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Housing, digitalisation and supporting business identified as key areas in AIB 2017 Sustainability Report

- **AIB's 2017 Sustainability Report outlines social, environmental and economic areas the bank has identified**
- **Report outlines, tracks AIB's determination to create long-term value as a business in economy and community following engagement with almost 1,400 stakeholders across five groups**
- **Report is subject to Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) standards and assured by Deloitte**

AIB today launched its [2017 Sustainability Report](#) outlining the social, environmental and economic areas the bank has identified for addressing following engagement with key stakeholders. The report outlines and tracks AIB's determination to create long-term value as a business in the economy and in the community.

The bank engaged with almost 1,400 stakeholders across five groups including customers, employees, regulators, investors, industry and wider public society. This process prioritised 11 macro-economic areas where stakeholders believe AIB has an important a role to play. These include housing, digitalisation, business and personal lending, entrepreneurship, food production and sustainable agriculture, Brexit, low carbon economy, financial literacy, skills and training, managing debt and ageing population. AIB is committed to publishing targets, aligned with its business strategy, for these areas over the next year.

Housing and supporting the development of a sustainable housing market was identified as one of the most important areas for stakeholders and the bank. AIB is focused on supporting efforts to increase housing supply by ensuring we have the appropriate funding structures in place to help mortgage holders, developers, investors and social housing. Recognising this, the bank has developed a range of initiatives to help boost the housing supply in Ireland including a €100 million Social Housing Development Fund and the funding 3,500 housing units as part of housing developments. In 2017 AIB reduced the standard variable rate (SVR) by 0.25%, the fifth rate reduction in three years, resulting in a total reduction of 1.25% since 2014 for both new and existing customers.

Digitalisation and technology are key enablers for customers and growth areas for AIB. The bank is number one for digital distribution in Ireland, with 1.4m online users. Some 95% of customer transactions are now automated, with 77% of personal loan applications made online, and 69% of AIB's transactional activity carried out via digital channels.

Supporting **business and employment creation** was a major area for stakeholders. In 2017 we experienced growth in new lending to SMEs of 15% and provided €1.4bn of new lending to SMEs in communities across Ireland. AIB remains Ireland's leading corporate bank and number one for foreign direct investment, with €3.2bn of new lending approved in 2017.

Being a **diverse and inclusive** employer is an important part of the culture that AIB wants to develop. It helps create an environment where employees can perform at their best, while building an organisation that reflects and understands our customer base. AIB also is committed to supporting the next generation with 80 new graduates joining the bank in 2017 and a further 80 arriving this summer.

AIB's Chief Executive Officer, Bernard Byrne said "As a bank, we recognise the important role we play in the economy and society. At AIB, we are creating a more sustainable bank - one that is socially responsible, that has an unrelenting focus on delivering for customers and that responds to the issues that matter to our stakeholders.

Through this report we are sharing examples of the initiatives we are delivering across our business. We are seeing positive results and we know we have more to do. Our next step will be to publish metrics and targets that are aligned to our sustainability agenda and to our overall strategy."

The 2018 AIB Sustainability Conference will take place on 16th October. John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods Market and Rachel Botsman, lecturer at Oxford University's Saïd Business School, will join a range of experts and speakers in a conversation about how business can support a sustainable future.

ENDS

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