



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1847u
Your ref: GLOS/41/JOH/THETHAMESHEAD

12 April 2024

Dear Mr O'Hara,

**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: Thames Head

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 approximately 260 metres of existing 11kV overhead line to 3-phase.
- Replace existing pole and associated pole-mounted apparatus with a new H-pole transformer.

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 Electricity Distribution (West Midlands) PLC (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Cotswold District Council (“the LPA”). 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 Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) associated with the Kemble Railway Cuttings SSSI which is approximately 25 metres from the proposed development.
4. The Applicant commissioned an ecological appraisal of the proposed development. A survey was conducted by GE Consulting Services (UK) Ltd on 9 January 2024 and the subsequent “Ecology Survey and Recommendations” report was issued on 11 January 2024 (reference: 2229-NG-VB). The proposed overhead line route passes through arable fields, bramble and hawthorn scrub, modified grassland verge and hardstanding surrounding the Thames Head Inn – although some vegetation clearance will be required, the limited impacts of this clearance on protected species that may be present will be mitigated by the recommendations outlined in the report. The survey found evidence of badger foraging within the area of the proposed development, but no setts within 20 metres, and outlined a number of precautionary recommendations to safeguard both badgers and other protected species. The recommendations from this report will be followed by the Applicant during the proposed development.
5. The Applicant consulted with Natural England who confirmed in communications on 8 February 2024 (reference: 464728) that they had no objection to the proposed development. Natural England advised that due to the close proximity of the application site to the Kemble Railway Cuttings SSSI, no materials, machinery or plant shall be stored or disposed of within the boundary of the SSSI, and no machinery or plant shall be driven or operated within the boundary of the SSSI. The

Applicant confirmed that this advice would be noted and factored during the planning of the proposed development.

6. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the proposed development.
7. The proposed development is a minor modification to an existing piece of infrastructure and is likely to have minimal visual impact on the National Landscape in which it is situated.

Yours sincerely,

John Wheadon
Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery
Energy Infrastructure Planning