



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1913u
Your ref: JO/MILA E6L5 LV Poles Rockford

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: JO/MILA E6L5 LV Poles Rockford

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 8 x wood poles on an existing low voltage overhead line.
- Upgrade existing low voltage overhead line from open wire conductor to aerial bundled conductor



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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 New Forest National Park Authority (“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 New Forest National Park, Ramsar, Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection (reference: 23/01625OHL) and concluded that the proposed development is not an EIA development (reference: 23/01624SCR).
5. The Applicant provided a Habitat Regulations Assessment (“the HRA”) carried out on 7 July 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 21 July 2023, issued conditional assent for the proposed development to be carried out between 1 September 2024 – 28 February 2025 (Natural England reference: 0707231410NG).
7. The Applicant consulted with the LPAs archaeologist who confirmed in communications on 4 August 2023 that the proposed development will not raise any archaeological concerns
8. An ecology survey was carried out at the site of the proposed development on 4 June 2024 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 18 July 2024 by RSK ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1385(00)). The survey determined the site fell within Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and identified that minor trimming of a mature Pedunculate Oak tree will be necessary to access one pole – this tree also offered potential roosting features for bats. Along with bats, the potential for reptiles, nesting birds and Hazel Dormice 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.



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9. 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 European dry heaths and old acidophilous oak woods 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 6 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 using buffer zones around trees in accordance with Streetworks National Joint Utilities Guidelines Volume 4. The proposed development will be carried out outside of bird breeding season and a Non-Licensed Method Statement for bats, widespread reptiles and Hazel Dormouse shall be prepared by an ecologist and adhered to throughout.
10. 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