



Department for
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& Net Zero

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30th August 2024

Dear Mr O'Reily

**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:

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:

- Replacement of a single low voltage (240/415v) electricity wood pole.

Secretary of State considerations:



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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 particular, 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 on 11 December 2023. The LPA raised no objections and concluded that “the proposed development is not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment.” (reference: 23/01624SCR).”
5. The Applicant provided a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) which was carried out 14 June 2023, this provided details on work methods, risks to the protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
6. The Applicant consulted Natural England (NE) on the 14 June 2023. NE granted conditional assent for the proposed development covering the period of 1 September 2024 – 28 February 2025, subject to adherence to the conditions laid out on the document (reference: 1406230829JT).
7. The Applicant consulted with the LPAs archaeologist who confirmed on 4 August 2023 via email that the proposed development will not raise any archaeological concerns.
8. An ecology survey was carried out on the 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



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determined that the site comprises an area of close grazed grassland associated with Lowland Heathland (a habitat of principal importance) and identified that minor trimming of mature oak sp. trees may be required to access the pole. The heathland habitat was found to provide suitable habitat for a widespread reptile species, roosting, Hazel Dormouse, badger, birds including Dartford Warbler and Woodlark; alongside other nesting birds, foraging and commuting bats to be present in the area of the proposed development along with suitable mitigation measures to minimise the potential impact on these species.

9. In regard to 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 dry heathland habitats, Purple Moor Grass meadows, Beech, Oak and Bogwoodlands. 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.
10. The proposed development is relatively short in duration (approximately 1 day), 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. All excavations are to either be infilled at the end of the day or provided a ramp.
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