



## **D2N2 Rural Reference Group Terms of Reference – December 2014**

### **1. LEP Vision**

*The vision is to create a strong Rural Economy focusing on the 8 growth sectors and to support those businesses with ambition for sustainable growth. The focus shall be upon jobs and growth for D2N2.*

### **2. Role and remit**

*The D2N2 Rural Reference Group is to develop a coordinated and complimentary activity for Rural Economic Growth to meet the needs of SME's and micro businesses & social enterprises in the rural areas of D2N2, within the Strategic Economic Plan and EU SIF.*

*To act as a consultative reference group to advise on future and emerging needs of the rural economy and to "rural proof" the D2N2 activities.*

*To explore options for strategic capital & revenue Programme funding to further support the D2N2 rural economy.*

*To create a landscape that will help set D2N2 as the area with a strong rural economy, in terms of:*

- *businesses supported to grow*
- *Skills development of existing workforce and including apprenticeships*
- *receiving top quality help and advice*
- *access to finance*
- *creating a network of experts and support to develop world class innovative products and services within the rural economy*
- *aligning activity through the D2N2 Business Growth Hub*
- *protecting and enhancing environmental capital*

*The group consists of key providers and stakeholders. It will later act as a steering group to ensure that provision is maintained and evolve to suit the changing needs of the rural economy, the changing marketplace and the resources available to help the economy grow.*

Periodic Focus and Working Groups will be created to advise the wider Steering Group – as appropriate.

### **3. Membership**

**Chair:** Rob Crowder – D2N2 Board Champion on Rural Matters (or his successor)

D2N2 Rural Reference Group members have been invited from public, private & VCS sector organisations that can support the development of a plan for Rural Economic Growth for

D2N2, taking into account the requirements of the EAFRD programme and main EUSIF (ERDF and ESF) and match funding and where operating, the LEADER Programmes in the area.

***Current membership list is shown as Appendix 1.***

**4. *Meeting frequency:*** At least every 3 months

The D2N2 Rural Reference Group will be aligned with planned meetings of the D2N2 LEP Board meetings. Update reports shall be presented to the Board by the Board Champion for Rural Matters. The frequency of meetings will be kept under review.

**5. *Secretariat***

Information relevant to the rural economy will be shared with the D2N2 Rural Reference Group for comment. As far as possible this will form part of the agenda but if timescales do not allow, information will be circulated via email.

D2N2 will ensure notes are made from the meetings and circulated in a timely manner.

Items for the agenda are to be provided to D2N2, Lindsay Allen and Rob Crowder (Board Champion) 1 week prior to the meeting, if possible.

**6. *Costs and reimbursement***

No support is currently envisaged to cover the costs of engagement in D2N2 Rural Reference Group meetings by its members or their host organisations. However, D2N2 has a small budget for attendance at relevant conferences (second class rail fair or equivalent and conference fees only) that relate to the work of the D2N2 Sector and reference groups and attendance to these must be approved by the chair of the group and a report back to share learning is required to the group and any relevant groups within D2N2 and its partners.