



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1778u  
Your ref: NL/HITL E10L5

18 November 2024

Dear Mr Luffman,

**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: HITL E10L5-Hazeley Heath 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 12 x 11kV wood poles 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 Hart District 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 Hazeley Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the proposed development (reference: 23/01376/EIA) and concluded EIA was not required. The LPA requested that the Applicant undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), a tree survey to inform an arboricultural report and to complete a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) prior to the commencement of the proposed development – all of which has been completed by the Applicant.
5. The Applicant consulted with Natural England who, on 25 September 2024 granted assent for the proposed development to be carried out between 1 October 2024 and 28 February 2025 (reference: 2808240725JC).
6. The Applicant sanctioned an ecological survey of the proposed work site, this was carried out by RSK Adas Ltd on 7 November 2023 and the subsequent Ecological Constraints Report (“the ecology report”) was issued on 22 November 2023 (reference: BRT69105-1266(00)).
7. The ecology report identified the site of the proposed development consists of tracts of heathland, scrub and woodland. Several ponds were identified in proximity of the proposed development, with connectivity provided through small streams and standing bodies of water throughout the heath. The potential presence of Great Crested Newts, reptiles, nesting birds and hazel dormice was 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.



## Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

8. A tree survey was undertaken on 12-13 August 2024 and the subsequent Arboricultural Method Statement was issued by RSK ADAS Ltd in September 2024 (reference: 1052243-22). The survey identified 10 individual trees/tree groups at risk of damage as a result of the proposed development – all trees at risk of damage were graded either B (moderate quality) or C (low quality). All work carried out within the root protection areas of these tree groups shall be supervised by a suitably qualified Arboricultural Consultant.
9. A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) was issued by RSK ADAS Ltd in August 2024 (reference: 1050155/BRT69105-1370(00)). This utilised the recommendations outlined in the ecology report and outlined mitigation measure that shall be followed by the Applicant during the proposed development.
10. The Applicant provided a Habitats Regulation Assessment (“the HRA”) to Natural England, dated 23 September 2024, which outlined the potential pathways to impact the Thames Basin Heaths SPA site and the mitigations to minimise their effects.
11. An additional UK habitat survey was carried out on 3 July 2024, and subsequently an EclA report was issued by RSK ADAS Ltd on 8 November 2024 (reference: reference: 1050155/BRT69105-1370(00)). The EclA concluded that, following the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the ecology report and CEMP, the impacts of the proposed development are largely negligible (no significant effects).
12. 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 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.



Department for  
Energy Security  
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13. 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