



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1860u
Your ref: JO/MILA E5L5 11kV St. Leonards Heath SSSI

02 September 2024

Dear Mr O'Reilly,

**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: JO/MILA E5L5 11kV St. Leonards Heath SSSI

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 a single wooden pole as part of an 11kV, 188 metre 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 Dorset 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 several sensitive areas.
3. The proposed development falls within the St Leonards' and St Ives Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dorset Heathlands Special Protected Area (SPA) and Ramsar.
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the proposed development (reference: P/STA/2023/06798) and concluded that EIA is not required as “due to the short term nature of the works the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.”.
5. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in October 2023 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
6. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted assent to the development from the period between 15 September 2024 to 28 February 2025 (reference: NE 0910230956EC). The assent was accompanied with a technical note from NE, noting the possibility of active reptiles and bat activity.
7. As the development is in a SSSI, the Secretary of State requested the Applicant to produce an Ecology Survey to explore any possible risk and mitigation to the sensitive area.
8. The Applicant produced a survey in July 2024, it detailed mitigations such as obtaining a non-licensed method statement for reptiles which should be produced by an ecologist and infilling excavations at the end of the working day.
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



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due to potential disturbance to European dry heaths habitats 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 one day. Excavations will therefore be undertaken during the day, so no 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