



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Mrs Debbie Wallace
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Energy Infrastructure Planning

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Our ref: 1809u
Your ref: EPK489

27 February 2024

Dear Mrs Wallace,

**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: EPK489 Chieveley Services, M4, RG18 9XX

Decision:

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.

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

- Upgrade 6 spans of an 11 kV 494.5m overhead line with 120mm BLX cabling

Secretary of State considerations:

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 Southern Power Electric Distribution (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of West Berkshire Council (“the LPA”). In particular, in reaching her decision the Secretary of State notes the following factors:

1. The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 (mandatory EIA);
2. The proposed 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 proposed development falls within the following designated sensitive area:
 - Snelsmore Common Estuary Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI)
4. In April 2022, the applicant consulted with Natural England (NE) regarding the SSSI designation and received a response addressed to the LPA (reference: 388068) noting ‘no objection – subject to appropriate mitigations being secured’. They recommended the following mitigation measure, “The line on the eastern side runs along a slope above one of the mires. The works should not affect any of the most sensitive areas of the site and should be treated as ‘out of bounds’. NE advised that the LPA planning permission document should include an appropriate planning condition to secure any mitigations.
5. The applicant consulted with the LPA, who responded in August 2022 (reference: 21/02416/FORMB), noting no objection subject to the condition of producing a Construction Environmental Plan (CEMP). The LPA stated, “... Due to the nature and spatial extent the potential impact on the sensitive area would be kept to a minimum. The applicant has also demonstrated that there is the possibility of reducing the impact.”
6. In September 2023, Dalcour Maclaren produced a CEMP (reference: Chieveley Services) on behalf of the applicant. The document detailed several mitigations such as completing vegetation clearance outside of bird nesting season and treating the mires and the most sensitive areas of the SSSI will be treated as ‘out of bounds’.
7. The CEMP was submitted to the LPA who recommended approval via email correspondence in November 2023. Furthermore, the LPA

consulted with NE regarding the CEMP, who confirmed no objections in November 2023.

8. Dalcour Maclaren, acting on behalf of the applicant, produced details of the operations in December 2023 to NE. NE requested confirmation of the mitigations to be undertaken during the operations and Dalcour Maclaren provided this in January 2024. On receipt of this information, NE granted assent to the applicant's operations between 1 April 2023 to 1 April 2024 (reference: 0212221606NG).

Yours sincerely,

John McKenna
Head of Network Planning team
Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team