



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1960u
Your ref: MN-ALDE-BOUV 33NI.2

23 August 2024

Dear Mr Norris,

**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: ALDE-BOUV 33 NI

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:

- Replace 27 poles as part of a 33kV, 3,100 metre overhead line



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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 Electric Power Distribution PLC (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council (“the LPA”). In reaching his 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 areas:
 - Bourne Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Dorset Heathlands Special Protected Area (SPA)
 - Dorset Heathlands Ramsar
 - Bourne Valley Local Nature Reserve
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who noted no objection to the proposed development (reference: PREA/24/00017) in March 2024. It concluded that an EIA is not required as the nature of the development will not give rise to significant effects.
5. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in January 2024 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
6. Natural England was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted assent to the development from the period between 1 December 2024 and 28 February 2025 (Natural England reference: 2901241347JT).
7. In June 2024, the Secretary of State requested for the applicant to produce an ecology survey to assess the possible risks and mitigations of the development. The applicant responded via email communications, stating that the LPA Ecologist undertook a full site check and considered that an ecology survey was not required.



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8. In July 2024, the applicant submitted further communications from the LPA Ecologist to the Secretary of State, detailing further rationale for not undertaking an ecology survey. The Ecologist confirmed that they have discussed the working method with the applicant and that they would provide ecological oversight during the development's works.
9. Having considered the HRA, the Secretary of State considers there may be likely significant effects on a National Site Network site under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This is due to potential disturbance to European dry heaths habitats, Alkaline fens and breeding birds, as a result of excavations and vehicle movements. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site. The works are expected to take 6-7 weeks, where excavation will be undertaken during the day, excavations will not be left open overnight. A pre-site check will be conducted by the LPA Ecologist prior to conducting works. The proposed development will be carried out outside of bird breeding season and works vehicles will stay on designated routes and will not drive on habitats beyond these routes.
10. In light of the proposed mitigations, the Secretary of State is satisfied that there will be no Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site, and this is beyond all reasonable scientific doubt.

Yours sincerely,

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