



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

## Local Development Plan

### Rural Industrial Policy Areas (RIPAs)

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In considering the approach to economic development within our Preferred Options Paper (POP), one of the preferred options that was supported in relation to economic development was the adoption of a more flexible approach which would see existing policy tailored to better reflect Mid Ulster's needs. This approach would take account of the specific nature of the district which is characterised by a frequent occurrence of rural industry. One of the measures advocated in the POP in relation to this approach was the designation of Rural Industrial Policy Areas (RIPA's) which will protect and consolidate existing areas of rural industrial uses and contain them within set limits whereby large scale expansion would not be permitted.
- 1.2 The idea of designating RIPA's received a very positive response from the public with all responses from the general public regarding RIPA's being in favour and accordingly it was agreed in the Public Consultation Report to bring forward RIPA designations.

## **2.0 Criteria for RIPA's**

- 2.1 The purpose of a RIPA is not to be a zoning and its extent should not be treated as a settlement limit. They are purely designated to allow for the clustering of existing economic activity. In order for an area to be considered as a potential RIPA site it will have to meet the following criteria;
  - Be located in the rural area i.e. outside of any settlement limits as designated in the Plan
  - No part of the proposed RIPA site should include or be in close proximity to any environmental designation such as a RAMSAR, SPA, SAC, ASSI or SLNCI
  - Have an established or accepted industrial use and / or related use such as research and development. The use on site and all buildings must either have the benefit of planning permission or be immune from enforcement action under Article 132 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
  - The use must not have ceased or decreased to a level which means it is no longer an economically viable activity.
  - Have the benefit of an existing access which would be capable of serving the existing industrial activity as well as accommodating additional activity if the site were to expand
  - Be in close proximity to a main transport corridor
  - Be of a size and scale which means that the character of the immediate surrounding area has been altered to an extent where it could no longer be described as having a distinctly rural character.
  - The consolidation of existing industry at the site would not lead to any harmful impacts being caused to nearby residential amenity.
- 2.2 These criteria will be applied to all sites where there has been an interest expressed (via representations during the Plan making process) in having a RIPA designation. It should be noted that the criteria is not a definitive list

whereby all sites who meet the criteria will be designated as RIPA's. We will consider sites against the criteria in order to ascertain if they qualify as potential RIPA sites and will then take a decision on the final designations.

- 2.3 The POP suggested several locations as being suitable for RIPA designations. This was not an exhaustive or definitive list and was only intended to promote and stimulate debate. The suggestions put forward in the POP were;
- Creagh
  - Ballygawley
  - Fivemiletown
  - Ardboe
  - Area around Sandvik
  - Newmills
  - Edendork
  - Castledawson Interchange
  - Tamnamore
- 2.4 The following sites are considered to be of strategic importance and will therefore be considered for RIPA status in the forthcoming Plan Strategy. Other potential sites listed in the POP as well as potential RIPA candidates suggested via representations, are considered to be less strategic in nature and will therefore be considered and brought forward (if appropriate) in the Local Policies Plan. A list of all sites which were the subject of representations seeking RIPA designations is included at Appendix 1.
- 2.5 The proposed strategic RIPA sites are;
- The area of existing industry near the settlement of Creagh
  - The area of existing industry near Sandvik (between Cabragh and Ballygawley).
  - The site at Desertcreat, near Cookstown which was proposed as the home of the new Police, Fire and Prison Services Training Centre.
- 2.6 These three areas have been considered as strategic because of a number of factors not least the fact that their size and scale is beyond what could normally be expected of a typical rural industry in Mid Ulster. The products which are manufactured in Creagh and Sandvik are of regional, national and international importance and the three sites are spread out equally across the district thus ensuring that one particular part of the district is not gaining an advantage over the other. In addition, it is also considered very important that these three sites are not only in close proximity to major transport corridors but are actually located adjacent to some of the main arterial roads which run through our district.
- 2.7 The Desertcreat site was not one which suggested in the POP but is considered because it has planning permission for a major development consisting mostly of use class C3, which is now unlikely to be developed. It is felt that this points to the suitability of the site for other less traditional economic uses and this in turn would provide a mix to the 3 RIPA sites which would mean that they are not entirely focussed on traditional industrial methods but which also embrace

other forms of economic and industrial development which may become more common in the future.

### **3.0 Creagh**

#### **3.1 Description of Area**

The area consists of flat and low lying land, located on the northern shore of Lough Neagh. The area is dominated by existing industry such as Acheson and Glover, Glassdon Recycling, Macrete, Creagh Concrete and Creagh Business Park which is home to range of uses including storage and distribution. There are also pockets of residential development along Airfield Road, located in close proximity to the existing areas of industry.

- 3.2 The settlement of Creagh is located immediately to the north west with the main A6 transport corridor forming a natural boundary for the area along the north east. Lough Neagh is immediately to the south with three landing points for sand extraction currently ongoing from Lough Neagh located on the shore line in very close proximity.

#### **3.3 Constraints**

The area to the south of Creagh Road and Airfield Road towards the lough is part of an international RAMSAR designation and some of this area is also part of an NIEA Special Protection Area. Some portions of this land also include parts of the proposed SCA, which is located south of the Creagh Road on the Lough foreshore as well as further south closer to the settlement of Ballymaguigan. Therefore, any RIPA designation, if one were to be designated, would be unlikely to extend south of these two roads towards the Lough Shore.

- 3.4 There is an LLPA and an AOHSV also shown in the MAP 2015 but these will not be affected by any proposed RIPA designation which would be likely to focus on the area where the main concentration of industry is located.
- 3.5 The most important constraint on development in the area however, is undoubtedly the fact that a considerable part of the site and land to the east (which is the most obvious area for industrial expansion) lies below the Q100 flood level, thus making it a floodplain. This matter is only exacerbated when the climate change flood plain models are also considered. The extent of area affected can be appreciated in the map below.

## Area Considered as Floodplain at Creagh.

(Dark blue – current rivers flood hazard mapping. Sky Blue – Climate change river flood modelling).



### 3.6 Representations

There are a number of site specific representations which have been received in the area which relate to industrial zonings, RIPA designations or housing land. Whilst site specific zonings are generally a consideration for the Local Policies Plan, in this instance given the representations relating to RIPA designations they are relevant. They are summarised in the table below.

<b>REPRESENTAITON REFERENCE</b>	<b>MADE ON BEHALF OF</b>	<b>USE OF LAND PROPOSED BY REPRESENTATION</b>
MUPOP/204	MACRETE LTD.	INDUSTRY OR RURAL INDUSTRIAL POLICY AREA (RIPA)
MUPOP/174	GLASSDON RECYCLING	INDUSTRY OR RURAL INDUSTRIAL POLICY AREA (RIPA)
MUPOP/179	CTG BIOGAS	INDUSTRY OR RURAL INDUSTRIAL POLICY AREA (RIPA)
MUPOP/237	CREAGH CONCRETE	SITE TO BE INCLUDED AS PART OF INDUSTRIAL LANDS AT CREAGH
MUPOP/17	PATRICK MULLHOLLAND	HOUSING

### 3.7 Assessment of Proposed RIPA Designation

This area is a well-established and accepted area of rural industry which benefits from industrial zonings (existing and proposed) in the extant MAP 2015. It benefits from excellent transport links by virtue of the fact that it is located adjacent to the main A6 corridor which provides the main link between Belfast and Derry, the two largest cities in Northern Ireland and which also provides excellent links to ports at Belfast, Derry and Larne. The area is also home to major world class industries which transport their products across the British Isles. There is therefore no doubt that it is a major strategic site and is definitely worthy of consideration as a strategic RIPA site which could be brought forward in the Plan Strategy.

- 3.8 However, the fact that a very significant part of the site is below the Q100 flood level and is therefore classed as a floodplain, means that there is a presumption against its development. For this reason it is unlikely that a RIPA designation

at this site could be supported due to the limited chance of such a designation actually being able to deliver additional development or growth.

## **4.0 Area Close to and Including Sandvik**

### Description of Area

- 4.1 The site is relatively flat with land to the north rising slightly along the Aghnagar Road. The site is dominated by existing industry with Sandvik who make quarrying equipment, Acheson and Glover making concrete products and a Northstone depot which appears to be closed. Work is currently ongoing on the northern portion of the site on an in-vessel composting facility for Northway (M/2014/0567/F). There are some detached residential dwellings and footings of commenced dwellings located immediately north of the site along the Aghnagar Road.

### Constraints

- 4.2 There are no Development Plan constraints on the site. There is a small trace of flooding indicated along the eastern boundary of the site but this is negligible and in any case is not included on the flood hazard maps but is rather strategic flooding and is not as reliably modelled as the flood hazard maps.

### Representations

- 4.3 One representation was received to the POP which requested that site of the ongoing construction of the in-vessel composting facility be included in the Plan as a RIPA. This was received on behalf of Northway, the company carrying out the development.

### Assessment of Proposed RIPA Designation

- 4.4 This site is an obvious candidate for a RIPA designation. The site is approximately 35 hectares in area and is characterised by well-established and ongoing large scale industrial activity. The site has very good transport links, having historically been located adjacent to the main A4, which was the main Belfast – Enniskillen / Donegal / Sligo transport corridor. The upgrade of the A4 means that the main traffic flow no longer passes the immediate frontage of the site, but a junction which connects to the new road is less than 2 miles away, meaning the site is still very accessible. The industry located at the site is world class in terms of the range of products and the geographical spread of their distribution.
- 4.5 The main options for expansion of the site are the lands to the north and east. The land immediately to the north of the existing industrial sites, which is also the subject of the representation (MUPOP/187) and the ongoing development of the composting facility, is an obvious choice. Agricultural lands immediately north east of the site, between the Aghnagar Road and the eastern most portion of the existing site are the other obvious candidates for expansion. These lands extend into open agricultural fields and are located away from any

concentration of housing. Housing immediately to the south east and south west of the site act as an obvious barrier to expansion in this direction and the A4 road is a similar barrier to expansion to the south.

- 4.6 It is proposed to bring forward a strategic RIPA designation at this site. Suggested criteria for this RIPA designation would include;
- Suitable uses will include B2 or B3 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.
  -
- 4.7 A map of a potential RIPA designation at Sandvik is attached at Appendix 2.

## **5.0 Desertcreat**

### Description of Area

- 5.1 The site in question is a large expansive site consisting of drumlin type landscape located immediately adjacent to the A29 road between Cookstown and Dungannon, bordering on the settlement of Desertcreat. There is an existing agricultural type laneway which runs through most of the site as well as the Killymoon River which runs through the northern portion. There are mature trees located on the northern portion of the site and a good degree of vegetation cover all around the site.
- 5.2 There is operational development ongoing on the southernmost portion of the site and this work is accessed via a new access from the main A29. This work and access were approved under LA09/2017/0439/F. The entire site has approval for a combined police, fire and prison services training college approved under I/2012/0240/F.
- 5.3 Given the drumlin type terrain, the site, whilst being large and expansive does not feel as such with views across the whole site and into the site being restricted due to terrain and vegetation cover.

### 5.4 Constraints

There are no development plan constraints on the site and the flood hazard maps do not show any flooding issues either. The site is on the edge of the Tullaghoge proposed Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI).

### 5.5 Representations

There were no representations to the POP submitted in relation to any part of this site.

### 5.6 Assessment of Proposed RIPA designation

This is not an obvious choice for a strategic RIPA designation given the fact that there is no existing industry or associated activity located on the site. However, as has been mentioned, approval has been granted for a joint



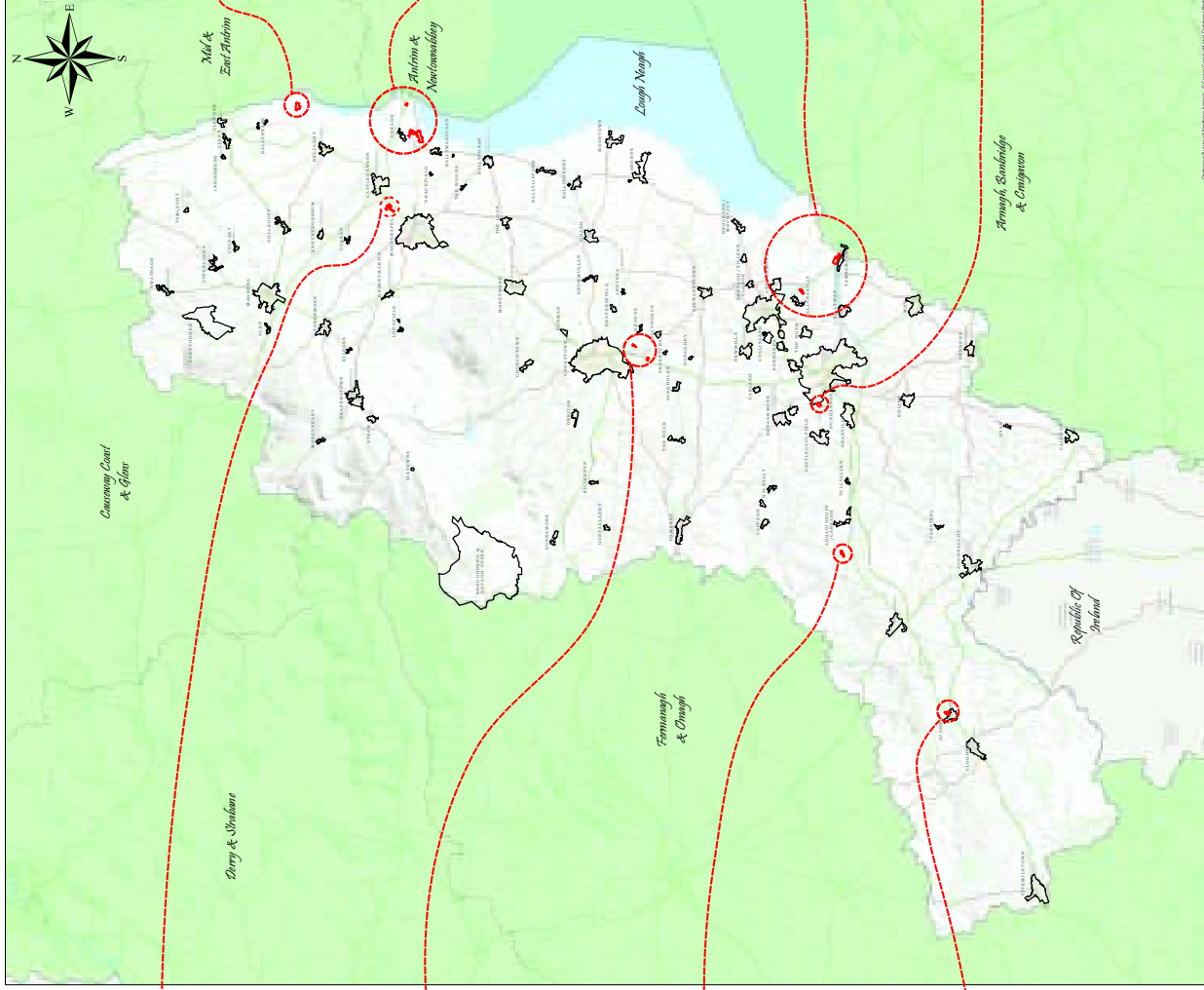
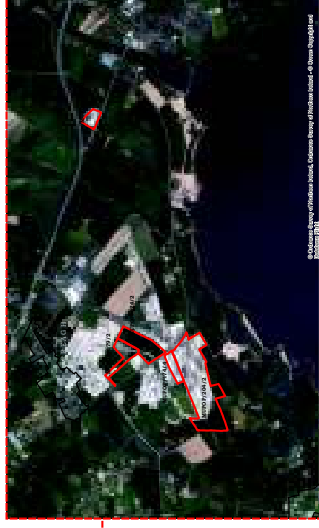
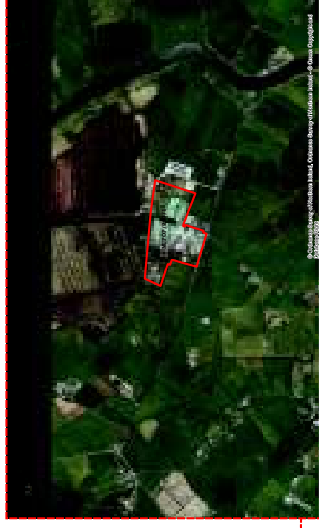
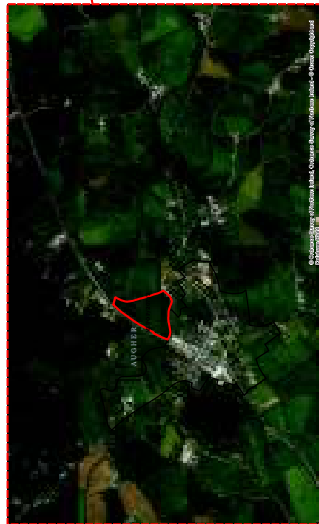
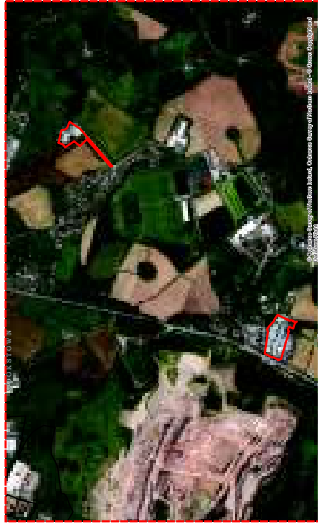
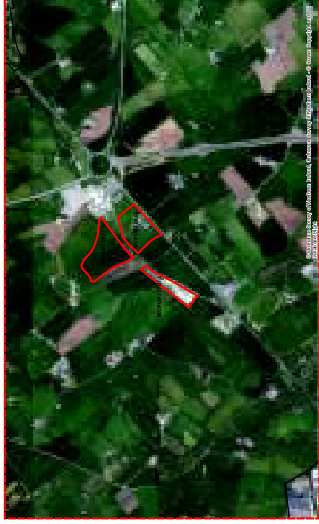
services training college, which is a C3 use according to the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

- 5.7 The site is undulating in terms of topography as opposed to the relatively flatter sites at Creagh and Sandvik. Accessibility of this site is very good with direct access being available onto the main A29 north south corridor.
- 5.8 Application I/2012/0240/F has granted planning permission for a C3 use on the site which is now unlikely to be developed. LA09/2017/0439/F also granted permission for a similar use. It is felt that these approvals point to the suitability of the site for other less traditional economic uses and this in turn would provide a mix and range to the selection of strategic RIPA sites which would mean that they are not entirely focussed on traditional industrial methods but would also embrace other forms of economic and industrial development which may become more common in the future, such as the associated research and development uses which may be required to supplement various types of industries.
- 5.9 It is proposed to bring forward a strategic RIPA designation at this site. Suggested criteria for this RIPA designation would include;
- Suitable uses will include use class B1 (c), B2, B3 and C3 (excluding schools) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015;
  - Access to the site will be taken from the A29 in accordance with approval I/2012/0240/F;
  - Development proposals must make every effort to retain existing mature trees which are located throughout the site. Similarly, all mature vegetation around the boundary of the site should be retained;
  - All work will be subject to the agreement and implementation of a programme of archaeological works which will provide for the identification and evaluation of archaeological remains within the site;
  - All work will be subject to the submission and consideration of a Habitat Management Plan;
  - No work will take place within 25 metres of a badger sett entrance without a Wildlife License being issued by a NIEA Wildlife Officer;
  - No development shall take place involving the two ponds on the northern portion of the site, without a Wildlife License being issued an NIEA Wildlife Officer and the conditions of that License have been complied with.
- 5.10 A map of a potential RIPA designation at Desertcreat is attached at Appendix 3.

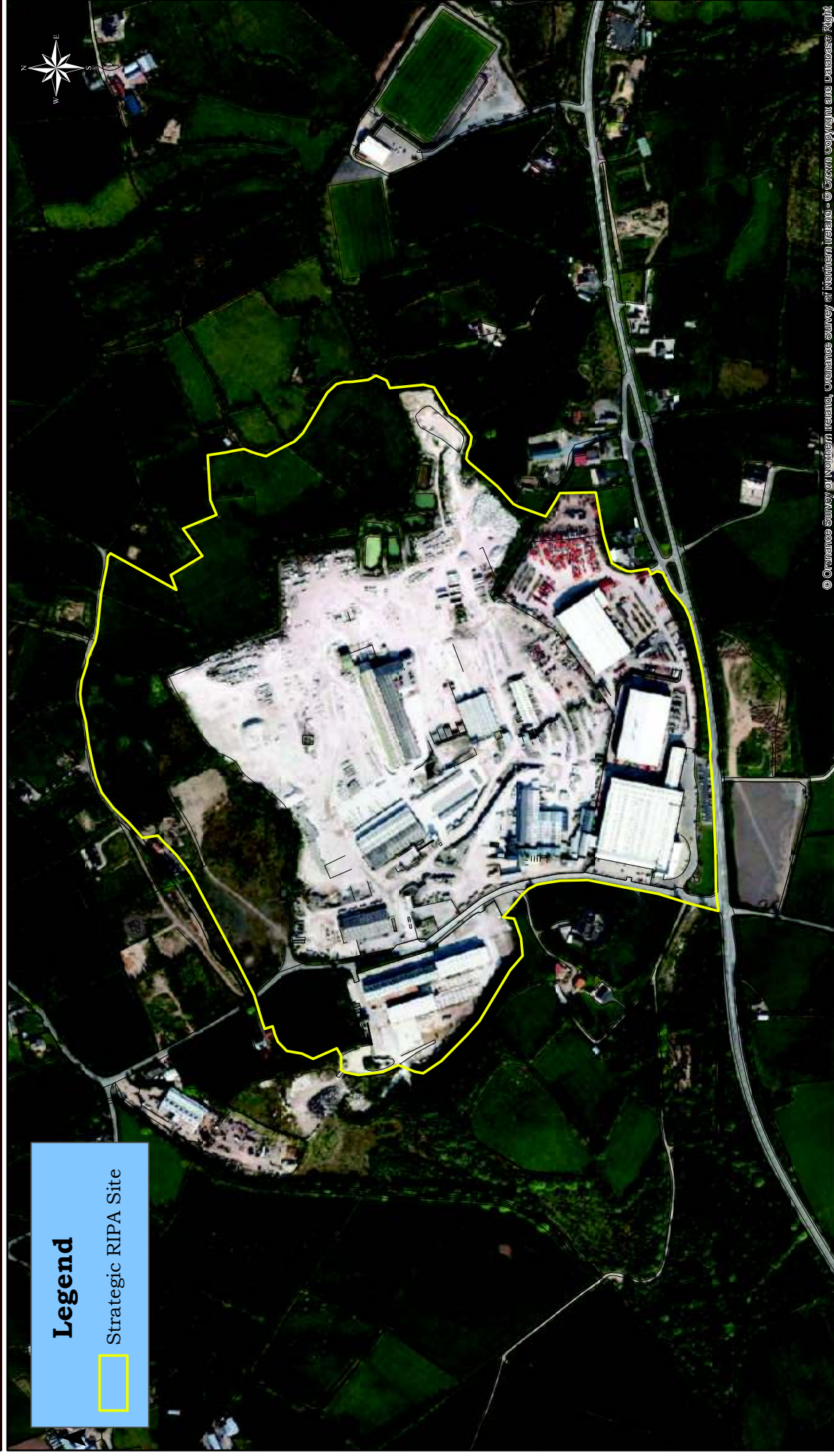
## **6.0 Recommendation**

- 6.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this background paper and agree that the information contained therein it used to inform the draft Plan Strategy subject to assessment and appraisal as part of the SA/SEA process.

# Appendix 1 - Public Consultation Suggested Sites for Rural Industrial Policy Areas



# Appendix 2 Proposed Strategic Rural Industrial Policy Area - Sandvik Area



## Legend

Strategic RIPA Site



# Appendix 3 Proposed Strategic Rural Industrial Policy Area - Desertcreat

