



Department for
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& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1970u
Your ref: JO/LYMI E6L5 Pitmore

6 November 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/LYMI E6L5 Pitmore - New Forest SSSI

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 1 x 11kV wood pole on a like-for-like basis



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

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, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the proposed development (reference: 23/01271) and concluded EIA was not required.
5. The LPAs archaeologist confirmed in communications on 17 July 2024 that the pole to be replaced if close to a Scheduled Monument buffer zone – no concerns were raised as long as the Applicant does not travel further north than their proposed access route.
6. The Applicant consulted with Natural England who, on 21 July 2023, granted conditional assent for the proposed development to be carried out between 1 September 2024 and 28 February 2025 (reference: 1707231039NG) in line with the protocols outlined within ‘Practical ways of working in the New Forest SSSI’.
7. The Applicant sanctioned an ecological survey of the proposed work site, this was carried out by RSK Adas Ltd on 10 June 2024 and the subsequent Ecological Constraints Report (“the ecology report”) was issued on 18 July 2024 (reference: BRT69105-1385(00)).
8. The ecology report identified the site of the proposed development as an area of dry heath, dominated by common gorse – the clearance of dense gorse scrub at the base of the pole will be necessary. No potential impacts to tree root protection areas were identified. Several recommendations to mitigate the potential impacts on protected species were outlined – all of which shall be followed by the Applicant during the proposed development.
9. The Applicant provided a Habitats Regulation Assessment (“the HRA”) to Natural England, dated 17 July 2023, which outlined the potential



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

pathways to impact the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar site and the mitigations to minimise their effects.

10. Having considered the HRA and the ecology 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 effects on breeding and overwintering birds, and European dry heaths as a result of vegetation clearance, vehicle movements and excavation works. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site. The proposed development will be carried out outside of bird breeding season, the works are geographically focused and short term in nature. The proposed development will be carried out during a period of dry weather, vehicles will remain on designated access routes and the number of vehicles will be limited to only those necessary to complete the works, no refuelling will take place on site and spill kits will be available in the event of mechanical failure.
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