



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1861u
Your ref: JO/MANN E1L5 Holt & West Moors SSSI

23 August 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: Holt & West Moors 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 2 x wood poles on an existing 11kV overhead line.



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

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 a sensitive area.
3. The proposed development falls within the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar/Special Protection Area (SPA), the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Holt & West Moors Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the proposed development (reference: P/STA/2023/06911) and concluded that EIA is not required as the proposed development is not likely to have significant environmental impacts.
5. The Applicant provided a Habitat Regulations Assessment (“the HRA”) carried out on 2 October 2023, this provided details on work methods, risks to the protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
6. The Applicant consulted with Natural England who, on 16 October 2023, issued assent for the proposed development to be carried out between 1 October 2024 – 28 February 2025 (Natural England reference: NE0310231110VT).
7. In communications on 16 October 2023, Natural England determined that the HRA did not sufficiently take account of hibernating reptiles and requested additional mitigation measures.
8. The Applicant consulted with the LPAs Senior Archaeologist who confirmed in communications on 4 March 2024 that the proposed development will not raise any archaeological concerns
9. An ecology survey was carried out at the site of the proposed development on 5 June 2024 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 16 July 2024 by RSK ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1385(00)). The survey identified that minor clearance of gorse and silver birch saplings as well as minor trimming of Silver Birch and willow saplings will be necessary to access the



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

poles. The potential for Great Crested Newts (GCN), reptiles, nesting birds, Hazel Dormice and bats to be present in the area of the proposed development was identified along with suitable mitigation measures to minimise the potential impact on these species.

10. Having considered the HRA and ecology survey provided, 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 assemblages of breeding birds, hibernating sand lizards and protected heathlands 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 proposed development is relatively short in duration (approximately 2 days), the works will be scheduled for a period of dry weather and vehicles will only use the proposed access routes. The proposed development will be carried out outside of bird breeding season and a non-licensed method statement for Hazel Dormice, GCN and reptiles shall be produced by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to the proposed development and shall be adhered to throughout.
11. In light of the proposed mitigation, 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