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## Mining Position Statement

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The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere covers over 5200 sq km of SW Scotland. It was designated in July 2012 in recognition of the regions internationally significant natural and cultural heritage and the commitment of its local population to sustainability.

The Biosphere designation is based on a zoned approach with a core area centred on the Galloway Hills that is nationally and internationally important for biodiversity, a buffer zone largely based on Galloway Forest Park that is focused on sustainable timber production and sustainable recreational activity and a transition area where the Biosphere team works with local businesses, organisations and communities to support a more balanced and sustainable relationship between people and nature.

The Biosphere is managed by a Partnership Board comprising representation from public agencies, private businesses, environmental organisations and local communities.

The Biosphere has no regulatory power and is not a statutory consultee. As such we are dependent on developers and local planners recognising the value of the UNESCO Biosphere designation in their decision making. The Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2019 states;

*Policy ED10: Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere*

*The Council supports the designation and aims of the Biosphere and will encourage development that demonstrates innovative approaches to sustainable communities and the economy, and supports the enhancement, understanding and enjoyment of the area as a world class environment. Development must be appropriate to the role of the different zones within the Biosphere.*

The Biosphere Partnership Board have a detailed position statement that outlines activities appropriate to the different Biosphere zones. In summary it states;

*The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere (GSAB) Partnership Board does not support any form of development in the Core Area of the Biosphere that directly or indirectly negatively impacts in any way on the international and national designations awarded to the three core areas.*

*The GSAB Partnership Board are not supportive of developments in the Buffer Zone that have a negative impact on the core of the Biosphere, the ecology of the buffer or its sense of place.*

*The GSAB Partnership Board supports sustainable development within the Transition Area that adheres to relevant local development plans, can demonstrate community support and applies appropriate habitat mitigation where relevant.*

The Biosphere Partnership Board recognise the need for minerals used to help progress society to a more sustainable way of living and working. They also recognise that the current overseas exploitation of such resources can often involve unacceptable impacts on vulnerable, local communities and their environment. As a result, industrialised countries do need to look for more sustainable solutions in securing minerals for use in the technologies of the future, part of this is linked to the circular economy, part of it may be linked to mineral extraction.

With the current lack of detail around the mining exploratory work taking place within the Biosphere, the Biosphere Partnership Board are not able to make an informed decision on any specific proposals.

However, the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership would expect any mining development to recognise the international significance of the UNESCO Biosphere designation.

They would expect to be properly consulted on any proposals in a timely manner that enable them to share any concerns we have on the social and environmental impacts of such developments.

They would expect our local communities to be given the opportunity to air their concerns, or support, and for these to be considered by both the developer and the local planning authority in any decision making.

If any mineral development were to progress, we would expect it to be an exemplar development adopting the highest possible standards of environmental protection, community engagement and landscape preservation that befits a world class UNESCO Biosphere designation.

February 24<sup>th</sup> 2022