

## DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla

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**From:** DAERA CNCC Secretariat  
**Sent:** 26 August 2022 09:53  
**To:** DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla  
**Cc:** DAERA CNCC Secretariat  
**Subject:** Mineral Prospecting Licence consultations  
**Attachments:** Mineral Licensing reply OMA one 22.docx; Mineral Licensing reply MCTA one 22.docx

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Hi,

Please see attached a copy of the response submitted by CNCC in respect of the Minerals & Petroleum Consultation.

Can you please acknowledge receipt of the response.

Many Thanks in advance.

Regards



CNCC Secretariat

Proposal to Grant Mineral Prospecting Licence Application OMA1/22: a response from the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside.

The Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside is a statutory advisory council (SAC) on matters affecting nature conservation and the countryside. CNCC welcomes the opportunity to comment on the current proposals to grant a prospecting licence.

The area selected has ribbed moraines and drumlins as well as extensive peats. The presence of Holocene peats is to be particularly noted and any further predation of the NI stock via later stage mineral exploitation is of concern. We also want to draw attention to the presence of Holocene peats and draw your attention to a recent paper by Dempster and Enlander (Dempster, M. and Enlander, I 2022 Conserving Quaternary geoheritage in Northern Ireland. Proceedings of the Geological Association).

We note that the background to the consultation is the Mineral Development Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 which vested most minerals (except for those belonging to the Crown Estate, certain salt deposits and 'common' substances such as brick clays) in what is now the Department for the Economy (then the Department of Commerce) so the Department can grant prospecting and mining licences.

We also note that the provisions relating to prospecting for minerals are quite distinct from mineral development. However, we understand that a prospecting licence still permits the licence holder to undertake certain activities such as borings.

We are concerned that multiple small scale changes to landscapes (as can be the case in mineral exploration) can lead to unintended levels of overall alteration. Small scale activities replicated across a landscape can alter landscape character without the planning system being fully cognizant of the degradation taking place. Therefore, CNCC strongly recommends that mechanisms are put in place to ensure independent monitoring of prospecting and mineral exploration activities so as to ensure that the cumulative impact of activities does not reach unacceptable levels.

We note that the planning system exists to act in the interest of the public good, and appropriate regulation should be in place and functioning to ensure that the public is well served. CNCC also notes that mineral exploration is often a contentious issue at community level in Northern Ireland. This has been the case in recent years in, for example, Woodburn Forest, and in areas of the Sperrins.

It is important that the Department provides leadership in managing controversy arising between decision makers, local authorities, developers and local communities, as conflicts over demand for land increase. Social interaction of these kinds can be complex, and sufficient resource should be dedicated to ensuring open engagement across different stakeholders.

Finally we would like to express concern over the limited information available via the public consultation. While the area of search is delineated the methods of search and extent of interference with the land surface and subsurface do not seem to be

detailed. To provide meaningful comment on the granting of licenses, CNCC would need to see more information on these issues.

Your reference:

Our reference: AE1-22-3043

[REDACTED]

Minerals and Petroleum Operations

Department for the Economy

Email: [MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk)

Planning Response Team  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Klondyke Building  
Cromac Avenue  
Gasworks Business Park  
Belfast BT7 2JA

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [planningresponse.team@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:planningresponse.team@daera-ni.gov.uk)

10 August 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Notice of intention to award Mineral Prospecting Licences**

I refer to your e-mail of 31 May 2022 regarding the above and request for comments.

We are pleased to provide comments and advice on the key environmental considerations for the Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group within DAERA.

For your convenience we have provided our comments under the following topic heading:

- Forest Service
- Water Management Unit
- Inland Fisheries
- Drinking Water Inspectorate
- Natural Environment Division

If you wish to discuss anything raised in our response, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Response Team using the contact details above.

Kind regards,

Planning Response Team

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## Forest Service

Both state managed and privately managed woodland lies within the application areas shown for the following:

- *APPLICATION REFERENCES:* KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22 from Karelian Diamond Resources Plc for two MPLs on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh,
- *APPLICATION REFERENCE:* MCTA1/22 from Mount Castle Trust for an MPL on land situated in County Tyrone, and
- *APPLICATION REFERENCE:* OMA1/22 from Flintridge Resources Limited for an MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

The Department publishes a woodland register showing the extent and location of these woodlands. This map is available from <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/Map%20of%20Forest%20and%20Woodland%20Cover%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%202021.pdf> and may, subject to data licencing considerations, be made available spatially to applicants.

## Policy Position

Under Section 1 of the Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, the Department has the general duty of promoting afforestation and sustainable forestry. The Department's position on proposals for woodland removal in the course of planned development is to:

- Seek to avoid removal of woodland within the planning application area other than the area required for construction and ancillary works unless there are overriding environmental considerations such as the opportunity to restore priority habitats.
- Seek woodland regeneration as a condition of planning permission where felling (as opposed to woodland removal) is permitted within the planning application area in keeping with good forestry practice.

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## Water Management Unit

### RE: APPLICATION REFERENCES: Mineral Prospecting Licences (MPLs)

**KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22** - Karelian Diamond Resources Plc

**MCTA1/22** - Mount Castle Trust

**OMA1/22** - Flintridge Resources Limited

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Water Management Unit note the above named consultations and would make the following comments.

It is noted that these licence applications permit exploration activities which involve relatively non-intrusive geophysical or geochemical surveys and that more intrusive works, such as drilling a borehole, will be subject to planning legislation. NIEA will be a consultee for any development works considered to be either 'Permitted Development' or subject to a full planning application.

Given the limited information currently available, NIEA Water Management Unit can only make a generic consultation response at this stage. If, or when, more detailed information becomes available on specific activities and locations, NIEA Water Management Unit will be in a position to make a more detailed response.

### Key Environmental Considerations

Any exploration activities that may involve the abstraction of surface or ground water; or the discharge of potentially polluting effluent, including stormwater with a high level of

suspended solids, should be properly planned and risk assessed with the necessary statutory authorisations put in place; namely:

- An authorisation or licence to abstract groundwater or surface water, under the Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, may be required.
  
- A discharge of a potentially polluting liquid to groundwater or surface water will require a Consent to Discharge, under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.
  
- Other permissions and assessments may be required from NIEA depending upon the specific activities and working practices proposed and their exact location in relation to sensitive environmental receptors.

Prior to drilling or other intrusive fieldwork, the applicants should contact Water Management Unit to discuss the location and proposals and to determine the required assessments and environmental permissions. Environmental permissions take a minimum of 4 months to process therefore early engagement with Water Management Unit is essential.

Water Management Unit should be contacted at:

17 Antrim Road

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Tonagh

Lisburn

Co Antrim

BT28 3AL

Email: [wmuplanningconsultations@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:wmuplanningconsultations@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Effective mitigation measures must be in place to protect the water environment and surrounding water bodies from any discharge into them that may damage ecological status and to ensure that the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for water bodies are not compromised nor the WFD objectives in other downstream water bodies in the same and other catchments.

It is an offence under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 to discharge or deposit, whether knowingly or otherwise, any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter so that it enters a waterway or water in any underground strata. Conviction of such an offence may incur a fine of up to £20,000 and / or three months imprisonment.

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**DAERA Inland Fisheries** response to - Consultation on NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES - KDRA2/22, KDRA3/22, MCTA1/22 and OMA1/22.

DAERA Inland Fisheries, is a core branch within Marine and Fisheries Division of the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs. It has a statutory remit for the conservation, protection, development and improvement of salmon and inland fisheries under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 (as amended). DAERA Inland Fisheries is the implementing authority under the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic. This treaty requires signatory states to develop programmes of work to conserve, rationally manage and improve Atlantic salmon populations and their habitats within their jurisdiction. This work is scrutinised by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO). DAERA Inland Fisheries welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Consultation on NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

Inland Fisheries notes the Department of Economy's intention to issue four licences in respect of Mineral Prospecting. There has been no indication of the methods of prospecting to be utilized or the exact locations of activities in relation to these applications and thus it is difficult to advise on specific impacts to fisheries interests. These applications also cross jurisdictions between DAERA Inland Fisheries and the Loughs agency, Inland Fisheries will provide comment in relation to those likely to impact fisheries interests with our jurisdiction.

We would like to take this opportunity to advise on the potential impact that works of this scale and nature can have on water courses, water quality and migratory and other fish species. Such impacts could include:

- Obstruction to upstream and downstream migration both during and after extraction activities
- Disturbance of spawning beds during extraction – timing of works is critical
- Increases in silt and sediment loads
- Point source pollution incidents
- Drainage issues
- Erosion issues
- Loss of baseflow in surface water environment as a result of abstraction.
- Degradation of aesthetic landscape quality and subsequent effects on angling.

Please see specific comments below.

- 1) And 2) **KDRA2/22** Base metals and Diamonds Co Tyrone and Co Fermanagh, 248km<sup>2</sup> (Ballinamallard River, Colebrook River and Tempo River catchments potentially impacted) and **KDRA3/22** Base metals and Diamonds Co Tyrone 249km<sup>2</sup> (Blackwater river and Ballygawley River catchments potentially impacted)

These applications have rivers and watercourses within the jurisdiction of DAERA Inland Fisheries and the following will apply –

The UK NI is also required to implement the third cycle of the Water Framework Directive [Consultation on the Draft 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021 to 2027 |](#)



[Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](http://daera-ni.gov.uk) which includes specific fisheries and water abstraction measures.

Northern Ireland as part of the UK is also committed to meeting international obligations to implement the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the Atlantic Ocean [North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization - NASCO](#) These obligations are delivered through the development and delivery of Implementation Plans [Third Reporting Cycle - NASCO](#)

The applicant should be aware of their obligations under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, as amended. More information can be found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/authorisations-under-fisheries-act-ni-1966>

Section 47 of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, which covers the applicant's responsibilities relating to Penalties for Pollution and the consequences of causing or permitting the release of any deleterious materials into any waters.

Section 48 of the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 under which any works in or on the riverbank should be permitted and is issued by DAERA Inland Fisheries

Section 54 of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 as amended relates to the Construction of fish passes in dams in rivers (maintenance of fish passage over any dam)

Section 58 - outlines the requirement for a 24 hour weekend closure of abstraction operations.

Section 59 - Relates to provision of gratings and screens on abstraction intakes and discharge points. Section 59 requires that a grid with spacing between bars of no more than 51mm and to the level of the highest flood is placed at the point of abstraction from the watercourse at all times. A small mesh screen must be placed over this grid during the months of March - May to ensure no entrainment of migrating smolts. A grid with spacing between bars of no more than 25mm must be placed at the point where the abstraction operation discharges back to the watercourse at all times.

The watercourses with the potential to be impacted by the associated activities as indicated in the maps supplied are likely to contain both priority species and priority habitats and should be afforded the protection that this provides under the Biodiversity Duty for Northern Ireland, more information is available at - <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/biodiversity-duty>

As a statutory consultee DAERA Inland Fisheries will continue to provide comment on any proposals put forward as a result of this plan through the normal planning consultation process. It is noted that any licence issued will have associated Environmental and Regulatory obligations, including environmental screening, Inland Fisheries will continue to engage in any such process and provide consideration/advice in relation to fisheries interests.

The geographical area includes that which is within the jurisdiction of the Loughs Agency and as the lead body for provision of advice regarding impacts to salmonid and inland fisheries interests within the catchments of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough said agency should be consulted in relation to this application.

3) **MCTA1/22** from Mount Castle Trust for an MPL on land situated in County Tyrone.

The geographical area is entirely within the jurisdiction of the Loughs Agency and as the lead body for provision of advice regarding impacts to salmonid and inland fisheries interests

within the catchments of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough said agency should be consulted in relation to this application.

- 4) **OMA1/22** from Flintridge Resources Limited for an MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh (The Kesh and Ballinamallard Rivers potentially impacted).

These applications have rivers and watercourses within the jurisdiction of DAERA Inland Fisheries and the following will apply –

The UK NI is also required to implement the third cycle of the Water Framework Directive [Consultation on the Draft 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021 to 2027 | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#) which includes specific fisheries and water abstraction measures.

Northern Ireland as part of the UK is also committed to meeting international obligations to implement the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the Atlantic Ocean [North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization - NASCO](#). These obligations are delivered through the development and delivery of Implementation [Third Reporting Cycle - NASCO](#).

The applicant should be aware of their obligations under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, as amended. More information can be found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/authorisations-under-fisheries-act-ni-1966>

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The geographical area includes that which is within the jurisdiction of the Loughs Agency and as the lead body for provision of advice regarding impacts to salmonid and inland fisheries interests within the catchments of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough said agency should be consulted in relation to this application.

## Drinking Water Inspectorate

Thank you for consulting with DWI on the Notice of Intention to aware Mineral Prospecting Licences. Upon review of available documentation, DWI are content that the licences permit exploration activities only and not a right to mining of any identified minerals. If a resource of interest is found, a Mining Licence would be filed and would be subject to separate assessment, consultation processes and planning approvals.

DWI do consider it prudent to provide some general comment to be adhered to during exploration works:

- Identification of Private Water Supplies: exploratory works must not impact on either the quality or sufficiency of a private water supply, and mitigation measures must be put in place, where required, in the protection of such drinking water supplies. Therefore, the developer should undertake a scoping exercise to determine the location of any private water supplies prior to any works. Details on undertaking a search for private water supplies in the vicinity of the proposed development can be undertaken by accessing the following link: Drinking Water Inspectorate Viewer ([daera-ni.gov.uk](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)). If the applicant intends to use any borehole / private water supply on site, and its intended usage would abstract over 10m<sup>3</sup>/day then it will require further consultation with the NIEA Abstractions and Licencing Team - more information is available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/applying-abstract-or-impound-water>.
- Engagement with NI Water (Public Water Supplies): Northern Ireland Water Limited should be consulted prior to any exploratory works to consider the impact of the works on the surface water catchments which are categorised as Drinking Water Protected Areas under Article 7 of the Water Framework Directive.

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## **Natural Environment Division**

### **Notice of Intention to Award Mineral Prospecting Licences**

Conservation, Designation and Protection (CDP) Casework Team note the above named consultations and have the following comments to make:

It is noted that these licence applications permit exploration activities which involve relatively non-intrusive geophysical or geochemical surveys and that more intrusive works, such as drilling a borehole, will be subject to planning legislation. NIEA will be a consultee for any development works considered to be either 'Permitted Development' or subject to a full planning application.

NED note from the submitted maps that approximately 26 national, international and European designated sites lie within the RLBs of the application areas.

Given the limited information currently available, CDP can only make a generic consultation response at this stage. If, or when, more detailed information becomes available on specific activities and locations, CDP will be in a position to make a more detailed response.

Any exploration activities that may impact upon designated site features – habitats or species - should be properly planned and risk assessed with the necessary statutory authorisations put in place. Due to the possibility of mineral prospecting activities having the potential to affect indirectly; potentially sensitive areas, it is important the following information should be considered.

## **UK National Site Network Considerations**

### Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) are protected and declared under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC, which been transposed into the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, as amended. Regulations 40-46 are of particular relevance to Mineral Prospecting Licensing and subsequent field based activities.

The Regulations outline the legal requirement by those deemed competent authorities to assess the likely significant impact on European Sites of activities they authorise. Regulation 43 directs that “A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which— (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Northern Ireland (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.”

In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, the authority shall have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which it is proposed that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given. The person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation shall provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment.

In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 44, the authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having confirmed that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

Further guidance is available;

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm)

Specifically the document found at;

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf)

### Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Department for the Economy must comply with the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 in particular Articles 38-40: Duties of public bodies in relation to land included in Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). Public Bodies must comply with Article 40 (Public Bodies: duties in relation to authorising operations) when they are considering granting consent or approval for activities that are likely to damage any of the flora, fauna, geological, physiographical or other features which makes an ASSI of special scientific interest. Please note the amendments made to Article 40 by the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (Sub-section 29).

Field based activities associated with the mineral prospecting licence may include activities which have the potential to damage the features of the ASSIs associated with the Licence Application Area.

We acknowledge that detailed screening and assessment of field based activities cannot take place until the Licensee has made and submitted, firm plans for these activities, which include details about the location, timing, duration of activities and proposed methods to dispose of any waste arising.

**In the absence of submitted firm plans for field based activities we would recommend that a precautionary approach be taken by attaching a condition to any licence issued that ‘the Licensee shall not carry out any work within or likely to damage an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) without the prior written consent of the Department’.**

If you have any queries in relation to applying for permission or undertaking a HRA, please use the contact details above,

You can find details, guidance and literature on our designated sites within Northern Ireland by following the links below:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/protected-areas>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer>

Countryside, Coast and Landscape Team notes that there is limited information available on the locations to be used in any prospecting for each of the four applications, so NED cannot make any detailed comments on them.

However, all the areas contain Earth Science Conservation Review sites and/or ASSIs with Earth Science interest. It is unlikely that prospecting activities would have a significant negative affect on geoheritage features.

Should further development e.g. borehole drilling be proposed following prospecting, any specific issues regarding geoconservation can be addressed through the planning process'

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**From:** DAERA Planning Response Team  
**Sent:** 10 August 2022 09:33  
**To:** DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla  
**Cc:** DAERA PermSec  
**Subject:** RE: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES  
**Attachments:** PRT - Mineral prospecting licences - Response.pdf

Good morning,

Please find attached response from DAERA.

Kind regards

[REDACTED] | Planning Response Team | Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group | DAERA Klondyke Building | Gasworks Business Park | Cromac Avenue | Belfast | BT7 2JA | Email (planning queries): [PlanningResponse.team@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningResponse.team@daera-ni.gov.uk) | PRT Tel: 028 9056 9604 | Web: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/>



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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 31 May 2022 15:48  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

Dear Stakeholder

**THE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969**

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES**



The Department for the Economy (the Department) has received four applications for Mineral Prospecting Licences (MPLs).

The four applications are:

- **APPLICATION REFERENCES: KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22** from Karelian Diamond Resources Plc for two MPLs on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh,
- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: MCTA1/22** from Mount Castle Trust for an MPL on land situated in County Tyrone, and
- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: OMA1/22** from Flintridge Resources Limited for an MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

In accordance with the above legislation, the Department has deemed each of these four applications to be valid but before reaching a final decision on these matters, the Department is required to serve notice on your organisation of its intention to grant the licences and to consider any representations which are made to it.

Information relating to the four applications and the consultation process, including the areas under application, can be found on our Departmental website from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/consultations> by following the link to Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications using the references above.

All representations should be submitted to the following email address: [MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk) and I would be grateful if you could inform us of any nil return.

All representations should be with the Department on or before **28 August 2022**.

Please note that, within the parameters outlined in the Confidentiality and Data Protection section contained with the '**Consultation Overview of MPL Application**' document your representation may be shared with the applicant.

Regards

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]  
Minerals and Petroleum Operations  
Department for the Economy  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB  
Tel: [Redacted]  
TextRelay: [Redacted]  
Web: [www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)



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[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 30 June 2022 10:11  
**To:** DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** SGM-0029-2022 NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

[REDACTED]

This is NIL return from DE.

Regards

[REDACTED]

**Departmental Business Services Team | Department of Education**  
[Rathgael House | 43 Balloo Road | Bangor | BT19 7PR](#)

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 31 May 2022 15:48

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** SGM-0029-2022 NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

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Regards

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

Minerals and Petroleum Operations  
Department for the Economy  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB  
Tel: [Redacted]  
TextRelay: [Redacted]  
Web: [www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)



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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 July 2022 15:18  
**To:** DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla  
**Subject:** DfI STOF-0015-2022 Response : Notice of Intention to Award Mineral Prospecting Licenses  
**Attachments:** STOF-0015-2022 NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES - response to [REDACTED] DfE.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Mr. [REDACTED]

Please see attached from Alistair Beggs, Director of Strategic Planning Directorate, DfI for your attention.

Kind regards.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] Personal Secretary for Alistair Beggs, Director, Strategic Planning Directorate  
| Department for Infrastructure | [REDACTED] | Clarence Court | 10-18 Adelaide Street | BELFAST BT2 8GB



Department for

**Infrastructure**

An Roinn

**Bonneagair**

Department for

**Infrastructure**

[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

**Strategic Planning Directorate**

Mr. [REDACTED]  
Minerals and Petroleum Policy  
Department for the Economy  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast,  
BT4 3SB

[MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk)

Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB  
Tel: 0300 200 7830

Email: [REDACTED]

Your reference: KDRA2/22, KDRA3/22,  
MCTA1/22, OMA1/22  
Our reference: STOF-0015-2022

21 July 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

**RE: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES  
TO:**

- **Karelian Diamond Resources Plc (APPLICATION REFERENCES: KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22)**
- **Mount Castle Trust (APPLICATION REFERENCES: MCTA1/22)**
- **Flintridge Resources Limited (APPLICATION REFERENCE: OMA1/22)**

I refer to your email of 31 May 2022 notifying DfI Planning, in accordance with sub-sections 11(4) and 11(5) of The Mineral Development Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, of the Department of Economy's intention to grant mineral prospecting licences to Karelian Diamond Resources Plc, Mount Castle Trust and Flintridge Resources Limited.

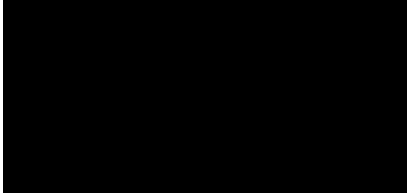
The Department is content that the regulatory system for planning in Northern Ireland provides the appropriate safeguards necessary to assess precious mineral exploration and extraction proposals effectively. The Department has therefore no comment to make on these applications.

For the application references listed above, I have attached information on the Valuable Minerals policies in the draft Plan Strategy (PS) in the emerging Local Development Plans for the council areas in which the applications are located. It should be noted that extant

policy set out in the Rural Strategy for NI (MIN 4 – Valuable Minerals) is retained until as such times as these draft Plan Strategies are adopted for the respective council areas.

I hope that this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



**Director  
Strategic Planning**

## **Valuable Minerals policies in emerging Local Development Plans – draft Plan Strategies (PS)**

- **KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22** (from Karelian Diamond Resources Plc for two MPLs on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh) – these applications are located within Mid Ulster District Council, and Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.
- **MCTA1/22** (from Mount Castle Trust for an MPL on land situated in County Tyrone) – this application is located across Derry City & Strabane District Council and Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.
- **OMA1/22** (from Flintridge Resources Limited for an MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh) – this application is located within Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.

### **Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC)**

- MUDC draft PS sets out policy MIN 3 – Valuable Minerals and Hydrocarbons.
- The Department made representation to the draft PS in its role as statutory consultee.
- Following consideration of representations made to the draft PS, the council submitted its draft PS to the Department for consideration last May (2021), and is still currently under consideration. The Department must cause an Independent Examination (in accordance with Section 10(4) the Planning Act 2011), unless it intends to make a direction under section 11(2) or 15(1) of the Act to direct the council to withdraw or modify a development plan document.

### **Derry City & Strabane District Council**

- DCSDC also have policy provision on Valuable Minerals, set out in their draft PS (policy MIN 4).
- Following consideration of representations made to the draft PS, the council undertook a consultation on 'Proposed Changes' which completed in February 2022.
- The Department made representation to the draft PS, and also provided comments to the proposed changes consultation, in its role of statutory consultee.
- The Department received the council's draft PS submission in May 2022, and it is currently under consideration whether to cause an IE.

### **Fermanagh & Omagh District Council**

- The council's draft PS includes policy provision for Minerals Development.
- Following consideration of representations made to the draft PS, the council undertook a consultation on 'Proposed Changes' which completed in December 2020.
- The Department made representation to the draft PS, and also provided comments to the proposed changes consultation, in its role of statutory consultee.
- The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) held IE hearing sessions between January – March 2022, which included sessions on the council's draft Minerals policies.
- The PAC indicated their report would be forwarded to the Department by mid October 2022. The Department must then consider the recommendations made within the IE report (under S12(1) of the Planning Act 2011).
- The Department must direct the Council to either adopt the development plan document as originally prepared; adopt the development plan document with such modifications as may be specified in the direction; or withdraw the development plan document.



**It should be noted extant policy set out in the Rural Strategy for NI (MIN 4 – Valuable Minerals) is retained until as such times as these draft Plan Strategies are adopted for the respective council areas.**

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 01 June 2022 14:53

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up

**Flag Status:** Completed

[REDACTED]

Nil return on behalf of DoF

Many thanks

[REDACTED] | DoF Permanent Secretary's Office  
2nd Floor West | Clare House | 303 Airport Road West | Belfast | BT3 9ED



*All e-mails and attachments issued by the Permanent Secretary and the Permanent Secretary's Office must be filed appropriately by the responsible business area. The Permanent Secretary's office does not keep official records of such correspondence.*

---

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 31 May 2022 15:48

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

Dear Stakeholder

**THE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969**

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES**

The Department for the Economy (the Department) has received four applications for Mineral Prospecting Licences (MPLs).

The four applications are:

- **APPLICATION REFERENCES: KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22** from Karelian Diamond Resources Plc for two MPLs on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh,
- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: MCTA1/22** from Mount Castle Trust for an MPL on land situated in County Tyrone, and
- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: OMA1/22** from Flintridge Resources Limited for an MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

In accordance with the above legislation, the Department has deemed each of these four applications to be valid but before reaching a final decision on these matters, the Department is required to serve notice on your organisation of its intention to grant the licences and to consider any representations which are made to it.

Information relating to the four applications and the consultation process, including the areas under application, can be found on our Departmental website from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/consultations> by following the link to Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications using the references above.

All representations should be submitted to the following email address: [MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk) and I would be grateful if you could inform us of any nil return.

All representations should be with the Department on or before **28 August 2022**.

Please note that, within the parameters outlined in the Confidentiality and Data Protection section contained with the '**Consultation Overview of MPL Application**' document your representation may be shared with the applicant.

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]  
Minerals and Petroleum Operations  
Department for the Economy  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB  
Tel: [Redacted]  
TextRelay: [Redacted]  
Web: [www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)



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## DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 24 August 2022 13:39  
**To:** DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD FOUR MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES - APPLICATION  
REFERENCES: OMA1/22, KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22, MCTA1/22  
**Attachments:** App 1 - Response.pdf  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consultation on the above four proposed Mineral Prospecting Licences which was discussed at a Special Council meeting on the 21 July 2022.

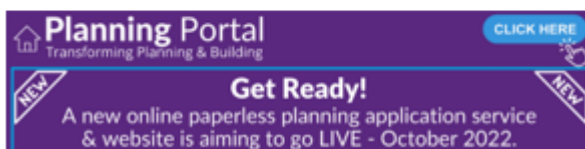
Members resolved at that meeting, to respond and outline the Councils formal opposition to all four licence applications and urge the Department to reject the submissions.

Please find attached an Appendix which sets out the Councils response to all four licence applications, and this also includes an overview of each licence site area which will be important in relation to the Departments consideration.

If you need anything further in this regard please let me know, - can you also acknowledge safe receipt.

Thanks

[REDACTED]  
Lead Planner



DISCLAIMER Fermanagh and Omagh District Council W: [www.fermanaghomagh.com](http://www.fermanaghomagh.com) T: 0300 303 1777 E: [info@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:info@fermanaghomagh.com) This electronic message contains information from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council which may be privileged or confidential. The information is intended to be for the sole use of the individual(s) or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient be aware that any disclosure, copying, distribution or use of the contents of this information is prohibited. If you have received this electronic message in error, please notify us by telephone or email (to the number or email address above) immediately. Personal information provided to the Council will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation – for more information visit our privacy section at [www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/privacy-statement/](http://www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/privacy-statement/)

## **Appendix 1 – Response to four proposed Mineral Prospecting Licences**

### **1.0 Overview of licence site areas**

#### **1.1 Mineral Prospecting Licence Application MCTA1/22**

A small portion of the lands outlined in red for MCTA1-22 fall within FODC. The majority of the lands are located within Derry City and Strabane Council area. The lands that fall within FODC do not fall within the existing Sperrins AONB, however it is located approximately 0.6km to the west of the AONB boundary. Also, the lands do not fall within the existing Special Countryside Area (SCA) designations, proposed SCAs or proposed Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV) as set out in the Draft Plan Strategy 2030.

Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) 008 Fairy Water Bog lies within the lands outlined in red outline for MCTA1-22.

RAMSAR site UK12008 - Fairy Water Bog lies within the lands outlined in red for MCTA1-22.

There are a number of protected habitat sites within the site area including peatland, woodland and local wildlife habitats.

There are a number of historic sites and monuments within the site area, including listed buildings.

**1.2 Mineral Prospecting Licence Application OMA1/22** The lands outlined in red for OMA1-22 are wholly within FODC. They do not fall within the existing Sperrins AONB, existing SCA designations, the proposed SCAs or proposed AoHSV as set out in the Draft Plan Strategy 2030.

There are 5 no. ASSIs located within the red outline for OMA1-22. They are ASS117: Straduff, ASSI130: TullyBog, ASSI234: Edenclogh Wood, ASSI274: Dunaree Hill and ASSI277: Tedd.

There are a number of protected habitat and priority species sites within the site area including peatland, grassland, woodland, local wildlife habitats, breeding waders and marsh fritillary butterfly.

There are a number of historic sites and monuments within the site area, including listed buildings.

**1.3 Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22** The lands outlined in red for KDRA2/22 fall within FODC and the northern half of KDRA3/22 also falls within FODC with the remainder within Mid Ulster Council area. The lands that are within FODC do not fall within the existing Sperrins AONB, existing SCA designations, the proposed SCAs or proposed AoHSV as set out in the Draft Plan Strategy 2030.

There are 3 no. ASSIs located within the red outline for KDRA2-22. They are ASS124: Cranny Bogs, ASSI129: Tonnagh Beg Bog and ASSI315: Coolcran. 4 4 Cranny Bog and Tonnagh Bog are also designated as Special areas of Conservation (SACs).

There are a number protected habitat and priority species sites within the site area including peatland, woodland, local wildlife habitats and breeding waders.

Tempo Manor Historic Park, Garden and Demesne lies with KDRA2-22.

There are a number of historic sites and monuments within the site area, including listed buildings.

## **2.0 Response**

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Department's Consultation on the notice of intention to award four Mineral Prospecting licences.

At the outset, the Council would wish to state its formal opposition to all four licence applications and would urge the Department to reject the submissions.

The Council understands that the Department has begun a wide-ranging review of both minerals and petroleum licensing policies. The legislation surrounding both licensing regimes dates back to the 1960s and the review is intended to ensure that the regimes remain fit for purpose. The ongoing review is intended to ensure that the licensing regimes continue to be effective in delivering key Programme for Government objectives to grow the economy and protect the environment.

The Council would contend that the granting of any of these licences would therefore be premature, and consideration of the licences should be held pending the outcome of the review. The reason for the review as noted by the Department "to ensure the legislation remains fit for purpose in delivering key objectives for the economy and the environment" supports the Council's view in this regard.

The Council would wish to be an active participant in any review as outlined previously, as Members are particularly concerned about the disproportionate and adverse impact which mineral prospecting generally, is having in the Fermanagh and Omagh district.

The Council is of the view that the whole system of issuing licenses is fundamentally flawed and that the Department operates a "presumption in favour" rather than fully assessing the implications of such applications. In this context, the Council also believes that communities are disengaged from the consultation process and the Department has made no effort to ensure consultations are "community focused".

In addition, consultations with other Departments such as NIEA should not happen in parallel with this current process, ie, with other stakeholders. In the assessment of a licence, environmental awareness is a key consideration and not having sight of

NIEA comments prejudices the Council's ability to comment on these matters at this stage.

The Council contends that wholly inadequate information has been provided. In the absence of information regarding, for example, the detailed methods of investigation proposed, the detail on invasive works and how the environmental impact of the proposed methods has been assessed, it is impossible for any interested party to have a full understanding of the proposed works.

In particular, the Council is concerned that the full programme of works has been redacted from the application form, in essence prejudicing the Council and others ability to fully understand the extent of the works. In addition, and fatally for this consultation process, the summary of work programme for Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22 has been collated.

The Council and other stakeholders are therefore unable to identify in any meaningful way the types of activity that may be associated with each particular licence. If the licences are to be considered and granted separately, the work programmes should be clearly set out separately also.

The Council would refer the Department to section 1 of this document which sets out in detail the extent of natural and historic designations within each licence area. Critically, designations within these areas include a number of European Designations, protected habitats and species and Listed Buildings. In this context, a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), is required at this stage.

To note for future reference or consideration at a later stage, this is in direct conflict with the precautionary principle and the EIA Regulations which seek to avoid the splitting of a project into stages to avoid consideration of a full EIA. The Department as a competent authority is in breach of its obligations.

It is noted that Mineral Prospecting Licence Application MCTA1/22 is located approximately 0.6km to the west of the AONB boundary and consideration should be given to whether granting the licence would adversely affect or work to erode the distinctive special character including landscape character, visual amenity, natural, historic or cultural heritage of the Sperrin AONB, or its views or setting, when considered individually or cumulatively alongside existing or approved development.

The Council would wish to highlight the fact that the Council area is already the location of a significant number of wind farms. The Council is particularly concerned at the adverse impact which mineral exploration could create in this already "challenged" landscape. In this context, the cumulative impact of a further two additional licences being granted within the Council area under KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22 is unacceptable.



[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 01 June 2022 16:48  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES  
**Attachments:** MPL KDRA2\_22.docx; MPL KDRA3\_22.docx; MPL MCTA1\_22.docx; MPL OMA1\_22.docx

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached response letters from NIE Networks.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 31 May 2022 15:48  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

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Dear Stakeholder

**THE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969**

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES**

The Department for the Economy (the Department) has received four applications for Mineral Prospecting Licences (MPLs).

The four applications are:

- **APPLICATION REFERENCES: KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22** from Karelian Diamond Resources Plc for two MPLs on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh,
- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: MCTA1/22** from Mount Castle Trust for an MPL on land situated in County Tyrone, and
- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: OMA1/22** from Flintridge Resources Limited for an MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

In accordance with the above legislation, the Department has deemed each of these four applications to be valid but before reaching a final decision on these matters, the Department is required to serve notice on your organisation of its intention to grant the licences and to consider any representations which are made to it.

Information relating to the four applications and the consultation process, including the areas under application, can be found on our Departmental website from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/consultations> by following the link to Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications using the references above.

All representations should be submitted to the following email address: [MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk) and I would be grateful if you could inform us of any nil return.

All representations should be with the Department on or before **28 August 2022**.

Please note that, within the parameters outlined in the Confidentiality and Data Protection section contained with the '**Consultation Overview of MPL Application**' document your representation may be shared with the applicant.

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Minerals and Petroleum Operations  
Department for the Economy  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB  
Tel: [Redacted]  
TextRelay: [Redacted]  
Web: [www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)



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Our ref NMacD/lmcg

[REDACTED]  
Minerals and Petroleum Operations  
Department for the Economy  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB

1 June 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

**MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES**  
**Application from Flintridge Resources Limited**  
**Mineral Prospecting Application reference – OMA1/22**

I refer to your email dated 31 May 2022 ref application for Mineral Prospecting Licence in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

Should a Licence be granted, the Licensee should be requested to contact the Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Distribution Service Centre at Carn Industrial Estate, Portadown BT63 5QJ before any site work commences to seek guidance on the location of Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited equipment and to ensure that the necessary safety measures are known and adhered to.

The Licensee should also be advised that it will be held responsible for damages to any equipment of Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited resulting from its operations and the cost of any alterations to or resisting of any equipment necessitated by its operations.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
**Company Solicitor**

Copy: Distribution Service Centre, Craigavon

## DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 26 August 2022 12:07  
**To:** DFE MPL Consultation dfe-mpla; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Tourism NI response: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES  
**Attachments:** Tourism NI Mount Castle Trust MCTA1-22.pdf; Tourism NI Flintridge Resources Ltd-Galantas Gold Corporation OMA1-22.pdf; Tourism NI Karelian Diamond Resources PLC KDRA3-221.pdf; Tourism NI Karelian Diamond Resources PLC KDRA2-22.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Purple Category

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[REDACTED] MLP consultation team,

Please find attached Tourism NI's responses to the consultation for the four Mineral Prospecting Licences as detailed in your email of 31 May 2022.

Just to also let you know that the email address [REDACTED] is no longer in use, and in future [REDACTED] should be used.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]  
Strategy & Policy

Tel: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]



---

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 31 May 2022 15:48

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES

Dear Stakeholder

**THE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969**

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES**

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The four applications are:

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- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: MCTA1/22** from Mount Castle Trust for an MPL on land situated in County Tyrone, and
- **APPLICATION REFERENCE: OMA1/22** from Flintridge Resources Limited for an MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

In accordance with the above legislation, the Department has deemed each of these four applications to be valid but before reaching a final decision on these matters, the Department is required to serve notice on your organisation of its intention to grant the licences and to consider any representations which are made to it.

Information relating to the four applications and the consultation process, including the areas under application, can be found on our Departmental website from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/consultations> by following the link to Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications using the references above.

All representations should be submitted to the following email address: [MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk) and I would be grateful if you could inform us of any nil return.

All representations should be with the Department on or before **28 August 2022**.

Please note that, within the parameters outlined in the Confidentiality and Data Protection section contained with the *'Consultation Overview of MPL Application'* document your representation may be shared with the applicant.

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Minerals and Petroleum Operations  
Department for the Economy  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast, BT4 3SB  
Tel: [Redacted]  
TextRelay: [Redacted]  
Web: [www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)



### **Tourism Northern Ireland**

**Floors 10-12, Linum Chambers, Bedford Square, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7ES**

**Telephone: +44 (0) 28 9023 1221**

### **ROI Marketing and PR**

**Telephone: +353 1 865 1880 | Callsave: 1 850 230 230**

**Corporate website: [tourismni.com](http://tourismni.com) Consumer website: [discovernorthernireland.com](http://discovernorthernireland.com)**

Tourist enquiries for Belfast and Northern Ireland are handled on our behalf by the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre.

You can contact them on 028 9024 6609 or online at [visitbelfast.com](http://visitbelfast.com)

Tourism Northern Ireland is an accredited Investor In People organisation

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## CONSULTATION REQUEST

**Licence Application Numbers:** OMAI/22 - from Flintridge Resources Limited for a MPL on land situated in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

**Further detail:** Mineral Prospecting Licences under Section 11 of THE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969

**Location:** The application includes lands situated in the Wards of Fairy Water, Dromore, Gortrush, Belleek & BOA, Trillick, Drumquin, Irvinestown, Ederney & Kesh

**Date:** 24/08/2022

### 1. Introduction

Thank you for your consultation request dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022

While Tourism NI is not a statutory consultee on planning applications, it recognises that planning policy and planning guidance refers to the specialist advisory contribution that tourism bodies can possibly make to planning applications for major projects.

It is understood that the application is for an area currently licensed by the Department to applicant under MPLA OM1/16 and the current licence expires on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The applicant holds Crown Estate Options for the area and has continued to gold exploration in the area under their Crown Estate Options.

It is also understood that DfE has deemed the application to be valid but before reaching a final decision on these matters, the Department is required to serve notice on organisations including Tourism NI of its intention to grant the licences and to consider any representations which are made to it.

Tourism Northern Ireland, Linum Chambers, Bedford Square, Bedford St, Belfast BT2 7ES  
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Corporate website: [tourismni.com](http://tourismni.com)  
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Chair: [REDACTED] Chief Executive: [REDACTED]

## 2. Purpose and Scope of Response

Tourism NI welcomes the consultation process being undertaken by DfE. This input by Tourism NI is intended to inform the decision-making process by providing strategic and contextual information that may be considered pertinent to the determination of the application.

Having regard to the above, the following information by Tourism NI is submitted and is structured under the following headings:

- **Tourism Strategic Overview**
- **Accommodation in the Area**
- **Wider Destination**

## 3. Tourism Strategic Overview

- The global Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating blow on world economies, including the tourism and hospitality sector. Pre Covid-19, there was huge growth potential in our tourism and hospitality industry, and it was recognised as a key economic driver for Northern Ireland. As one of Northern Ireland's key service sectors and economic pillars, the tourism and hospitality industry offers one of the best opportunities for Northern Ireland to deliver sub-regional economic growth.
- In response to Covid-19, a Tourism Recovery Steering Group was established by the Department for the Economy to lead the planning and preparations for the recovery of the Northern Ireland tourism industry and to prepare for re-growth of the sector. Phase two Tourism Recovery Action Plan set out the key challenges facing the Northern Ireland tourism industry as it recovers from the pandemic and the actions required to support the tourism industry in the most targeted and effective way. As the industry is now recovering from the impact of the pandemic, it is hoped that it will recover to fulfil the growth plans in the years to come.
- The following contextual information highlights the important role that tourism has played in the Northern Ireland economy before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Northern Ireland welcomed 5.3 million visitors in 2019 generating a total revenue of £1 billion for the local economy, meeting its 2020 target of £1 billion one year early. Of this revenue, £731 million was generated from out of state tourism, meaning that tourism is effectively an export sector in that it attracts visitors from external markets but revenue is spent here.
- Tourism was worth 5.2% of Northern Ireland's Gross Domestic Product and sustained 70,800 employee jobs (9% of employee jobs in NI) in tourism and across related industries.
- While these figures are positive, Northern Ireland is still a relatively emerging destination. It has yet to catch up with other destinations in the UK in terms of

tourism's contribution to GDP, tourism jobs and overseas visitor spend per night.

- The original Programme for Government (2016-2021) reflected this new confidence in tourism and a new appreciation of its potential for contributing to growing the Northern Ireland economy and in delivering on jobs and investment.

#### **4. Accommodation in the Area**

- At the end of June 2022, in the Fermanagh & Omagh Council area, there were 89 serviced accommodation providers (Hotels, Guest Houses, Guest Accommodation and B&Bs) providing 917 rooms and 2,102 bed-spaces.
- This provision meant that Fermanagh & Omagh Council had the fifth lowest number of hotel rooms of all the Local Government Districts (445 rooms).
- In June 2022, the Council area had the fourth largest number of self-catering rooms of all the Local Government Districts (1,218 rooms).
- The latest hotel occupancy statistics indicate during the period January to June 2022 the Council area experienced a room occupancy of 59%.
- In 2019, the last full year data available, hotels in the Council area recorded a room occupancy of 67% – the third highest room occupancy in Northern Ireland (jointly with Causeway Coast & Glens) after Belfast City (71%) and Mid & East Antrim (70%).
- In the period January-December 2019, Guest Houses, Guest Accommodation and B&Bs in the Fermanagh & Omagh Council area recorded a room occupancy of 34% – the fourth highest in Northern Ireland (jointly with Mid & East Antrim) after Belfast City (51%), Mid Ulster (44%) and Antrim & Newtownabbey (36%).

#### **5. Wider Destination**

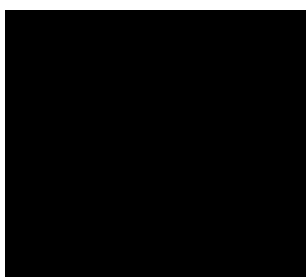
- In 2019 the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council area attracted an estimated 427,000 overnight trips, equating to 8% of all overnight trips to Northern Ireland.
- In the same year, the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council area was responsible for around 8% (79.4million) of Northern Ireland's total domestic and inbound overnight spend (£1bn).
- The area has natural landscape appeal including the Sperrins AONB and the Marble Arch UNESCO Geopark. The huge success of the Cuilcagh

Boardwalk demonstrates the need to offer exciting and compelling options to experience this product.

- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council is a council partner in the Mid South West Regional Growth Deal along with Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon and Mid Ulster councils. The £126m of Growth Deal funding represents a significant and unique opportunity to invest further in the local tourism offering.
- A suite of potential development projects is being pursued by the Council mainly in conjunction with DAERA's Rural Development Programme including Cuilcagh Mountain Experience (Preparatory Technical Study).
- Other potential projects in the pipeline include Shannon-Erne Pilgrim Way, International Appalachian Trail, Sliabh Beagh Masterplan and Off Road Cycle Trail between Belcoo and Lough Navar.
- As a result of a Sperrins Future Search programme in 2019, in which TNI participated, Sperrins Partnership has been formed and has recently appointed a new project Development Officer to develop and deliver key projects in this area. Council partners in the Sperrins Partnership include FODC, Mid Ulster, Causeway Coast & Glens (CC&G) and Derry City & Strabane councils. Projects will be progressed in various sectors including tourism.
- At the end of 2020 a TNI-led programme for Devenish Island resulted in the development of a Devenish Visitor Management & Development Framework with significant input from FODC, Waterways Ireland and the Historic Environment Division (HED) of DfC.
- The key objectives of this programme were to identify and address the accessibility issues, how the island experience is delivered and promoted. A framework of key responsibilities was drawn up and a charter signed by each of the stakeholders, and this is now being led by FODC to further develop the potential of Devenish Island.

## 6. Conclusion

As explained above, the purpose of this response by Tourism NI is to outline strategic and contextual information that may help inform the assessment of this application.



**Chief Executive**