



The Mid-Wales (Powys) Conjoined  
Wind Farms Public Inquiry  
Session 2 (SSA-B)

**SUMMARY**

Proof of Evidence  
on

Ecology

Dominic M G Woodfield CEnv MCIEEM  
(for Powys County Council)

ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 (Sections 36, 37, 62(3) & Schedule 8)  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (Section 90)  
and  
The Electricity Generating Stations and Overhead Lines (Inquiries Procedure) (England and  
Wales) Rules 2007

**THE MID-WALES (POWYS) CONJOINED WIND FARMS PUBLIC INQUIRY**

**SESSION 2 - STRATEGIC SEARCH AREA B**

(Application by RES UK & Ireland Limited dated 27 March 2009 for consent to construct and operate a 100 MW Wind Turbine Generating Station in Powys, Mid- Wales (“Llanbrynmair”))

(Application by RWE Npower Renewables Limited dated 11 December 2008 for consent to construct and operate a 130-250MW Wind Turbine Generating Station in Powys, Mid-Wales (“Carnedd Wen”))

**SUMMARY**

PROOF OF EVIDENCE  
of  
Dominic Woodfield BSc (Hons) CEnv CMIEEM  
for  
Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

**ECOLOGY**

Bioscan Ref: E1784/Pr-vf

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## **1 WITNESS BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS**

- 1.1 My name is Dominic Macsen Geraint Woodfield. I am a professional ecologist and Managing Director of Bioscan (UK) Limited, a leading ecological consultancy established in 1984. I am a registered Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).
- 1.2 My ecological expertise encompasses a broad range of UK habitats from intertidal to sub-montane communities, and also a wide range of fauna including birds, bats, badgers, herpetofauna, water voles, dormice, otters and some insect groups. I have presented evidence, both for and against the granting of consent, at public inquiries into a wide range of developments, from large residential schemes through to major Transport and Works projects.

## **2 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 I am giving evidence on behalf of Cyngor Sir Powys County Council (“the Council”) on ecology and nature conservation matters, specifically with regard to the issue of access to the adjoining Carnedd Wen and Llanbrynmair wind farm proposals. The Council is in ongoing discussion with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), and where it is clear that there is overlap in the case being presented on ecology matters, the Council is seeking to defer to the statutory authority in order to avoid replication and thereby assist the running of the inquiry. This means that subject to further agreement with NRW, I may defer to them on specific points.
- 2.2 The Council’s case is that a shared access arrangement, achieved by means of short sections of interlinking track between the two wind farm sites, provides a means to achieve a significant net reduction in environmental effects that will otherwise arise as a consequence of widening and other works along a 12.5km section of the Llanerfyl to Talderddig Road.

2.3 My evidence considers this from the point of view of high value ecological receptors including priority habitats (e.g. species-rich hedgerows and mire/blanket bog vegetation), peat resources (including the role of deep peat in carbon storage), European Protected Species (especially dormice, bats and otters) and other relevant species of conservation concern (in particular curlew).

### **3 SUMMARY OF CASE**

3.1 I present evidence in support of the Council's position (shared by Natural Resources Wales) that the applicants do not appear to have made reasonable efforts to explore shared access, in the interests of minimising significant environmental harm, and that this raises issues of compliance with applicable statute and policy.

3.2 My evidence also sets out the approach and results of an independent study conducted by the Council that demonstrates that a shared access solution that delivers net reduction of impact on ecological receptors is both feasible and workable in principle. I also appraise and test the various ecological reasons put forward by RES, in respect of Llanbrynmair, as to why they have discounted shared access.

3.3 Using the in principle connections between the Carnedd Wen and Llanbrynmair access track networks identified by the Council's study, I compare the likely additional ecological impacts associated with delivering these links against those that would be avoided or reduced by obviating the need for significant widening, bridge strengthening and bypass works along the minor rural road between Llanerfyl and Talerddig. In doing so I also raise concerns about the adequacy of the EIA material on ecology submitted in support of those highways proposals.

### 3.4 My overall conclusions are as follows:

- i) the case for shared access as a means to avoid or reduce significant ecological impacts arising from the proposed highways works along the Talerddig Road, is clear and overwhelming. This applies even without taking into account the serious deficiencies in the submitted assessment of impacts;
- ii) insufficient effort has been directed by the applicants towards exploring a shared access arrangement, contrary to the sequential 'avoid-reduce-compensate' approach;
- iii) the Council's in principle links between the two sites represent a "satisfactory alternative" to the significant highways works along the Talerddig Road, which means that in the event that European Protected Species are found, it may not be possible to meet the Habitats Directive tests required to be satisfied in order to obtain the necessary legal derogation for those works.
- iv) Reduction of unnecessary development landtake is common sense, and on this basis the case for shared access makes itself even before one needs to consider the detail of the impacts thereby avoided or reduced. The detail in this instance merely makes that case all the more compelling.



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