



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Our ref: 1518U
Your ref: Chisbridge E115

6 December 2022

Dear Ms Bright,

**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: CHISBRIDGE E115

**LOCATION: FRIETH MEADOWS AND MOOREND COMMON SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC
INTEREST, HENLEY-ON-THAMES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RG9 6PU**

Screening decision for a proposed development (the “Development”) to:

- Rebuild an 11 kilovolt (kV) overhead electricity line of approximately 1135 metres, including replacing 19 electricity wooden poles with a maximum height of approximately 10.5 metres and associated component parts (surge arrestors, ACD, earth guard, LV conductor, Hi Vis Guard, ABSD, cross arm, and squirrel guards).

The development requires Section 37 consent under the Electricity Act 1989 and are subject to the 2017 Regulations.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (“the Secretary of State”) has considered the factors set out in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations, together with the information within the supplied documentation (“the Application”) by Dalcour Maclaren Ltd (“the Applicant”) on behalf of Southern Electric Power Distribution Plc in relation to the impacts on the environment of the Development and the views of the Buckinghamshire Council (“the LPA”). In particular, in reaching his decision the Secretary of State notes the following factors:



1. The Development does not fall within Schedule 1 (mandatory EIA).
2. The Development falls under Schedule 2 of the 2017 Regulations as the electricity line is to be installed above ground in a sensitive area.
3. The LPA have assessed the development under the requirements of the 2017 Regulations and provided their screening views stating that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not recommended for the development (Screening views dated 24 August 2022, and Form B dated 13 June 2022, ref 20/07631/CONSA).
4. The Development is located within Frieth Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Moorend Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
5. The above sites are notified for neutral and acid grassland and broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland.
6. The Application includes an Assent Request report, which details avoidance and mitigation measures and good practice measures. Such measures also include:
 - a. Minimum and sensitive removal of vegetation ,
 - b. Works to take place outside the bird breeding season,
 - c. Vehicle access through existing access routes where possible,
 - d. Construction methods to ensure minimal disturbance to the site and to reduce the risk of entrapment,
 - e. No materials or vehicles will be stored on site, and
 - f. Best practice pollution control measures.
7. Natural England was consulted and issued assent under Section 28H of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), assent dated 22 June 2022, ref. 140621218KT). Further, the screening views of the LPA state that *“The proposed development is anticipated to have no significant, permanent effects on pollution and nuisances, as the work only constitutes replacement and refurbishment work. Having taken into account the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and characteristics of potential impacts it is concluded that the proposals are unlikely to have significant environmental impact”*.
8. In view of the above factors the Secretary of State considers that any potential likely significant effects to protected species or the habitats of the SSSIs will be mitigated subject to the implementation of the measures detailed in the accompanying report and as agreed with Natural England.
9. In relation to the AONB, the Development is to replace infrastructure of similar shape and size along a route in close proximity to the path of the current overhead electricity line and in the same position within the landscape. In addition, the screening opinion of the LPA on this matter states that *“The landscape of the area into which the proposed development is, is a large rolling landscape with extensive areas of interconnected woodland and open farmland. Limited long-range views are available further away from the site, particularly due to the woodland on higher ground.”* Therefore, due to the temporary and minor nature of the construction works, the Development is not expected to result in any notable landscape visual effects on the special qualities of the AONB.



10. With regards to production of waste associated with the Development, the Application states that no construction compound or site storage will be required to facilitate the works. Any redundant parts, equipment and other waste generated from the Development will be removed from site and disposed of appropriately. Therefore, provided these measures are implemented and due to the minor nature of the works it is expected to be unlikely that there would be any significant effects arising from the production of waste. Further the LPA's screening views do not raise any concerns on this matter.
11. The Application does not include information with regards to designated heritage assets, however it is noted that the Development does not pass through any of these and that there are no Scheduled Monuments located within 1 kilometre of the Development. Further the LPA's screening views do not raise any concerns in relation to this matter.
12. The Application does not include information with regards to listed buildings in the vicinity of the Development, however it is noted that the Perrin Springs and the Muswell Farmhouse Grade II listed buildings are at approximately 130 metres and 240 metres respectively from the Development. Further, the LPA's Form B on this matter states that "*The works will be undertaken nearby properties which include listed buildings however none of the works involve the demolition, alteration or extension of a building of special architectural or historic interest*". In view of the above factors the Secretary of State considers that, as the Development is to replace existing infrastructure it is unlikely that there would be any significant effects to the setting of the Grade II buildings.
13. The LPA's archaeologist was consulted and raised no concerns about potential archaeological impacts arising from the Development stating that "*the nature of the proposed works is such that they are not likely to significantly harm the archaeological significance of any assets*" (letter dated 24 June 2021, ref. CBC15386). In addition, as mentioned above the Development is to replace existing infrastructure, therefore, on the basis of the information available it appears reasonable to conclude that there would be no potential for buried archaeology and heritage assets to be present and impacted by the Development.
14. The Application does not include information with regards to potential impacts to residential receptors. However due to the temporary and limited nature of the construction works, it is considered unlikely that there would be any potential significant effects to the surrounding residential receptors. Also, it is noted that the LPA's screening views do not raise any concerns on this matter.
15. Finally, the Application does not suggest that there are other known developments in the area. Therefore, given the temporary and localised nature of the Development, the Secretary of State considers that it is unlikely that there would be any localised likely significant effects from the Development in combination with other existing or approved projects.

Taking account of the abovementioned factors and information received, the Secretary of State concludes that the Development is **not an EIA** development under the 2017 Regulations and does not require a statutory EIA as it is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment due to its nature, location and size. A copy of this letter has been sent to the LPA for information.



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Yours sincerely,

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