Irish Rural Link

5th December 2017

**Irish Rural Link welcome the Progress made in investigating Local Public Banking Model**

Irish Rural Link – the national network representing the interest of rural communities are quite pleased with the progress that has been made over the past few months by the Government in exploring the Sparkesse Model of Public Banking and the potential of such a model in Ireland.

Irish Rural Link has been working with the Sparkassen Foundation over the last two years to introduce the idea of a regional public banking model in Ireland. IRL have met with political parties, officials from Department of Finance, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Department of Rural and Community and relevant Ministers.

There were positive reactions to this type of banking model as an alternative to pillar banking to help SME’s in a local area access finance and help economic growth within a region when IRL and Sparkassen presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Finance in October and met with Officials from Dept of Finance shortly after. Lending to SME’s and the agriculture sector severely reduced following the financial crisis and has not recovered to the extent that is needed for economic development in rural areas.

Following a PQ in the Oireachtas last week to Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe, we welcome the report on the investigation of a Local Public Banking model; will go to Government in the coming weeks.

We call on the Cabinet to recognise the need for some kind of alternative banking model in Ireland and to more actively engage with organisations such as the Sparkasse to fully explore how this model could be set up in Ireland.

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 over 600 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level. [www.irishrurallink.ie](http://www.irishrurallink.ie)