



Communities and transition mineral mining in Scotland

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What's happening in Scotland?

Location	Mining company	Transition minerals of interest	Local environmental considerations
Arthrath near Ellon, Aberdeenshire	Aberdeen Minerals Ltd	Nickel, copper and cobalt	Part of the River Ythan catchment, a local biodiversity hotspot
Blackcraig, Dumfries and Galloway	JDH / Walkabout resources	Lead, zinc, copper, nickel, gold and silver	Biosphere management zone
Gairloch near Loch Maree, Northwest Highlands	Galantas Gold	Zinc, copper, lead, silver and gold	Biosphere management zone, SSSI and National Nature Reserve

International comparisons with communities in Galicia, Spain and Tampakan in the Philippines

1. Company engagement

Our interviewees said that companies are not engaging fully with them.

National Planning Framework 4: “Engagement should be early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate”.

Exploratory drilling is not considered a ‘development’ so there is no legal requirement for consultation. However, this does not match community expectations.

“I feel like the whole community is in the dark.”

“The lack of honesty and openness that the company displayed did them no favours whatsoever.”

“We’re just left with uncertainty [...] getting on for three years now.”



JDH Exploration's consulting geologist (left) shows rock core samples to Cree Valley Community Council members during a site visit

2. Political representation

People felt let down by their political representatives

Planning, including for mining, is a fully devolved matter in Scotland but the strategic approach around minerals for the energy transition is led by the UK Government. It can sometimes be unclear who is responsible for what.

“They [the community] don't know what's going on, and I think the Council has a responsibility. I think the Scottish Government has a responsibility. I think the UK Government has a responsibility.”

“People felt let down that something as major as that [could happen without consultation]. [...] The majority of people are really proud of their area. [...] And why weren't people informed? It was just such a dereliction of duty.”

3. Local perceptions of transition mineral mining

Communities do not believe the benefits of mining is likely to reach them

Most people interviewed opposed transition mineral mining in their area as, in their experience, it can exacerbate existing injustices around land ownership and job opportunities.

People cared about companies damaging the natural landscape, pollution and the impacts on tourism.

“The only benefits are for landowners”

An interviewee from Spain: “We are often supposed to *“look the other way”* when it comes to injustices committed in the name of the energy transition”

An interviewee from the Philippines: *“God did not create the water for them alone”*



Exploratory drilling by JDH Exploration in
Blackcraig, Dumfries and Galloway



Exploratory drilling in Arthraath, Aberdeenshire
by Aberdeen Minerals

4. International resource justice

Scottish communities understand that overconsumption in rich countries fuels harm to people and nature globally.

Many people see demand reduction and the circular economy as solutions.

People in Scotland are aware that 'green' extraction can be problematic because it operates in the same system that prioritise economic growth above all else.

On whether transition mineral mining can be just “my gut reaction is probably not [...] there would need to be the government will there I think, to make sure it was socially just”.

From an interviewee in the Philippines: “We need to understand needs and wants. If there are plenty of wants, that means plenty of waste. If we focus on needs, then that’s sufficient.”

Conclusions

- Communities are not being properly consulted and report feeling intimidated, disempowered and isolated
- People do not trust mining companies to respect people and nature
- They feel ignored by their political representatives who seem to be ignoring their responsibilities at all levels of government
- People have a good understanding of resource justice, demand reduction and the circular economy, even if they do not use these terms
- Scottish communities understand Scotland's excessive material consumption is linked to international resource injustices, even when this is done in the name of the green transition

Key recommendations

- All policy makers, especially Councillors, MSPs and MPs representing local communities affected by transition mineral mining in Scotland, must take their responsibilities to communities seriously
 - They must represent the interests of their communities, not the companies that seek to profit from them
- MSPs should call on the Scottish Government to develop due diligence guidance for mining companies operating in Scotland that puts early, comprehensive and clear community consultation at the centre of decision making
- Local Development Plans should include a requirement to consult throughout mining projects, including during the exploration phase
- The UK Government must amend its Critical Mineral Strategy to prioritise demand reduction and community consultation



Thank you!

Please ask any questions in the chat and feel free to email me tamsinwake@gmail.com