PROGRAMME

9.30 am – 11.00 am  UK NETWORK SUPPORT UNITS MARKETPLACE

Please take the opportunity to visit the NSU’s located beside the registration area.

DAY 1 – TUESDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2017

11.00am – 11.20am  WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Tony McCusker
Northern Ireland Rural Development Council

Catherine McCallum OBE
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

11.20 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.  KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Chaired by Agri Journalist and Industry Commentator, Richard Wright this two part presentation is based around a combination of panel interview, presentation and discussion with opportunities for audience participation.

Part 1: A Picture of Rural Across the Regions (Panel Discussion)

Delegates will gain a better understanding of rural across the regions and the contribution of the Rural Development Programme in addressing rural needs

Key Speakers:

Professor Sarah Skerratt (Scotland); Gail Merriman (Wales); Stephen Hall (England); Teresa Canavan (Northern Ireland); Seamus Boland (Ireland) and Susan Grieve (European Network for Rural Development)

Roundtable Discussion

An opportunity for delegates to reflect on the current Rural Development Programme.
Part 2: Future Directions in Rural Development

The second half of the presentation will focus on future direction in rural development in the context of the current Rural Development Programme, with presentations from:-

Professor Sarah Skerratt  
*Rural Scotland in Focus*  
*Generating much needed Rural Evidence*  
Scotland's Rural College

Neil McCullough  
*Trends, Challenges and Opportunities for Rural People & Places*  
Oxford Economics

Professor Jeremy Phillipson  
*Future Directions & Models of Rural Development*  
Newcastle University

A Questions & Answers session will follow.

1:30pm – 2.15pm  NETWORKING LUNCH

2.15pm – 4.45pm  OVER TO YOU : WORKSHOPS

Workshops  
Facilitated workshops to encourage interaction and discussion on the following themes:

**Workshop 1:** Sustainable and Inclusive Communities  
**Workshop 2:** Enterprise and Employment  
**Workshop 3:** Land use, Environment and Rural Economy  
**Workshop 4:** Infrastructure & Connectivity

*Please refer to the workshop information in your delegate pack for further details. (Orange section)*  
*Tea break served outside of workshops from 3:30pm*

4.45pm – 5.00pm  DAY 1 CONFERENCE CLOSE: CAPTURING THE STORY SO FAR

*If departing after day 1 please complete the Evaluation sheet in your delegate pack (yellow section)*
5.00pm – 6.15pm  
YOUR TIME

6.15pm – 10.00pm  
DINNER AND NETWORKING AT CRUMLIN ROAD GAOL

Buses will depart from outside the Clayton Hotel at 6.15 pm sharp and will return delegates to the Clayton Hotel after dinner.

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2017

8.45am – 12noon  
PROJECTS IN PRACTICE

To enable delegates to learn more form practitioners and beneficiaries through their participation in a series of ‘projects in practice’ events.

1. Harrison’s Food Shop Greyabbey with visiting presentation from Peninsula Healthy Living Centre Kircubbin.  
   (Bus departs Clayton Hotel at 8:45am sharp)

   (Bus departs Clayton Hotel at 9:00am )

   (Bus departs Clayton Hotel at 9:15am)

4. Loughgiel & Lough Neagh Partnership - These case studies will be showcased within the conference venue and no onward travel is required.  
   (9:45am in the Main conference room – The Olympic Suite)

Please refer to the Projects in Practice information in your delegate pack for further details. (Blue section)

12.15am – 1.30pm  
DAY 2 CONFERENCE CLOSE: THE BIG PICTURE

More than Minutes will draw proceedings to a close taking a final look at the big picture

Please complete you evaluation sheet in your delegate pack (yellow section)

1.30pm – 2.30pm  
LUNCH & ONWARD TRAVEL HOME
SPEAKER PROFILES

TONY MCCUSKER, Chair, Rural Development Council (RDC) Contract Holder for the Northern Ireland Rural Network Support Unit

Tony has served in a number of Government Departments including the former Northern Ireland Assembly and the Departments of Health and Education and Environment. He was formerly Director in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister with responsibility for the Executive Secretariat and Corporate Services and then joined the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as Deputy Secretary having responsibility for the Department’s Policy Group. He has led Common Agriculture Policy negotiations for Northern Ireland and represented the Department regularly at UK and EU strategy meetings on agri-food, rural issues, the environment and fisheries. Tony retired from the Northern Ireland Civil Service in 2005 and since then has undertaken a wide range of advisory work in Northern Ireland and in several European countries. Tony was appointed as the Chair of the Rural Development Council (RDC) in 2011.

CATHERINE McCALLUM OBE, Director of Rural Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Catherine is currently Director of Rural Affairs within the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs. She is responsible for delivery of the LEADER and Rural Tourism elements of the Rural Development Programme (RDP), as well as the Tackling Rural Poverty & Rural Isolation (TRPSI) Programme and Community Development. In June this year she was awarded an OBE for services to Government and the community. Catherine’s career in the Civil Service has spanned almost 35 years. She joined the then Department of Health & Social Services in 1981 and worked in a variety of posts, including social security and training before joining the newly established Child Support Agency in 1993. She worked there for a number of years, holding a number of management positions, including the role of Director of Operations and Acting Head of the organisation. Catherine was appointed to the post of Chief Executive of Rivers Agency in 2012 and spent almost 3 years there, before moving into the core Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, now Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs. She holds an Honours degree from Queen’s University and an MBA from the Ulster University. She is married, with 3 grown up children.

RICHARD WRIGHT, Agri Journalist and Industry Commentator

Richard is a well-known and highly respected journalist in Northern Ireland. With a career spanning over 30 years, Richard was the former BBC Agricultural Correspondent for Northern Ireland reporting on farming and rural issues through his daily Farm Gate reports on Radio Ulster. Richard describes his real loves as family, food, wine and golf.
PROFESSOR SARAH SKERRATT, Director of the Rural Policy Centre at Scotland’s Rural University College (SRUC).

Professor Sarah Skerratt is Director of the Rural Policy Centre at Scotland’s Rural University College (SRUC). In the Scottish Parliament, Sarah provides Secretariat to the Cross Party Group on Rural Policy and was a regular witness to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee (2011-2016), and continues to inform Committee and SPIce work. She was vice-chair of the Land Reform Review Group (2012-2014), Ministerial adviser on land reform (2014-2015), appointed to Scottish Government’s “1 million acres in community ownership by 2020” short life working group (2015-2017), and the Rural Fuel Poverty Task Force (2016). Sarah was the Principal Investigator for the Scottish Government-commissioned five-year research programme: “Governance and Decision-Making for Community Empowerment” (2011-2016). Sarah has almost three decades of experience working in and with rural communities, facilitating workshops, brokering discussions between stakeholders and conducting visioning exercises. Sarah also works with the Scottish Government, universities, private, public and third sector and development agencies in Scotland and internationally. She is on the Board of Directors for SRUC, Rural Housing Scotland and Scotland’s Regeneration Forum (SURF). In 2017, Sarah was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) in recognition of her work in rural policy and rural poverty. She is currently on partial secondment to Audit Scotland, to “rural-proof” their audit work. AW

GAIL MERRIMAN, RDP Community and Co-operation Schemes Manager, Welsh Government.

Originally from Edinburgh, Gail has lived in Wales since 1996. She has worked in rural development for 20 years for the private, third and public sectors. Working for the Welsh Government Gail specialises in community-led local development and been involved with LEADER since 2002. She led the drafting of the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and was involved in subsequent negotiations with the European Commission. Gail works in the Rural Development Division of the Welsh Government and is currently the policy lead for a suite of socio-economic Schemes under the banner of “Communities and Co-operation”. She has responsibility for rural proofing, contributes to rural policy and chairs the Welsh Government’s Community-led Local Development Consultation group.

STEPHEN HALL, Government Statistician in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA.

Stephen Hall is a Government Statistician in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). He has headed the rural statistics team for five years. In that role he is responsible for the Digest of Statistics of Rural England, the Rural Economic Bulletin, the Rural-Urban Classification, and ad hoc statistical analysis for Ministerial and policy briefing. He devised the criteria and mapping methodology for determining eligible areas for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development for Local Enterprise Partnerships and LEADER Local Action Groups and devised the funding allocation methodology. Prior to his rural role, for over 11 years he was responsible for the UK Sustainable Development Indicators and was regarded internationally as an expert in this field – regularly being invited to be involved in Eurostat, OECD, UNECE and UN projects. As a keen choral singer, in 2009 he founded the Etcetera Civil Service Choir as music director and chief administrator. Under his leadership the choir now has 150 members (including Defra’s Permanent Secretary) drawn from Government Departments, performs large scale concerts, and has raised £1000s for charities.
TERESA CANAVAN, Chief Executive, Rural Development Council (RDC), Contract Manager for the Northern Ireland Rural Network Support Unit

Teresa was appointed as RDC Chief Executive in 2013. She has over 19 years’ experience working in RDC on a range of projects and programmes. She led the first Rural Network for Northern Ireland contract during the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme and was instrumental in RDC securing the Network Support Unit contract for the current programme period. Teresa is widely respected and recognised within the sector as an expert in rural development delivery and implementation. A graduate in Business Studies Teresa also holds an MSc in Rural Development; an Advanced Diploma in Business Management & Leadership from the University of Ulster in partnership with Boston College and ILM Level 5 in Leadership.

SEAMUS BOLAND, Chief Executive, Irish Rural Link

In 2001 he was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Irish Rural Link. In 2011 he was appointed the Chairperson of Pobal and is a member of the European Economic Social Council. In 2012 Seamus was appointed Chair of the Peatlands Council. He was appointed a member of the Carnegie Rural Commission in 2004, which is charged with the examination rural issues in Great Britain and Ireland. Seamus serves on a number of National Development Plan and Rural Development Programme monitoring committees. As a member of the Community and Voluntary Pillar of National Social Partnership, he was involved in the negotiation of two National agreements, Sustaining Progress and Towards 2016. He is also a member of the first Press Council of Ireland, established in 2007. And Chairperson press council finance committee. Formerly manager of Tullamore Traveller Workshop and Shannon Banks Traveller workshop in Athlone, Seamus was appointed Regional Director of the Midland Regional Youth Service in 1995. He was Vice President of Macra Na Feirme and has served on a number of boards including the Youth-work Ireland, National association of Traveller Training Centres and currently is Chairperson of The Wheel. He has a background in training which includes; community development training, Governance and management. He holds a degree in Rural and Community Development from NUI Maynooth and is qualified as a speech and Drama Teacher.

SUSAN GRIEVE, European Network for Rural Development

Susan Grieve is the Geographical Expert for UK and Ireland for the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) Contact Point and has over 14 years’ experience working with European Funding. She has an in-depth knowledge of the LEADER Programme having worked hands-on with LAGs and communities to help them develop their Local Development Strategies and Business Plans, as well as evaluating LEADER at national and EU level. She has worked as an evaluator of Rural Development Programmes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Susan is currently working with the ENRD Contact Point to deliver a multi fund conference on ‘Achieving Results the CLLD way’ in Sweden in December.
PROFESSOR JEREMY PHILLIPSON, Professor of Rural Development and Director of Research - School of Agriculture, Food & Rural Development at Newcastle University

Jeremy Phillipson is Professor of Rural Development within the Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University. He has research interests on the development needs of rural economies and fishing communities, processes of expertise exchange within rural land management, and on the integration of social and natural sciences in resource management. He coordinates Landbridge, a knowledge exchange network for rural professionals, is a co-director of the ESRC et al Centre for Evaluation of Complexity Across the Nexus, and a member of Defra’s Social Science Expert Panel. Between 2003 and 2013 he was Assistant Director of the UK Research Councils’ Rural Economy and Land Use Programme. He currently coordinates Rural Enterprise UK, a new research and knowledge exchange initiative designed to improve the success of rural SMEs.

NEIL MCCULLOUGH, Associate Director, Oxford Economics

Neil leads the consultancy services within our City Services Consulting team. He has over 15 years’ project management and research experience ranging from leading major international projects whilst in PWC for the CEO and head of global research, to leading local economic profiling and forecasting assignments since joining Oxford Economics. His assignments typically involve economic modelling, interpretation and policy related recommendations at sub-national level. Neil is currently modelling the economic contribution of Sellafield Limited to the local economies of Cumbria, the local impact of constructing a new nuclear reactor in Anglesey, and the economic contribution of three industrial estates in Northern Ireland. Neil has recent modelled policy targets and planned investments at local authority level (e.g. Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester, Solent LEP, boroughs across London, and Core Cities, amongst others), and undertaken competitiveness studies (e.g. Belfast City Council), economic development strategies (e.g. Greenwich and Belfast City Council), and Economic Visions (E.g. a vision for an advanced innovation district in Sheffield and Rotherham and a vision for Northampton becoming a recognised part of the Oxford Cambridge growth corridor). Neil was seconded to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in 2009 to work on the Independent Review of Economic Policy in Northern Ireland. He graduated in 2000 with a degree in economics from the University of Ulster, Jordanstown. He later obtained an MSc in Finance from Queen’s University Belfast in 2002. During this period, Neil worked with the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre (NIERC) who formerly assisted in the production of Oxford Economics’ Regional Economic Outlook. Neil also worked as a Senior Economist at PricewaterhouseCoopers.