



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1985u
Your ref: MN- 33kVNI-MANN-MILA

11 September 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: 33kV NI MANN-MILA

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 14 x existing 33kV wood poles on a like-for-like basis (P1/P1.1-P6/P6.1 & P8/P8.1)



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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 a sensitive area.
3. The proposed development falls within the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site & Special Protection Area (SPA), Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and 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 and concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (reference: P/STA/2024/00707).
5. The Applicant supplied Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to Natural England (dated 29 January 2024) which outlined the methods and mitigations to be used throughout the proposed development as well as an assessment of the impacts on the designated features of the protected sites. As a result, Natural England issued unconditional assent on 17 January 2024 for the proposed development to be carried out between 1 September 2024 and 28 February 2025 (references: 2901241335JT & 0501240904RM).
6. An ecology survey was carried out at the site of the proposed development on 24 July 2024 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued by RSK ADAS Ltd on 8 August 2024 (reference: BRT69105-1377(00)). The report identified the potential for several protected species to be present, including reptiles, nesting birds, bats, water vole, hazel dormouse, and otter, and habitats largely of dry heath supporting a range of grasses and forbs. A series of damp ditches and several large ponds were identified nearby the poles which



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could provide potential habitat for Great Crested Newt – the closest of these is within 33 metres of pole 5.1.

7. The “Ecological Constraints Report” outlines mitigation measures to minimise the likelihood of impacting on protected species and the tree roots of mature trees – these mitigation measures will be followed by the Applicant during the proposed development.
8. Having considered the HRA and Ecological Constraints Report 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 damage to the protected dry and wet heathland as a result of excavations and vehicle movements, and potential disturbance to assemblages of nesting/overwintering birds. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site. Works vehicles entering the site will be kept to a minimum and will follow designated access routes, no storage of materials or equipment shall take place outside of these designated routes, no-refuelling of vehicles will take place on site and spill kits will be present. Excavated materials will be retained and returned to trench in the correct order of layers, excavations will not remain open overnight. Non-licensed method statements shall be produced prior to the proposed development to minimise the likelihood of impacting protected species – this will require, as a minimum, the presence of an ecological clerk of works to supervise the works.
9. 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