



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 1962u
Your ref: MN-BICE-HEAD 33NI (BLACK AND BLUE) (BLACK
AND WHITE)

18 November 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: BICE-HEAD (BLACK AND BLUE) (BLACK AND WHITE)

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 3 H poles within a span of approximately 986 metres of 33kV overhead line



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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 Cherwell District Council (“the LPA”). In particular, 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 Wendlebury Meads and Mansmoor Closes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the development on 4 April 2024 (planning reference: 24/00477/EL).
5. The Applicant consulted with Natural England (NE) regarding the SSSI designation. On 6 November 2024, NE granted assent to the development from 6 November 2024 to 28 February 2025 (reference: 0410240813JT).
6. As the development is in a SSSI, the Secretary of State requested the Applicant to produce an Ecology Survey to explore any risk and mitigation to the sensitive area.
7. An Ecology Survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 9 July 2024 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 13 August 2024 by ADAS Ltd (reference: 1050155 / BRT69105-1373(00)). The survey found that the site consists of farmland and lowland meadow habitat, with associated hedgerows and ditches, providing suitable habitat for species including bats, badgers, and great crested newts. The hedgerows and meadows within the proposed works area have the potential to support nesting birds, including Breeding Snipe and Curlew. Bat roosting opportunities were present, and the hedgerow adjacent meets the requirements to be an important and protected hedgerow. To minimise the potential impact on these species, mitigations such as a non-licenced method statement should be produced detailing working methods. Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of bird breeding season and during the reptile active period. If there are anticipated impacts to the hedgerow, a Hedgerow Removal Notice will be required from the Local Planning Authority. Additionally, if rabbit warrens are to be impacted,



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then rabbits should be humanely removed and ensuring no obstructions to the burrows.

Yours sincerely,

John McKenna
Head of Network Planning team
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