



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

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Our ref: 1494u  
Your ref: EQD664

30 August 2022.

Dear Miss Shepperd,

**SCREENING DECISION BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER THE  
ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)  
(ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2017 (“THE 2017  
REGULATIONS”)**

**NAME OF SCHEME: EQD664 HILL BARN**

A screening decision has been requested regarding a proposal that one span of existing 11kV overhead electric line at and in the vicinity of Hill Barn in the Ipsden area of South Oxfordshire, OX10 6AD, to be upgraded from a 2-wire overhead line to a 3-wire overhead line. This will involve the addition of a single wire along the length of the overhead line (the “proposed works”)

The proposed works require Section 37 consent under the Electricity Act 1989 and are subject to the 2017 Regulations.

The Secretary of State has considered the factors set out in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations, together with the documentation supplied by Dalcour Maclaren, on behalf of Southern Electric Power Distribution Ltd (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed works and the views of South Oxfordshire District Council (“the LPA”)



In reaching his decision, the Secretary of State notes the following factors:

- The proposed works do not fall within Schedule 1 (mandatory EIA)
- The proposed works fall under Schedule 2 of the 2017 Regulations as the electricity line is to be installed above ground in a sensitive area.
- The development is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, the LPA stated that the proposed works are small scale, consisting of the installation of an additional wire along an existing overheadline (OHL) span. The upgraded OHL will not significantly alter from the existing line and will be in keeping with the current setting and the rest of the network in the area. Other than the associated works, the LPA stated no other known developments proposed within the locality which could result in an accumulation of effects on receptors. The LPA noted that the proposed works are minor in nature and impact and therefore no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated to result. The LPA considered that the area the works will take place in is of low sensitivity and the risk of there being a significant environmental impact caused by undertaking the works is considered to be low. The Secretary of State is content with this observation.
- Natural England, in their reply dated 13 July 2021, had no direct comments about the proposed works but advised that the Chilterns Hills Conservation Board (CHCB) be contacted due to the fact the proposed works were within the Chilterns Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- The Applicant contacted the CHCB on 4 August 2022 and received a reply from the CHCB on 16 August. In their reply, the CHCB stated that their preferred option was for the line to be placed underground; it is noted that the Applicant has never stated that undergrounding was an option for this application and the intent has always been to upgrade the current OHL.
- The Applicant wrote further to the CHCB on 23 August to confirm that the upgrade to the line would not include any undergrounding and that wayleave agreements had been confirmed with the King William IV public house and villagers. The CHCB wrote back to the Applicant on 24 August stating they would not propose to raise an objection to the upgrading but would warmly welcome undergrounding in this area as a general principle if the opportunity arises. The Secretary of State notes the points raised by CHCB in regard to undergrounding but accepts that this option has not been considered by the Applicant and as this is a like for like replacement and will use existing infrastructure, meaning there will not be any additional visual impacts.



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- Regarding archaeological impacts, no designated archaeological heritage assets are identified within a 1km radius of the proposed works. Two Grade II Listed Buildings, these comprising the King William IV Public House and Stone Farmhouse, are identified to lie immediately to the north of the proposal site. No non-designated heritage assets are recorded on the site of the proposed works.

Taking account of the abovementioned factors and information received, the Secretary of State concludes that the proposed works **are not EIA development** under the 2017 Regulations and do not require a statutory EIA as they are unlikely to have significant effects on the environment due to their nature, location and size. A copy of this letter has been sent to the LPA for information.

Yours sincerely,

*John McKenna,*

Energy Infrastructure Planning team.