Irish Rural Link

4th April 2017

**Irish Rural Link Express Concern on Removal of 300,000 premises in rural areas from National Broadband Plan**

Irish Rural Link – the national network representing the interest of rural communities are concerned about the removal of 300,000 premises in rural areas from National Broadband Plan agreed by the Cabinet today, Tuesday 4th April 2017.

Eir have been contracted to deliver high speed broadband to these 300,000 homes and businesses in rural areas between now and end of 2018. If this can be delivered within the timeframe, it will be good. However, not all of these premises will have Fibre Optic to the Home with 10% only having VDSL technology.

Irish Rural Link’s concern is that this may not be delivered to all premises within this timeframe and that they will be delivered at a higher cost to consumers. 84,500 premises have been added to the state intervention map as a result of commercial intervention unable to deliver on this, this leaves a total of approx. 582,000 households and businesses without high speed broadband. The delivery of broadband to these premises is still not set in stone.

The setting up of a business, expansion of SME’s and Micro Enterprises and in turn, the creation of employment is highly dependent on decent high speed broadband. Irish Rural Link is aware that approx. 10,000 jobs are lost every year due to poor quality broadband. The longer businesses have to wait for decent broadband the less confidence they will have and will look to locate to other areas where broadband is available. The implementation of the Action Plan for Rural Development will be compromised if high speed broadband is not available.

IRL are calling on the Government to ensure they monitor very closely the delivery of broadband to these 300,000 premises by Eir and within the stated timeframe. Any premises that are not reached must go back into National Broadband Plan. More certainty on when the full National Broadband Plan will be delivered must be given.

If you want to check if your home or business will be one of the 300,000 premises included in this rollout you can log onto <http://fibrerollout.ie/> and enter your Eircode or postal address.

Ends

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

Seamus Boland (Chief Executive) 0862491153 or Louise Lennon (Policy and Communications Officer) 0861069244

**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 nearly 500 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level