

APPLICATION BY RES UK & IRELAND LIMITED

DATED 27 MARCH 2009

FOR CONSENT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE

THE LLANBRYNMAIR WIND FARM

IN

POWYS, MID-WALES

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

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**ON ORNITHOLOGICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE ALLIANCE DOCUMENT
ALL-016**

RES/Ornithology/Written Statement/Steve Percival/SSA-B

5 December 2013

1. This written statement covers the comments raised by the Alliance on Ecology and Wildlife that relate to ornithological issues (in Section 3 of document ALL-016).
2. The Alliance notes in 3 (a) that 79 species were recorded in the 2008 ES, including a number of red and amber listed species. The Alliance states that this demonstrates the importance of this area despite the damage done through previous developments undertaken without a full understanding of the ecosystem and its services. In 3 (b) the Alliance notes that the ES identified three key species and described them as the “*main ornithological interests*” at the site; hen harrier, black grouse and curlew. The Alliance was concerned that these three species represented a small sample of the bird population of ornithological interest on the site, and claimed that the site’s value for these birds is also not given its true weight in light of the acknowledged reduction in habitat here and in the locality.
3. All of the site’s bird populations were fully described and assessed in the ES and subsequent SEI. All have been given appropriate weight and consideration in the assessment process. The conservation value of all bird species recorded during the surveys was clearly set out in the ES and SEI (see Tables 7.13 and 7.14 of the ES, and Tables 6.12 and 6.13 of the consolidated SEI), and the impacts fully assessed in Section 7.13 of the ES and Section 6.13 of the consolidated SEI.
4. In 3 (c) the Alliance gives the specific example of curlew. It notes that the county of Montgomeryshire holds nationally important numbers of curlew and that these birds have shown a rapid and drastic decline in the last 5 years. This decline in curlew numbers is not in dispute and I specifically acknowledged this in paragraph 6.6 of my main proof.
5. The Alliance claims in 3 (c) (ii) that “*there is no evidence that curlew adapt to turbine presence after the windfarm development; turbines need to be at least 150m from breeding colonies once the windfarm is operational and curlew are frightened off site during the construction phase despite the restriction that no activity on a site may be within 600m.*” It is not clear exactly what these statements are based on as they are not referenced in the Alliance statement. There is some equivocal evidence that curlew can be displaced from wind farms during both construction and operation in some circumstances, as I discussed in my main proof (paragraphs 6.17-6.23). A worst-case assessment based on these studies has been used to inform the assessment of effects of the wind farm on this species (which concluded no significant effects on this species) and as the basis for the management measures that will be put in place as part of the Habitat Management and Breeding Bird Protection Plans (as described in Section 7 of my main proof), plans that have been developed and agreed with NRW and RSPB.
6. In 3 (c) (iii) the Alliance states that “*the fact that curlew exist and breed in other parts of the UK does not detract from the national and regional importance of the Montgomeryshire population, which is now hanging on tenuously in spite, and not*

because of national policies. Curlew are a key indicator of upland biodiversity and are on the Red list.”

7. The importance of curlew has been fully recognised in the ES and subsequent SEI. It has been classed as high sensitivity throughout, as up to nationally important numbers had been recorded, and assessed as such. Specific measures will be put in place through the Habitat Management Plan to deliver a net benefit to this species with habitat enhancement (including rushy patches for nesting and providing cover for chicks, and agriculturally-improved grassland for foraging), and predator control to reduce adult and chick mortality. Specific measures will also be implemented during construction as part of the Breeding Bird Protection Plan to avoid the possibility of any significant impact on this species at that time as well as during the operational phase of the wind farm. It is now agreed with NRW and RSPB that with the management measures in place that there will not be any significant impact of the Llanbrynmair wind farm on curlew.