



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Madeleine Pain
Southern Electric Power Distribution Plc
PO Box 36
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PH

Energy Infrastructure Planning
3-8 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2JP

Email: S37consents
@energysecurity.gov.uk
Website: www.gov.uk/desnz

Our ref: 1963u
Your ref: 33NI SUNN CHOB

22 October 2024

Dear Miss Pain,

**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: PS005189 33NI SUNN CHOB

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 12 33kV wood poles on a like-for-like basis



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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 (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Surrey Heath 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 to be installed above ground in a sensitive area;
3. The proposed development falls within the following designated sensitive areas:
 - Chobham Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Chobham Common National Nature Reserve (NNR)
 - Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the development subject to the conditions submitted in the Form B being applied on 5 June 2024 (planning reference: 23/1145/SCR).
5. The Applicant consulted with the County Archaeologist who confirmed in communications on 5 September 2023 that they had no objections to the proposed development “the works can proceed with no requirement for archaeological mitigation”.
6. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in August 2023 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
7. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted assent to the development from the period between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 (reference: 3108231510NG). The Applicant further consulted with NE to have the assent adjusted to 1 February 2025 to 30 June 2025.
8. An Ecological walkover was carried out at the site of the proposed development in April 2024 and the subsequent “Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” was issued on 7 June 2024 by CSA Environmental Ltd (reference: CSA/6811/01). It detailed mitigations such as conducting works under an Impact Avoidance Method Statement and with an



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Ecological Clerk of Works present on site, in order to minimise impacts to deciduous woodland adjacent to poles, by following alternative access routes provided and an ECoW should perform a finger-tip search to ensure that no great crested newts or hazel dormice are present prior to works commencing.

9. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) was produced in July 2024 outlining relevant construction method and specifies necessary control measures required to minimize environmental impacts.
10. Having considered the Habitats Regulations Assessment completed by Dalcour Maclaren, the Secretary of State is satisfied that there will be no likely significant effects on any National Site Network site under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This is due to the limited works to be carried out within the SPA and SAC which consists of minor vegetation clearance around the base of existing poles.

Yours sincerely,

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