Purpose of Consultation

In accordance with the provisions of the Petroleum (Production) Act (Northern Ireland) 1964, the Department for the Economy (DfE) has received an application from EHA Exploration Limited (the applicant) for a Petroleum Licence. DfE has accepted the application as a valid application.

The purpose of this document is to provide consultees with an overview of the application and consultation process for this Petroleum Licence Application (PLA1/16). The following documents are attached.

- Annex A  Redacted Application Form for Petroleum Licence Application
- Annex B  Technical Overview of the Petroleum Licence Application
- Annex C  Company Brief for Petroleum Licence Application
- Annex D  Map of area under consideration for Petroleum Licence Application
- Annex E  Public Notice for Petroleum Licence Application

General information on Petroleum Licence applications, and how DfE assesses applications, can be found on the DfE website https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/petroleum-licensing

Consultation Process

While the Petroleum (Production) Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 places no statutory obligation on DfE to consult regarding its intention to consider a Petroleum Licence application, in the interests of openness and transparency DfE has notified relevant organisations (listed below) that it has accepted Petroleum Licence Application PLA1/16 as a valid application and invited them to make representations.
In assessing previous Petroleum Licence applications, DfE would have consulted on the basis of an ‘intention to award’, having already obtained Ministerial approval. In November 2018 the Secretary of State published new guidance to government Departments entitled ‘Guidance on decision-making for Northern Ireland Departments during the period for Northern Ireland Executive formation.’ In line with this guidance, DfE undertook a Public Interest Test and concluded that it should continue all necessary preparatory work to ensure that a decision on this Petroleum Licence application can be taken as soon as possible after a Minister is appointed. The objective of this consultation therefore is to ensure that DfE has taken account of the range of opinions in preparation for making a recommendation to a future Minister as to whether or not a Petroleum Licence should be granted to the applicant.

In addition to placing this document on the DfE website, a Public Notice (Annex E) will be placed in the following local newspapers to ensure that DfE has an informed view of any issues that may have the capacity to impact on the granting of the Licence or its terms and conditions:

- Andersonstown News
- Antrim and Ballymena Times
- Antrim Guardian
- Banbridge Chronicle
- Banbridge Leader
- Belfast Telegraph
- Dromore/Banbridge Leader
- Dungannon Herald
- Lurgan Mail
- Mid Ulster Mail
- News Letter
- North Belfast News
- Portadown Times
- South Belfast News
- The Belfast Gazette
- The Irish News
- Tyrone Courier
- Tyrone Times
- Ulster Gazette

The Public Notice will appear for a period of 2 weeks from week commencing 06 May 2019. The consultation period will begin on 07 May 2019 for a minimum of eight weeks ending on 05 July 2019.

This Overview and all other documentation relevant to Petroleum Licence Application (PLA1/16) is available to view at DfE and the relevant local council offices; details are outlined in the Public Notice (Annex E).
Any person wishing to make representations in respect of Petroleum Licence Application (PLA1/16) must do so to DfE on or before 05 July 2019. Please quote reference PLA1/16 in any correspondence relating to this application.

After the consultation period has closed DfE will consider comments received. Once responses have been analysed, the application and recommendations on the award of a Licence and any required conditions on that Licence will be passed to a future Minister for consideration.

A summary of all the comments received during the consultation process and DfE’s response will be published on the DfE website.

**How to respond to this consultation**

Representations on the consultation can be returned to DfE by:

- Email: minerals@economy-ni.gov.uk
- or
- Post: Department for the Economy
  Minerals and Petroleum Branch
  Room 9
  Dundonald House
  Upper Newtownards Road
  Belfast
  BT4 3SB

DfE will take into account any representations which are made to it on or before 05 July 2019. Please note that, within the parameters outlined in the Confidentiality and Data Protection section below, your representation may be shared with the applicant.

**Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Your response may be made public by DfE and placed on the DfE website as part of the consultation process.

In addition information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), Environmental Information Regulations 2004; Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR)). If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA and EIR, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

If you do not want your name or all or part of your response to be made public, please state this clearly in the response and mark your response as ‘CONFIDENTIAL.’ Any confidentiality disclaimer that may be generated by your organisation’s IT system or included as a general statement will be taken to apply only to information in your response.
for which confidentiality has been specifically requested. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on DfE.

In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

For information regarding the Minerals and Petroleum Branch Privacy (MAPB) Notice following the introduction of GDPR please go to the following link https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/privacy-notice-minerals-and-petroleum-branch

Applicants for a Petroleum Licence may need to include commercially sensitive information in their applications, such as financial forecasts and proprietary data. DfE will handle such information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and other relevant law, which take full cognisance of issues of transparency and confidentiality. This has resulted in the redaction of information from the published application form.

Copies of the Consultation

This Consultation Document may be accessed on the Minerals and Petroleum page of the DfE Website https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/minerals-and-petroleum or by email request at minerals@economy-ni.gov.uk or in writing from MAPB at the address above or by telephoning the branch on 02890 520993.

If you require access to the consultation documents in a different format – eg Braille, disk, audio cassette, larger font – or in a minority ethnic language, please contact DfE on 028 9038 8462 and appropriate arrangements will be made as soon as possible.