Irish Rural Link

02nd November 2017

**Irish Rural Link Respond to Announcement of Funding for new RAPID Programme**

Irish Rural Link (IRL) – the national network representing the interest of rural communities welcome the return of RAPID Programme by the Department of Rural and Community Development but are disappointed with the level of funding that will be made available to communities for 2018

Following the announcement of €5 million for RAPID by Minister Ring earlier today, Thursday 2nd November 2017, €2.5 million will be allocated to Dublin’s North East Inner City while just €2 million of this fund will be allocated to 31 Local Authorities– an equal share of approx €64,500 per Local Authority.

RAPID is an important source of funding for disadvantaged communities to help in tackling social exclusion in provincial towns across the country and we welcome the re-launch of this Programme and hope it continues to exist into the future.

However, IRL are disappointed and concerned that the low level of funding available to community groups through Local Authorities is not sufficient to make any real difference to these communities which saw funding taken away for projects that RAPID covers during the recession and in many cases have not been restored.

We ask Government to consider increasing funding for this Programme to ensure projects can make a real difference for communities.

Ends

**For further information, please contact (anytime):**

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**About Irish Rural Link:**

Irish Rural Link represents the interests of locally based rural groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas by highlighting problems, advocating appropriate policies, sharing experiences and examples of good practice. It has a membership of over 600 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level