

**From the Office of the Minister
Diane Dodds MLA**



Mr Henry Downey
Democratic Services Officer, Belfast City Council
DowneyH@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast BT4 2JP
02890 529202
email: private.office@economy-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: CORR-4824-2020

Your Ref: HD/JT

26 October 2020

Dear Mr Downey,

Petroleum licensing - Belfast City Council Moratorium

Thank you for your letter dated 19 October 2020 seeking my response to the motion which was passed at a meeting of Belfast City Council on 01 October 2020.

As you will no doubt be aware, policy on the issue of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration is the responsibility of my Executive colleague, the Minister for Infrastructure. I therefore have no comment to make on that matter.

The section of the motion seeking my intention in respect of the issuing of exploratory licences and calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate ban on all petroleum licensing does fall within my Department's remit. On 13 October 2020, in response to a Private Members Motion on Onshore Petroleum Licensing and Drilling in the Northern Ireland Assembly, I outlined my position with regard to a moratorium or ban on petroleum development, as well as my intentions with respect to the handling of two current petroleum licence applications.

The full transcript of the debate is available at the link below (see page 28 onwards)
<http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-13-10-2020.pdf>.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Diane Dodds'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

DIANE DODDS MLA
Minister for the Economy