



**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND  
LOCAL TRANSPORT**

**IN RELATION TO AN APPLICATION BY RES UK & IRELAND LIMITED  
DATED  
27 MARCH 2009  
FOR CONSENT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A WIND TURBINE  
GENERATING STATION  
IN  
POWYS, MID-WALES**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) is prepared jointly by [Powys County Council (PCC)/Welsh Government Transport (WGT) /Natural Resources Wales (NRW)] and RES UK & Ireland Limited ('RES') in relation to an application for consent pursuant to section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct and operate the Llanbrynmair wind turbine generating station in Powys, Mid-Wales.
2. This SOCG has been produced and agreed by the parties in connection with Session 2 of the Public Inquiry and is specific to the RES UK and Ireland Ltd., application for the Llanbrynmair Wind Farm only.
3. This SOCG concerns the topic of Local Transport Issues, in particular access to the Wind Farm off the A458 and A470 trunk roads and the interaction of the Wind Farm traffic with the Llanerfyl to Talerddig County Road (the C2031 between Llanerfyl and Neinthirion and the unclassified U239 for the remainder of the route).
4. For the avoidance of doubt, the Strategic Traffic Management Plan (sTMP) for Mid Wales Wind Farms and all cumulative movements of construction traffic, including HGVs and construction workers and Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicles transporting the turbine components on the A458, A470 and further afield will be addressed at Session 4 of the Public Inquiry and are not, therefore, covered by this SOCG.
5. The following (Transport) Reason for Objection (objection point 1) was issued by Powys County Council (PCC) on 27 September 2012:  
  
*"On the basis of the information submitted, it is considered that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network."*
6. PCC's Updated Outline Statement confirmed the above. The Statement also indicated that:  
  
*"...The Council asks the Secretary of State to consider the extent to which the significant impacts of the Applicant's proposed access route could be mitigated by alternative routes, for example shared use of the Carnedd Wen site access..."*  
(paragraph 7.1.2).

*“...the Council considers that there are still issues to be resolved in relation to the section of County Road through Welshpool to be used under the STMP. The Council is seeking to resolve those issues with the developers. The Council is also seeking to negotiate a section 106 agreement to ensure that the STMP is adhered to and to ensure that any damage to the highway is rectified at the applicant’s expense.”* (paragraph 7.1.3).

7. The latter point regarding the County Road through Welshpool relates to the STMP and will be addressed in Session 4 of the Public Inquiry.
8. It is understood that the PCC now object to the scheme on the basis that access through the Carnedd Wen Wind Farm for abnormal load deliveries is more appropriate than the use of the County road through Llanerfyl. This is on the basis that it has yet to be satisfactorily demonstrated that this access route is not feasible or available. PCC also require RES to demonstrate the need for three access points off the County Road if it is demonstrated that a shared access thorough Carnedd Wen cannot be provided. These points were indicated in a meeting with PCC on 1 August 2013.
9. Welsh Government Transport does not object to the Development subject to conditions.
10. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) do object to the Development on transport grounds as indicated in their consultation response to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (‘DECC’) on 12 October 2012:

*“...The highway works....are substantial in extent and require major modifications....”* (paragraph 10 of letter)

*“The ES still lacks detailed mitigation measures on the design of the four site entrances....”* and *“...the off-site highway amendments.... are of a scale that they have the potential to give rise to significant cumulative environmental impacts.”* (paragraph 11 of letter).

*“...the applicant to consider the sharing of an access route form the public road to the plateau with the adjacent Carnedd Wen windfarm....”* (paragraph 78 of letter)

*“...New laybys and road widening should be undertaken sympathetically to minimise impacts on natural heritage and suitable conditions should be attached to any consent to ensure this.”* (paragraph 79 of letter)

11. These matters were confirmed in NRW’s Outline Statement of Case which also indicated that NRW considers that:

*“The off-site highway works....are substantial in extent and will require major modifications....which will be sufficient to bring about a change of character....”* (paragraph 13).

### **SITE LOCATION**

12. The site lies to the northwest of Nant yr Eira Valley between Llanbrynmair and Llanerfyl in Montgomeryshire, Powys, approximately 8km northwest of Carno. The site is centred on grid ref: E294500, N306500. The site covers approximately 1,700 hectares, or 4,200 acres. The site consists of agricultural land (principally for cattle and sheep) and woodland.
13. The application site is located within the Carno North Strategic Search Area B as defined by Technical Advice Note 8: Planning for Renewable Energy (July 2005).

### **DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

14. The proposed development is for the construction and operation of a 30 wind turbine generation station at land between Nant yr Eira Valley and Llyn Gwyddior in Montgomeryshire, Powys, Mid Wales, and for a direction under section 90(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act that planning permission for the development be deemed to be granted (‘the Development’).
15. In addition to the wind turbines, the Development includes on site tracks, underground cabling and crane hardstandings, a communications mast, a permanent (80m high) free standing lattice wind monitoring mast, electrical transformers, electrical connection works and a substation control building.

### **APPLICATION HISTORY**

16. In March 2009, a section 36 consent application under the Electricity Act 1989 was submitted by RES to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (‘DECC’) for a wind energy development of up to 43 turbines on land between

the villages of Llanbrynmair and Llanerfyl in Powys. An Environmental Statement ('ES') accompanied the Section 36 consent application.

17. Between April 2010 and August 2012, five Supplementary Environmental Information ('SEI') documents were submitted in response to further requests for information made by PCC and Countryside Council for Wales, (now Natural Resources Wales).
18. In August 2013, in line with the Inspector's timetable, RES submitted a Consolidated Environmental Statement ('CES'). The CES provides an updated assessment of all of the potential environmental effects of the Development. A further SEI assessing the cumulative effects of the Development in combination with the four other wind farm applications and the proposed grid connection, will be submitted in advance of Inquiry Session 4 (Cumulative Session).

#### **BASELINE AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

19. Details of the baseline and methodologies results for the Development are set out in the following Chapters of the CES:
  - i. Chapter 4 Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA)
  - ii. Chapter 10 Transportation and Access

#### **POTENTIAL EFFECTS**

20. An assessment of the potential effects of the Development on Local Transport is set out in Chapter 10 Transportation and Access of the CES.
21. The road traffic impact is significant on the Hafod Farm to Talerddig section of the County Road but not significant on the Llanerfyl and Diosg sections of the route. The potential of significance informed the access strategy which removed construction traffic from the Llanerfyl and Diosg sections of the road.
22. Temporary road closures for short time durations during a number of days will be necessary will be necessary to construct the highway works. Suitable alternatives routes have been identified.

23. Landscape and Visual effects of the off-site highway works are set out in Chapter 4 Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) and incorporated within the SOCG on landscape and visual matters.

#### **RESPONSE TO PCC**

24. The Cabinet Report of 25 September 2012 indicated that the PCC Highway Officer had concluded that there remained a high level of uncertainty whether the county road highway works would be provided and due to a lack of details regarding various aspects of the work the Highway Authority was unable to support the proposal in the interests of road safety.
25. PCC's reasons for objection to the Development have been discussed at a series of meetings during January 2013 and August 2013. The level of detail which has been provided to PCC over this period has been agreed to be *'all that could be asked for from a highway and road safety perspective'*. Consequently, the high level of uncertainty and lack of detail referred to in the Cabinet as the reasons that the Highway Authority was unable to support the proposals have now been addressed.
26. Further, in relation to road safety an independent road safety audit has been undertaken which is included within Appendix G of the LTMP. Minor issues were raised in relation to the two trunk road junctions at the A470 and the A458. These were incorporated within amended junction designs.
27. The safety audit also considered the overall access strategy and the route is suitable in road safety terms.
28. Highway concerns were listed in Section 4.3 of the Cabinet Report as:
- Concrete deliveries and associated HGV time restrictions  
Clarification on traffic programming and the delivery of materials to site has been provided in the LTMP. On-site concrete batching is now proposed which removes issues associated with concrete deliveries on the wider road network.
  - Clear indication of visibility splays to be provided is required  
The LTMP provides full and clear details of visibility splays which have been validated as part of an independent road safety audit

- Confirmation that the land required for the construction of the highway works is the subject of agreement between RES and the various landowners

My client confirms that the land required for the construction of highway works is the subject of agreement with the various landowners

- Confirmation of whether Gosen Bridge will be improved

The LTMP details the design 'optioneering' process that has been undertaken at Gosen Bridge. This process has identified workable solutions at Gosen Bridge which require to be the subject of detailed design post planning.

Ongoing discussion relates to the aesthetics of the final bridge solution. The existing bridge will be improved as part of the off-site highway works. This will also provide a community benefit by allowing two-way traffic across the bridge.

- Confirmation that positive drainage will be provided

The LTMP indicates a significantly reduced impermeable area from that originally proposed due to the widespread use of permeable grass reinforcement. Through discussions and consultations with the hydrology team, who form part of the Llanbrynmair Design Team, the impact of the road works on drainage and surface water flow have been considered and, where required, a sustainable drainage system with attenuation has been provided.

- Discrepancies noted in red line boundary information

All previous drawings have been superseded.

- Concern that no details have been submitted about how the public rights of way are affected by the improvement works

The impact of the works on public rights of way along the route have subsequently been considered in consultation with PCC Countryside Services. Methodology for managing public rights of way has been agreed and included within the LTMP.

- A complete road closure for several weeks associated with a proposed 6 metre excavation between Gosen and Sychtyn may not be supported by the highway authority

The Cabinet Report indicates that this scale of works will almost inevitably require a complete road closure for several weeks which may not be supported by the highway authority.

The LTMP has presented a revised proposal at Gosen Bridge which removes the areas of work described above. The proposals submitted will no longer require “*several weeks*” of road closure.

The reduction in the quantity of road closures has been a key consideration of the design philosophy. Details of necessary road closures and alternative routes are included in the LTMP. Further details have also been provided to PCC.

These details demonstrate that the road closures are limited in number and are for a short duration only during the intra-peak period or at night time when every day traffic levels are low. No permanent closure is now proposed for any lengthy time period. The current level of anticipated level of closures is anticipated to reduce during the detailed design stage with the early appointment of a contractor to assist the detailed design process.

## **WELSH GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT**

29. The position of Welsh Government Transport with respect to local transport matters has been provided in their letter dated 15 March 2013 which is included within Appendix B-2 of the LTMP.
30. The letter advises that the Welsh Government as highway authority for the Welsh Trunk Road Network has no objection in principle to the use of the A470 junction at Talerddig for construction traffic and the use a junction of the A458 at Llanerfyl for AIL deliveries associated with the Llanbrynmair Wind Farm.
31. Welsh Government Transport also confirmed that they have no concerns in principle regarding the results of the Stage 1 Safety Audits on either trunk road junction in an e-mail dated 30 July 2013 (Appendix A).

## **RESPONSE TO NRW**

32. NRW has an outstanding objection in relation to the off-site highway works. Details are provided in paragraph 10 and 11 above.
33. NRW's reasons for objection to the Development have been discussed at a series of meetings during January 2013 and August 2013. The level of detail which has been provided to PCC over this period has been substantial.
34. An AECOM e-mail dated 14 June 2013 (Appendix B) to NRW indicated the level of detail provided, the number of meetings that have occurred and responded to the objection points raised. The e-mail summarised the reduced level of off-site highway works now proposed and the more sympathetic design proposals using grass reinforcement techniques widely.
35. The e-mail indicates that although the landscape and visual impact assessment is likely to conclude that there will be some localised adverse effects on landscape elements/character and the visual amenity of receptors along the road during the works to the road, these will be short-term. In the longer term the highway works and the associated landscape proposals will be assimilated into the landscape resulting in very limited residual and adverse landscape or visual impact. There is not likely to be any significant adverse effects on visual amenity relating to the of site highway works in the long term. (i.e. beyond 4- 5 years).
36. Chapter 4 of the CES confirms that there are significant temporary effects associated with the off-site highway works. These matters are considered in greater detail in the SOCG on landscape and visual effects which indicates that the mitigation works will ensure that the highway works will be assimilated successfully into the landscape.
37. The e-mail also requested an updated NRW position statement on the County Road proposals based on the revised drawing submission and the content of the e-mail.
38. Further clarification was provided on 21 June 2013. Further detail has been requested in a NRW e-mail of 19 July 2013. Dialogue is ongoing. However, this is related to detailed matters that can be considered during the detailed design process post-planning.

39. It is considered that it can be agreed that the landscape and visual impact of the off-site highway works are as reported in paragraphs 37 and 38 above.

### **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

40. An assessment of the cumulative effects of the Development on Local Transport, is set out in Chapter 10 Transportation and Access of the CES. The cumulative effect was assessed assuming the Mynydd Waun Fawr Wind Farm was progressed in a similar timescale. However, the application has now been withdrawn.
41. It should be noted that a further Statement of Common Ground with respect to the cumulative effects of the Development in combination with the other proposed developments, in SSA B and SSA C, will be issued in advance of Inquiry Session 4.

### **OFF-SITE HIGHWAY MITIGATION MEASURES**

42. Proposals for the off-site highway works along the County Road between Llanerfyl and Talerddig intended to provide a safe and appropriate means of transport access, together with being designed sympathetically in relation to the character of the road, are set out in Chapter 10 of the CES.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

43. The parties to this Statement of Common Ground are in agreement that:
- i. The level of detail provided for the proposed County Road highway works is now sufficient, demonstrates that the works can be provided and that the highway works are suitable in road safety terms.
  - ii. The access strategy, which stipulates Abnormal Indivisible Loads to progress to the site along the County Road from the A458 and construction traffic to progress to/from the site along the County road from the A470, is appropriate and suitable in road safety terms.
  - iii. The anticipated temporary road closures (required for the construction of the highway works) and the associated impact on everyday traffic are acceptable.

- iv. The proposed highway works at the A470/Talerddig and the A458 Llanerfyl trunk road junctions are acceptable.
- v. The highway works now proposed will be successfully assimilated into the landscape

This Statement has been agreed by:

Signed.....

On behalf of [PARTY]

Date.....

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Signed.....

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Date.....

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Signed.....

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Date.....

