



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero

Mr Ben Thomas  
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Our ref: 1858u  
Your ref: Staplegrove 132kV 'U' line

12 April 2024

Dear Mr Thomas,

**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: STAPLEGROVE 132kV 'U' LINE DIVERSION**

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:

- Divert a 132kV 1,200 metre overhead line

## 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 National Grid Distribution (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Somerset 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 132 kilovolts and therefore requires a mandatory screening.

The proposed development also falls within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) associated with Hestercombe House SSSI.

3. The County Archaeologist was consulted due to the presence of Roman remains. The applicant received comments advising that the northern side of the development should be archaeologically monitored in July 2023.
4. The applicant consulted with Natural England regarding the SSSI IRZ designation and received no comments regarding the development on 7 July 2023 via email (reference: 440823).
5. The LPA was consulted regarding the proposed development and noted no objection to the development recommended that 7 conditions be attached on 13 September 2023 (planning reference: 38/23/0256). The conditions pertained archaeological protection measures; public right of way protection measures; tree protection measures; a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and protected species.
6. The LPA produced a delegated report (planning reference: 38/23/0256) on 14 September 2023 detailing the rationale for their views regarding the development. The report included consultation responses sought by the LPA from consultees such as the LPA’s Conservation Officer and the Highways Authority.
7. Within the LPA’s delegated report, the LPA’s Conservation Officer stated, “the removal of 5 pylons and the associated cables from the

landscape would be beneficial to the appreciation of the wider historic landscape and views from the Quantock Hills.”.

8. In accordance with The Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990, the applicant published a statutory notice to the public in the local newspaper, The Somerset County Gazette on 14 September 2023. The applicant received no representations.

Yours sincerely,

*John Wheadon*  
Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery  
Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team