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**[DRAFT]**  
**Commitment to  
Community  
Consultation**

Brechfa North Energy  
Project,  
Carmarthenshire

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July 2016

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## **1**     **About This Document**

This Commitment to Community Consultation sets out how RES - one of the world's leading independent renewable energy companies - will consult with the local community regarding the proposed Brechfa North Energy Project, situated in Carmarthenshire near the villages of New Inn, Llanllwni, and Gwernogle.

RES is experienced in renewable project development and believes that community consultation is an integral part of the process. A comprehensive process that engages with local people and stakeholders at an early stage allows an informed debate that helps us identify concerns, explore solutions and design a low-impact project that will be welcomed as a positive asset to the local community.

This document sets out how RES will consult with stakeholders on the Brechfa North Energy Project and the methods available to local communities, residents, businesses, interest groups and the general public to view and comment on the developing plans.

This document should be treated as a working document which will be updated and refined subject to comments and suggestions received from stakeholders during the consultation process and the overall project programme.

## 2 Brechfa North Energy Project

RES, one of the world's leading independent renewable energy companies, has started to investigate the potential for developing a renewable energy project north of Brechfa Forest, in Carmarthenshire. **Brechfa North Energy Project** is the name of a proposed development which is located approximately 12 miles north-east of Carmarthen, 2 miles east of the village of New Inn, 2 miles south east of the village of Llanllwni, and 2 miles north-west of the village of Gwernogle.

The site is centred on GB National Grid Reference E251341, N236444. Please refer to **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1 – Location of the proposed development**



The site in question was subject to a planning application in 2010 for a 21-turbine wind farm known as Bryn Llywelyn. RES is considering the site afresh, with a view to designing a smaller development on private agricultural land that will optimise low cost and secure renewable energy generation while minimising local impacts.

RES is currently active in a range of renewable energy technologies including onshore wind and solar, as well as enabling technologies such as energy storage and demand-side management.

Indigenous and renewable wind power has a vital role to play in meeting the UK's need for a secure, decarbonised energy system at lowest cost to consumers. A well located wind farm development at Brechfa North would be an asset to the local area by taking advantage of the excellent wind speeds to generate clean, renewable electricity.

A planning application for this development would fall under the new Developments of National Significance (DNS) Regime, as set out in the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. Further information about the DNS Regime is set out in **Section 4**.

RES will carry out a new programme of community consultation as outlined in this document; contacting local stakeholders to keep them informed, and to ask for their input and feedback as the new proposal is developed.

### 3 Commitment to Consultation

RES is committed to open and constructive dialogue with the local community and other stakeholders. This means that:

1. Accurate information about the proposal will be presented in a clear and timely way;
2. Consultation events and information events will be well-publicised, maximising participation in the consultation process;
3. All stakeholders will be able to ask RES questions about the proposed development at any stage;
4. RES will respond to all enquiries in a timely manner (for general questions this is usually within five working days);
5. Opportunities will be provided for interested stakeholders to comment on various aspects of the proposal;
6. RES will respect all views expressed, record them and take them into account, where appropriate, during the development of the project;
7. RES will submit a pre-application Consultation Report<sup>1</sup> with the planning application to demonstrate its commitment to community consultation. The Consultation Report will include:
  - An account of the statutory consultation, publicity, and consultation activities (including public consultation events and information days);
  - A summary of all issues raised and how they may have been addressed; and
  - Particulars of all responses received from persons consulted, including copies of responses from specialist consultees<sup>2</sup>, and the account taken of these.

Through its engagement, RES will look to discuss the following aspects of the proposal with the local community:

- How information about the proposed development should be communicated to the public;
- How input and feedback is gathered from the local community;
- The design for the proposed development;
- What effects (positive and negative) the proposed development may have on local people and the local environment; and
- Any community benefits associated with the proposed development.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 11 of the Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016

<sup>2</sup> These include organisations with particular expertise in or responsibility for matters relevant to a proposal (e.g. Natural Resource Wales).

## 4 Developments of National Significance (DNS) Regime

### **Introduction**

As of March 2016, decisions on planning applications for certain types of infrastructure (called Developments of National Significance, or DNS) will be made by the Welsh Government rather than the relevant Local Planning Authority. Applications for DNS are dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate for Wales ("PINS Wales") on behalf of Welsh Government.

A DNS is a type of planning application for a large infrastructure project of national importance – for example, a wind farm, power station or reservoir. A DNS differs from a normal planning application in the way that it is decided. Instead of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) making the decision, an appointed Planning Inspector examines the application, on behalf of PINS, and makes a recommendation to the Welsh Minister based on planning merits and national priorities. The Minister then decides whether or not to grant permission.

### **Key Stages of a DNS Project**

There are four distinct stages of a DNS project, which are summarised on **Figure 2**<sup>3</sup> (overleaf):

- Stage 1: Pre-notification
- Stage 2: Application
- Stage 3: Examination
- Stage 4: Decision

Further detail on how members of the community can get involved at each stage of the process is provided in the following document - *Developments of National Significance: A Guide for Communities* – which can be found at the following address:

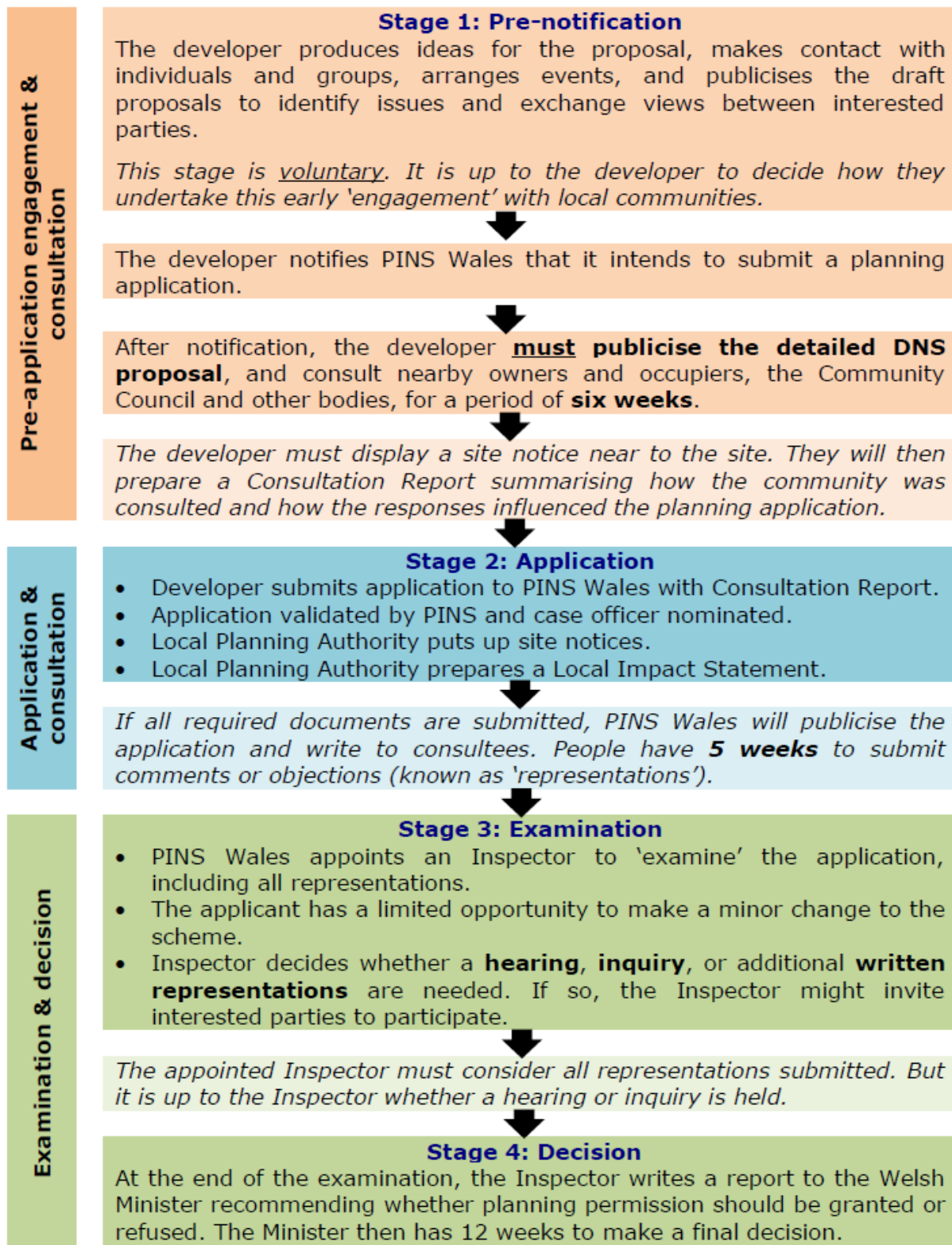
<http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160229-dns-guide-for-communities-en.pdf>.

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<sup>3</sup> This figure is an extract from 'Developments of National Significance: A Guide for Communities, The Planning Inspectorate, February 2016 (Page 4)'



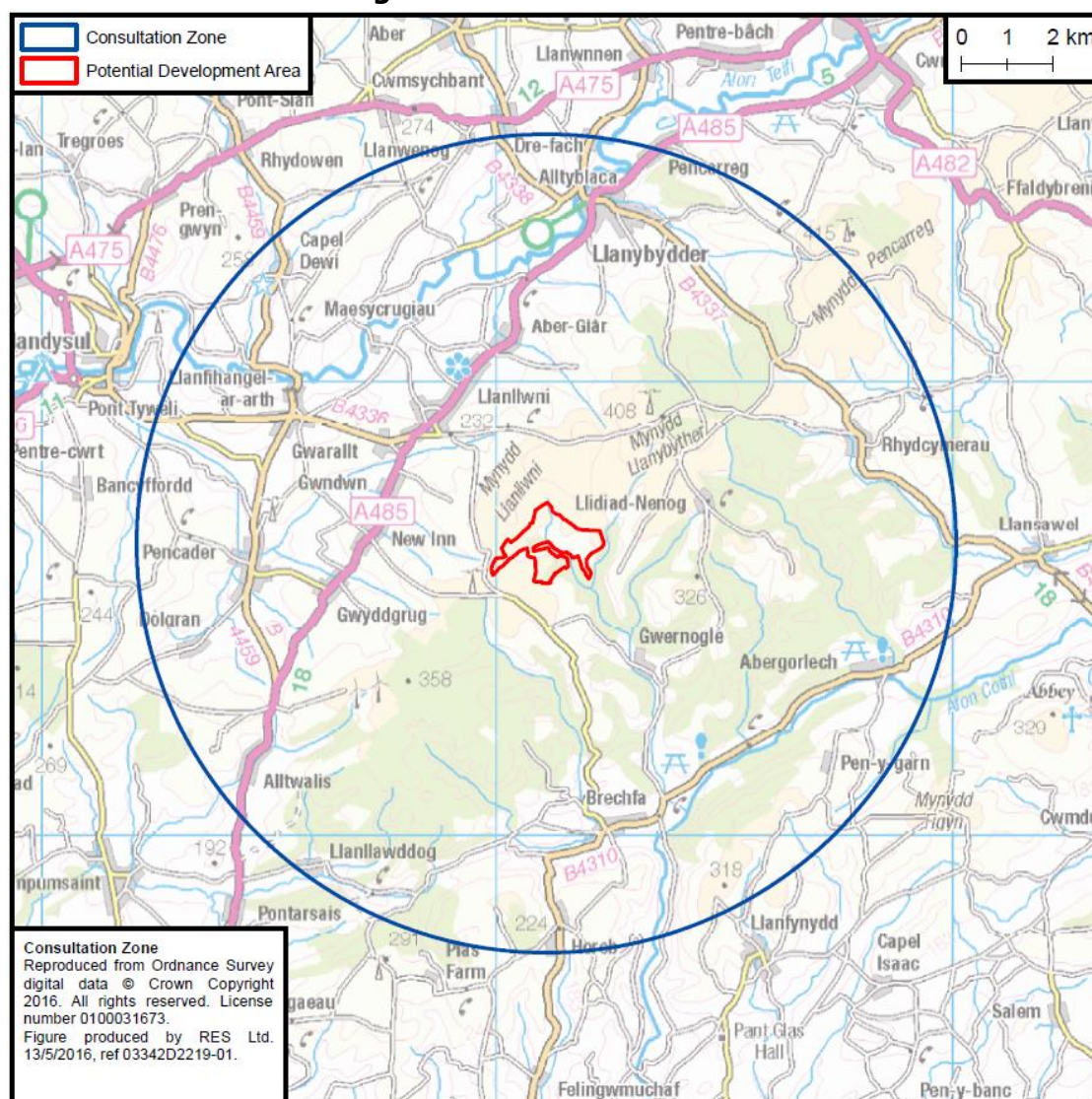
**Figure 2 – Key Stage of the DNS Process**





RES wants its consultation to be as inclusive as possible. We recognise that there are essentially two types of consultees: those who live, work, or farm near the site and have a direct interest in how the proposed development may affect them (**primary consultees**) and those living in the wider region who may be interested in renewable energy or developments in the area (**secondary consultees**).

### Figure 3 – Consultation Zone



<sup>4</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160330-dns-appendix-8-the-consultation-report-en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160229-dns-guide-for-communities-en.pdf>

The Consultation Zone includes the following towns/villages/hamlets:

- Llanybydder
- Llidiad-Nenog
- Rhydcymerau
- Gwernogle
- Abergorlech
- Brechfa
- Llanllawddog
- Alltwalis
- Dolgran
- Pencader
- Gwyddgrug
- New Inn
- Llanfihangel-ar-arth
- Llanllwni
- Aber-Giâr
- Maesycrugiau
- Capel Dewi

As well as local residents, local businesses, organisations and community groups located within the Consultation Zone, primary consultees will include elected representative of the Consultation Zone, including, but not limited to:

- Local and regional Assembly Members;
- Member of Parliament;
- Ward Councillors; and
- Community Councillors.

RES will actively engage with primary consultees in the Consultation Zone using:

- Direct mail/newsletters to provide clear and accurate information on the proposed development;
- Direct mail to invite stakeholders to any public consultation/information events; and
- Offers of briefings about the proposed development to elected representatives.

As secondary consultees are located outside of the Consultation Zone, they will not be directly contacted. However, both primary and secondary consultees will have access to information about the proposed development through:

- Advertisements of any public consultation/information events in local newspapers;
- Coverage of the proposed development in local media sources;
- Attending the public consultation/information events;
- A project website containing updates on progress ([www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk](http://www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk))
- Contacting the project team by telephone or email using the details supplied in **Section 7** of this document.

## 6 Consultation Plan

Table 1 outlines the key milestones in the consultation programme (pre-application through to submission of a DNS application) associated with the proposed development. Information contained within this table will be regularly monitored to ensure it confirms with the overall project programme.

**Table 1 – Consultation programme**

Stage	Indicative Timeline	Consultation/Communication Methods	Audiences
<b>Pre-application</b>	March-August 2016	<b>One-to-one meetings</b> Discuss and agree how RES should consult with the community.	The following consultees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Assembly Member.</li> <li>• Member of Parliament.</li> <li>• Ward Councillors and Community Councils adjacent to or within the potential development area.</li> </ul>
	July-August 2016	<b>Project Contact Details</b> Dedicated contacts for community enquiries.	Available to all consultees via the Project Website.
	July-August 2016	<b>Project Website – Holding Page</b> Launch of project website holding page and Commitment to Community Consultation Document: <a href="http://www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk">www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk</a>	Available to all consultees.
	July-August 2016	<b>EIA Scoping Document</b> Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Request to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for Wales. This document will be available to all consultees through the Project Website: <a href="http://www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk">www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk</a> and dedicated PINS Project Website: ( <a href="https://acp.planningportal.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseId=3149642">https://acp.planningportal.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseId=3149642</a> )	The request will be made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for Wales who will be responsible for circulating the document to a specific list of statutory consultees.

Stage	Indicative Timeline	Consultation/Communication Methods	Audiences
<b>Pre-application (Contd...)</b>	September-October 2016	<b>Direct Mail</b> Introducing proposed development, dedicated contacts for stakeholder enquiries, and invitation to public consultation events.	All primary consultees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All households and businesses within Consultation Zone;</li> <li>• Local Assembly Member.</li> <li>• Member of Parliament.</li> <li>• Ward Councillors and Community Councils adjacent to or within the potential development area.</li> </ul>
	September-October 2016	<b>Project Website – Upcoming Public Consultation Events</b> Website holding page updated with information about public consultation events.	Available to all consultees.
	September-October 2016	<b>Advertising of Public Consultation Events</b> Within the local media and on community notice boards.	Circulation area of local newspapers / coverage of local broadcast media
	September-October 2016	<b>Press release to local media</b> Concerning details of Public Consultation Events.	Circulation area of local newspapers / coverage of local broadcast media
	September-October 2016	<b>Attendance at Public Consultation Events</b> To be held in local venues within the Consultation Zone. Events will provide information about the development of the project; opportunities to provide feedback about the information presented, and ask questions to members of the project team.	Open to all consultees and interested parties.
	September-October 2016	<b>Project Website – Public Consultation Events Information</b> Full dedicated project website will become live following the public consultation events. All information presented as part of the public consultation events will be made available on the website.	Available to all consultees.

Stage	Indicative Timeline	Consultation/Communication Methods	Audiences
<b>Pre-application (Contd...)</b>	February-March 2017	<b>Project Website - DNS Notification</b> Submitting a notification to PINS of a proposed application for DNS. The application form will be available to all consultees through the Project Website: <a href="http://www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk">www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk</a> and dedicated PINS Project Website: ( <a href="https://acp.planningportal.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseId=3149642">https://acp.planningportal.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseId=3149642</a> )	The request will be made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for Wales who will be responsible for accepting or refusing the notification request within 10 days.
	February-March 2017	<b>Direct Mail</b> Informing consultees that notification has been accepted by PINS and the next steps in the DNS Regime relating to publicity and consultation. Invitation to Public Consultation Events.	All primary consultees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All households and businesses within Consultation Zone;</li> <li>• Local Assembly Member.</li> <li>• Member of Parliament.</li> <li>• Ward Councillors and Community Councils adjacent to or within the potential development area.</li> </ul>
	February - April 2017	<b>DNS Pre-application Publicity and Consultation</b> Publicise and consult on the proposed application for DNS for a period of at least 42 days. Any documents submitted as part of the proposed application (including but not limited to draft application form, drawings/plans, design and access statement, and environmental statement) will be available to all consultees through the Project Website: <a href="http://www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk">www.brechfanorth-energyproject.co.uk</a> .	As a minimum, RES will be required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult specific community consultees, specialist consultees and any relevant persons (<i>as defined by PINS Wales – please refer to Section 4</i>).</li> <li>• Serve written notice on owners or occupiers of land adjoining the site;</li> <li>• Display site notices in at least one place on or near the site; and</li> <li>• Place a notice in a local newspaper.</li> </ul>

Stage	Indicative Timeline	Consultation/Communication Methods	Audiences
<b>Pre-application (Contd...)</b>	February-March 2017	<b>Project Website - DNS Pre-application Publicity and Consultation &amp; Public Consultation Events</b> Dedicated project website will include all information submitted as part of the proposed application for the pre-application publicity and consultation. Dedicated website will include information about upcoming Public Consultation Events.	Available to all consultees.
	February-March 2017	<b>Advertising of Public Consultation Events</b> Within the local media and on community notice boards.	Circulation area of local newspapers / coverage of local broadcast media
	February-March 2017	<b>Press release to local media</b> Concerning details of Public Consultation Events.	Circulation area of local newspapers / coverage of local broadcast media
	February-April 2017	<b>Public Consultation Events</b> To be held in local venues within the Consultation Zone. Events will provide information about; the proposed development, the DNS Regime - how and when the application will be determined, how to provide feedback about the information presented, and ask questions to members of the project team.	Open to all consultees and interested parties.
	February-April 2017	<b>Project Website</b> Dedicated website will be updated to include all information presented as part of the Public Consultation Events.	Available to all consultees.
<b>Submission</b>	May-June 2017	<b>Submission of a Valid DNS Application</b> Following confirmation that a valid DNS Application has been submitted, all documentation will be made available in electronic format and hard copies (in selected locations).	Available to all consultees.



Stage	Indicative Timeline	Consultation/Communication Methods	Audiences
<b>Submission (Contd...)</b>	May-June 2017	<b>Direct Mail</b> Informing consultees that a valid DNS application has been submitted to PINS Wales and the next steps in the DNS Regime relating to publicity and consultation.	All primary consultees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All households and businesses within Consultation Zone;</li> <li>• Local Assembly Member.</li> <li>• Member of Parliament.</li> <li>• Ward Councillors and Community Councils adjacent to or within the potential development area.</li> </ul>
	May-June 2017	<b>Press release to local media</b> Confirming details of DNS Application.	Circulation area of local newspapers / coverage of local broadcast media
	May-June 2017	<b>Project Website</b> Dedicated website will be updated to include all information associated with the DNS Application.	Available to all consultees.
<b>Post-Submission</b>	<i>May-June 2017 Onwards</i>	<b>Ongoing Engagement</b> <i>Following validation of the DNS Application, RES will continue to engage with all stakeholders throughout the determination period and beyond. Further details of engagement beyond validation of the DNS application will be set out within this document at the appropriate time.</i>	



## **7**    **How to Contact RES and the Project Team**

RES has a dedicated project team that will undertake the community consultation activities described in this document.

The project email address below has been set up to enable people to send enquiries to the Brechfa North Energy Project Team:

- **Email:** [brechfanorth.energyproject@res-ltd.com](mailto:brechfanorth.energyproject@res-ltd.com)

Alternatively, please contact us using the following methods:

- **Write to us at:** Brechfa North Energy Project, RES Ltd, Cedar House, Greenwood Close, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff, CF23 8RD
- **Call us on:** 02921 670377

RES will respond to all enquiries in a timely manner (for general questions this is usually within five working days).