

Report on	Report on the Council's consideration of the launch of the Consultation on Mineral Prospecting Licence Applications MPLA1/22 and MPLA2/22 for Dalradian Gold Limited
Date of Meeting	1 st March 2022
Reporting Officer	Dr Chris Boomer
Contact Officer/s	Colin McKeown

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with information regarding the Department for the Economy's consultation on their notice of intention to award two Mineral Prospecting licences to Dalradian Gold Limited. The Notice was published in the week commencing 17 th January 2022. A copy of the Public Notice is attached at Appendix B.
1.2	The report will also advise of our intention to respond to DfE and the nature of that response.
1.3	Councils' response must be issued to DFE before 10 th April 2022
2.0	Background
2.1	The two application sites are identified as MPLA1/22 and MPLA2/22 and are located within Counties Tyrone and Londonderry. A considerable part of MPLA2/22 is located in the north west of the Mid Ulster LGD covering the majority of the Sperrin AONB. A map showing the areas covered by the proposed licences is attached in Annex B.
2.2	The two applications are for areas currently licensed by the Department for the Economy to the applicant. The two licences, known as DG5/16 and DG6/16, will end on 31 May 2022.
2.3	The applicant holds Crown Estates options for both areas. Precious metals i.e. gold and silver are vested in the Crown and the applicant has continued, and intends to continue, gold exploration in both these areas under their Crown Estates Options.

2.4	<p>The Public Notice advising that the Department intends to grant the two Mineral Prospecting licences will appear in the first publication of the following newspapers in weeks commencing 17th January 2022 and 24th January 2022;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Belfast Gazette • Tyrone Courier • Mid Ulster Mail • Tyrone Constitution • Dungannon Herald • Ulster Herald • Coleraine Chronicle • Strabane Chronicle • Strabane Weekly News • Londonderry Sentinel • Derry Journal • Derry News (known as Derry Now) • Belfast Telegraph (NW Edition)
2.5	A copy of the Public Notice has been attached at Appendix C
3.0	<p>Main report</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3.2 Whilst the prospecting licenses relate only to investigations by Dalradian, they do not represent any permission for development or extraction and therefore, the Council has limited planning grounds on 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.</p> <p>3.3 There are already high levels of fear and concern in these rural communities over the ongoing planning application lodged by Dalradian Ltd under reference LA10/2017/1249/F and accordingly, it is our view that community involvement in the statutory process surrounding minerals exploration and development is something which is essential.</p> <p>3.4 Members should be aware that the Council has previously adopted the following position in relation to similar exploration licenses for Dalradian Ltd and that we would again endorse this position;</p>

3.5	<p><i>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 offers no benefit to the local community and the issue of prospecting can cause division in communities and conflict among neighbours.</i></p>
3.6	<p>If the Department proceeds with their intention to grant these licenses then, the Councils position is that they should be granted subject to more extensive community involvement being carried out by Dalradian such as mandatory notification being served on landowners prior to entering land as well as prior notification being provided of overhead surveillance which can be intrusive and intimidating for local communities involved.</p>

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None identified:
	Human: None identified
	Risk Management: None identified
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None identified
	Rural Needs Implications: None identified
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are requested to agree the attached response which will issue to DfE which will acknowledge the lack of planning grounds for objecting to the prospecting license but which places emphasis on the importance of involving the local community in this highly sensitive and contentious issue.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A – Letter to DfE forming the Councils response to the public consultation Appendix B– Map showing the areas covered by MPLA1/22 and MPLA2/22 Appendix C – copy of Public Notice issued by DfE

APPENDIX A



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

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

Dear Mr. Wilson

THE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969 – NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AWARD TWO MINERAL PROSPECTING LICENSES TO DALRADIAN GOLD LIMITED

APPLICATION REFERENCES: MLPA1/22 and MLPA1/22

Thank you for your letter dated 14th January, advising Mid Ulster District Councils 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 Dalradian, they do not represent any permission for development or extraction and therefore, the Council has limited planning grounds on which to object. However, 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.

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 gold 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 for Dalradian Ltd. 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 offers no benefit to the local community and the issue of prospecting can cause division in communities and conflict among neighbours.

If the Department proceeds with their intention to grant these licenses then the Councils position is that Dalradian 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.

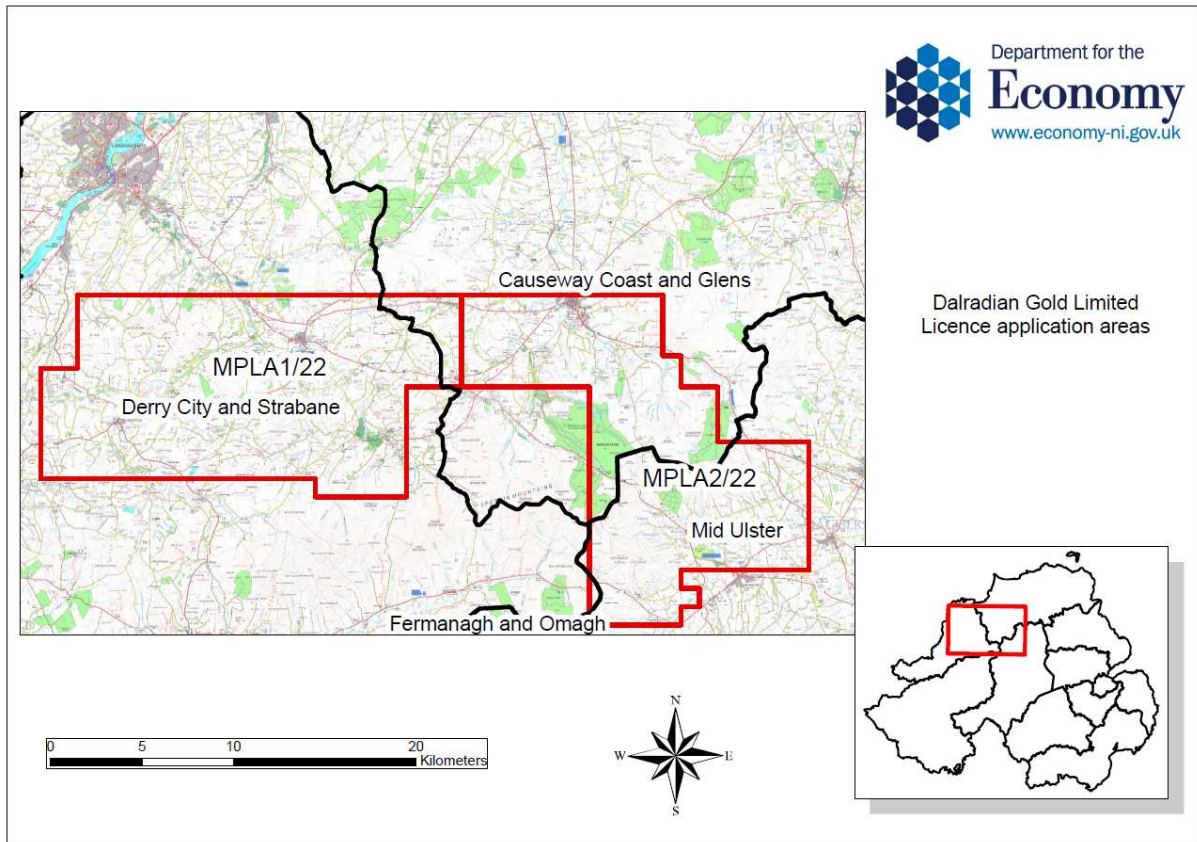
Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Boomer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Chris Boomer
Service Director – Planning

APPENDIX B

Map showing the areas covered by MPLA1/22 & MPLA2/22



**APPENDIX C – PUBLIC NOTICE PUBLISHED W/C 17TH JAN
AND W/C 24TH JAN 2022**



Department for the
Economy
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 proposes to grant two Mineral Prospecting Licences in Counties Tyrone and Londonderry.

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 MPLA1/22 and MPLA2/22.

This information may also be inspected in hard copy. This can 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 10 April 2022, either by email to:

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.