



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2007u
Your ref: JO/WIBK E1L5 Stokeford Heaths SSSI

26 March 2025

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/WIBK E1L5 Stokeford Heaths 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 2 x wood poles on an existing 11kV 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 PLC (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Dorset 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 Dorset Heathlands Ramsar & Special Protection Area (SPA), Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Stokeford Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who concluded that the proposed development is not likely to have significant environmental impacts and raised no objection (reference: P/STA/2024/04034).
5. A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Appropriate Assessment were completed on 8 June 2023 by the Applicant and submitted to Natural England.
6. Natural England issued assent on 8 August 2024 for the proposed development to be carried out between 1 October 2024 and 28 February 2025 (reference: 0806231713EC). This assent has expired, and as such the Applicant must give further written notice to Natural England before commencement of the proposed development. There have been no changes to the proposed development since the original assent was issued.
7. An ecology survey was conducted in January 2025 by RSK ADAS Limited on behalf of the Applicant, and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 19 February 2025 (reference: BRT69105-1434 (00)). The survey identified habitats of dense Gorse covering acid grassland and the potential presence of great crested newts, reptiles, nesting birds and badger. A number of recommendations to mitigate the limited impacts on protected species and habitats were outlined – these will be followed by the Applicant during the proposed development.



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8. Having considered the Ecological Constraints Report and HRA 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 the potential impacts on dry heathland and protected birds as a result of vehicle movements and excavations. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site. The risks will be mitigated by undertaking the works outside of bird breeding season under the supervision of a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works, ensuring non-necessary support vehicles do not access the protected sites, carrying out the works during a period of dry weather, and ensuring suitable spill prevention measures are in place and adhered to.
9. 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