



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2001u
Your ref: 3544369

3 October 2024

Dear Mr Bates,

**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: Claydon

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:

- Remove 2 x sections of hedgerow – 35 metres of total hedgerow – to allow for access
- Dismantle 1 x existing 132kV tower (PHZA/PKWA18) and construct 2 x new 132kV terminal towers (PHZA/PKWA18RA&18RB) complete with sealing end platforms to provide a connection to a Solar Farm and Battery Storage scheme
- Reinstate hedgerow



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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 National Grid Electricity Distribution (West Midlands) PLC (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Tewkesbury Borough 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 132 kilovolts and therefore requires a mandatory screening.
3. The proposed development does not fall within any sensitive areas.
4. The LPA were consulted regarding the proposed development, had no objection and concluded that an Environmental Statement in connection with the proposed development is not required (ref: 24/00542/OHL).
5. Ecological surveys were conducted by Avian Ecology Ltd in 2020 to support planning for the related Solar Farm and Battery Storage scheme on the site of the proposed development and the findings were outlined in the October 2021 “Claydon Solar Farm – Ecological Assessment Report” (reference: Pegas-075-1259). The surveys identified the presence of Great Crested Newts in a pond 2.86km from the proposed development and ditches in the vicinity of the proposed development with the potential to support water voles.
6. The LPA recommended an updated walkover survey.
7. Further ecological surveys were conducted on 13th June & 19th August 2024 and the subsequent preliminary ecological appraisal reports “Land at Claydon, Area 1” and “Land at Claydon, Area 2” were issued in June and August 2024 respectively (references: R 947~0 & R 947~1). The reports concluded that the habitats present at the site of the proposed development were generally of low ecological value and are not suitable to support water vole, and the likelihood of potential presence of Great Crested Newts is considered to be low. The reports outlined a number of recommendations which shall be adhered to by the applicant.
8. There is a requirement to remove 2 sections of hedgerow, totalling 35 metres, in order to provide access to the work site. The hedgerow is



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considered to be in very poor condition and has very limited ecological value as per communications with a consultant ecologist dated 17 June 2024. The LPA confirmed in communications on 29 July 2024 that they are satisfied with the Applicants plan to remove the hedgerow, and believe the replacement hedgerow, which will be reinstated upon completion of the proposed development, will be an improvement.

9. Natural England were consulted by the LPA and confirmed in communications on 12 August 2024 they had no comment to make on the proposed development (Natural England reference: 483424).
10. Public Notices regarding the proposed development were posted in local newspapers on 1 & 15 December 2023. No representations were received regarding the proposed development by the deadline of 12 January 2024.

Yours sincerely,

John McKenna
Head of Network Planning team
Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team