

<b>Report on</b>	DFIs consultation with MUDC regarding their notice of intention dated 31st May 2022 to award two Mineral Prospecting licences to Karelian Diamond Resources Limited
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	2 Aug 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Melvin Bowman
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Dr Chris Boomer.

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with information regarding the Department for the Economy's consultation regarding their notice of intention dated 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2022 to award two Mineral Prospecting licences to Karelian Diamond Resources Limited and advise of our response.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>The application sites are located within Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. A map showing the areas covered by the proposed licences is attached in Annex B.</p> <p>The proposed Work Programmes in the current applications indicate that the exploration targets are base metals and diamonds. Mineral Prospecting licences are normally granted for a period of 6 years. Licensees are required to carry out an agreed scheme of prospecting and to report the results of their Work Programmes to the Department on an annual basis or more frequently.</p> <p>The two licences are known as KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22.</p>
2.2	<p>The Public Notice advising that the Department intends to grant the two Mineral Prospecting licences appeared in the first publication of the following newspapers in weeks commencing 06th June 2022 and 13th June 2022;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Belfast Gazette</li> <li>• Tyrone Courier</li> <li>• Mid Ulster Mail</li> <li>• Tyrone Constitution</li> <li>• Dungannon Herald</li> <li>• Ulster Herald</li> <li>• Fermanagh Herald</li> <li>• Impartial Reporter</li> </ul>

	A copy of the Public Notice has been attached at Appendix C.
2.3	Council's response must be issued to DFE before 28th August 2022.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Members should be aware that there is a strong likelihood that these prospecting licenses will be granted by the Department but that this does not confer any kind of planning permission for mineral extraction. Having said that, the Council would express concern at the lack of direct involvement with the local community in relation to the statutory process for granting these licenses.
3.2	Whilst the prospecting licenses relate only to investigations by Karelian, they do not represent any permission for development or extraction and therefore, the Council has limited planning grounds in which to object. However, members should be aware that on 26th October 2017, a meeting of Council devolved authority to Planning Committee to respond in relation to the matter of earlier prospecting licenses. It was resolved that we should respond not solely on the grounds of planning concerns but that our response should also reflect and be inclusive of the views of other stakeholders such as the local community.
3.3	In addition, during a meeting of Planning Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on 1st March 2022 it was agreed that the Council has concerns at issuing licenses prior to the outcome of public inquiry into Dalradian and feels that until the results of the public enquiry have been heard it is not sensible to keep issuing mineral exploration licenses.
3.4	Mid Ulster Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy It is important to draw attention to Policy MIN3 within our Mid Ulster Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy, which states that a precautionary approach will be adopted in relation to applications to extract valuable minerals and hydrocarbons. The policy also goes on to state that the use of chemicals or unconventional hydrocarbon extraction will not be permitted until there is sufficient evidence on all environmental impacts.
3.5	Some of the main reasons for opposition relates to environmental damage including impact on visual amenity, loss of peatland, impact on wildlife as well as traffic concerns. There also would be concerns regarding impact on public health and the negative impact that the proposal would have on tourism in the wider Sperrins region.

3.6	<p>Members should be aware that the Council has previously adopted the following position in relation to similar exploration licenses and that we would again endorse this position;</p> <p><i>The Council objects to the proposed Mineral prospecting licenses and also opposes the issue of all mineral prospecting licenses across the District. The reason for the Councils opposition is that they offer no benefit to the local community and the issue of prospecting can cause division in communities and conflict among neighbours.</i></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial: N/A</p> <p>Human:N.A</p> <p>Risk Management: N/A</p>
4.2	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: N/A</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: N/A</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>We remain of the opinion that the Department should not grant approval for either Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications KDRA2/22 or kdra3/22 and would suggest that a representation be submitted to the Department on behalf of the Council on, or before 28th August 2022. Members are referred to the attached draft response in Appendix A.</p> <p>This representation should clearly reaffirm the Councils precautionary approach in relation to applications to extract valuable minerals and hydrocarbons.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	<p>Appendix A – Letter to DfE forming the Councils response to the public consultation  Appendix B - Map showing the areas covered by KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22  Appendix C – A copy of the public notice issued by DfE</p>

## **Appendix A**

**Letter to DfE forming Councils response to the public consultation**



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

Mid-Ulster District Council  
Planning Department  
Local Development Plan Team  
50 Ballyronan Road  
Magherafelt  
BT45 6EN  
Tel – 03000 132 132  
Email –

[developmentplan@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:developmentplan@midulstercouncil.org)

Mark Wilson  
Minerals and Petroleum Branch  
Room 9  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB

August 2022

Dear Mr Wilson

**THE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969 NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD TWO MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENCES TO KARELIAN DIAMOND RESOURCES LIMITED**

**APPLICATION REFERENCES: KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22**

Thank you for your letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022, advising Mid Ulster District Council of the Departments intention to grant the above mentioned prospect licenses.

Whilst the Council note that the Department intends to grant these licenses, we would request that the contents of this representation, which is sent with the agreement of our elected members is given full consideration.

Whilst the prospecting licenses relate only to investigations by Karelian Diamond Resources Limited, they do not represent any permission for development or extraction and therefore, the Council has limited planning grounds on which to object. However, on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017, a meeting of Council devolved authority to Planning Committee to respond in relation to the matter of earlier prospecting licenses. It was resolved that we should respond not solely on the grounds of planning concerns but that our response should also reflect and be inclusive of the views of other stakeholders such as the local community.

We would ask the Department to recognise the heightened levels of fear and concern felt within local communities in this area over the issues surrounding this type of mining and the activities of mining companies. We feel that community

involvement in every aspect of the statutory process involving the exploration of valuable minerals is something that should not be overlooked.

Mid Ulster District Council has adopted a previous position in relation to similar exploration licenses and it is expressed below;

*The Council objects to the proposed Mineral Prospecting license and also opposes the issue of all mineral prospecting licenses across the District. The reason for the Councils opposition is that it offers no benefit to the local community and the issue of prospecting can cause division in communities and conflict among neighbours.*

The elected members of the Planning Committee have expressed concern at the proliferation of these prospecting licenses. They are also concerned at accounts that following the grant of licenses at other locations, activity has extended beyond that permitted by these licenses and indeed, materials have been said to have been removed from the ground at other locations – activity that clearly goes beyond the remit of prospecting.

The members are concerned that the ‘cart is being put before the horse’ with the continued granting of these licenses and are of the opinion that until a definitive outcome is achieved from the upcoming public enquiry into the proposed goldmining operation near Greencastle, that no further licenses should be granted at this stage.

If the Department proceeds with their intention to grant these licenses then the Councils position is that Karelian should engage in more extensive community involvement such as mandatory notification being served on landowners prior to entering their land as well as prior notification being provided of overhead surveillance which can be intrusive and intimidating for local communities involved.

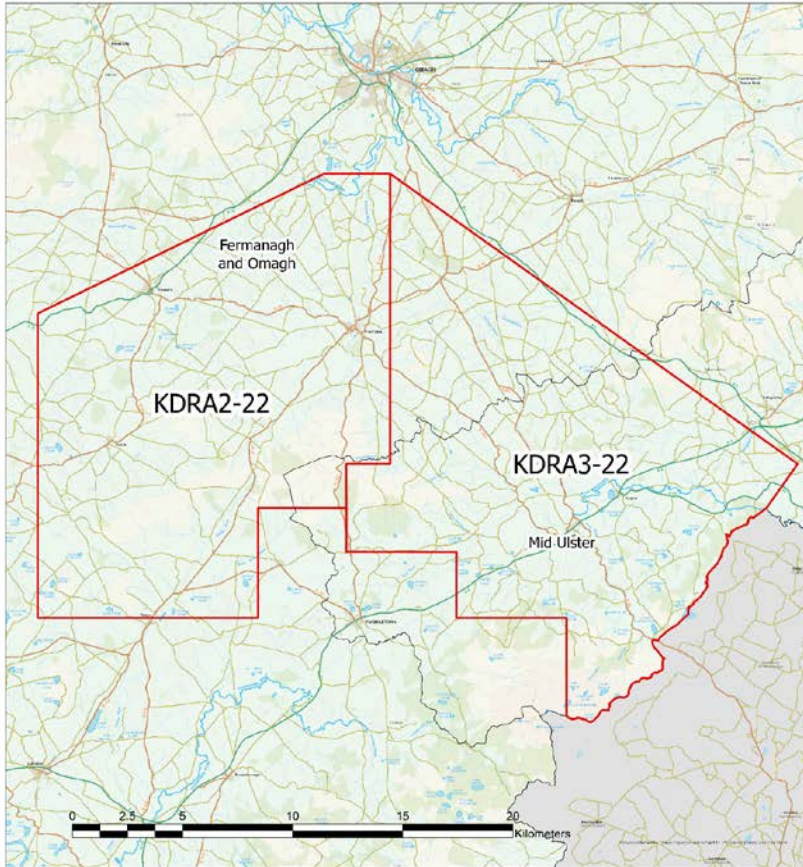
Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Boomer

Service Director - Planning

## **APPENDIX B**

**Map showing the areas covered by KDRA2/22 & KDRA3/22**



Department for the  
**Economy**  
[www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

Karelian Diamond Resources  
2022 Mineral Licence Application Areas





## **APPENDIX C**

**A copy of the Public Notice**



Department for the

**Economy**

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

## **Mineral Development Act (NI) 1969**

In exercise of its powers under Section 11 of the above Act, the Department for the Economy (the Department) proposes to grant two Mineral Prospecting Licences in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh.

Details of the applications, including a map showing the areas covered by the proposed licences is available at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/consultations> by following the link to Mineral Prospecting Licences KDRA2/22 and KDRA3/22.

This information may also be inspected in hard copy at an office in the locality. This will be done by appointment only and anyone wishing to avail of this facility should contact the Department on 028 9052 9377 to arrange.

Any person may make representations to the Department about the proposed licences, this should be done on or before 28 August 2022, either by email to [MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MPLconsultation@economy-ni.gov.uk) or by letter to the Department for the Economy, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB, please note that email correspondence is preferred.