



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2099u
Your ref: LA/PS006118/ALTL E14L5

10 April 2025

Dear Mr Armstrong,

**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: ALTON LOCAL E14L5

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 two 11kV wooden 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 East Hampshire 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 South Downs National Park, Wick Wood and Worldham Hangers Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Coombe Wood and The Lythe SSSI, East Hampshire Hangers Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wick Hill Hanger, Coombe Wood, Wells Plantation and Park Hanger, Warner's Hanger, Worldham Hanger Ancient Woodlands.
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who has no objection to the development on 6 December 2024.
5. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in February 2024 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
6. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted assent to the development from the period between 1 July 2025 to 1 October 2025 (reference: 0212240749JT).
7. An ecology survey was conducted at the proposed development site on 20 December 2024 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued by RSK ADAS Ltd on 17 January 2025 (reference: BRT69105-1486(00)). The sites comprise of an agricultural field surrounded by dense bramble scrub, along with a scrub-dominated slope featuring bramble and field maple, bordered by woodland. The survey found pole P62332 surrounded by bracken and bramble, with four woodpecker holes potentially serving as bat roots, earning a PRF-M rating (Potential Roosting Feature – Moderate). Hazel Dormouse nest boxes were noted within the woodland along the access track and adjacent to pole, and a potential badger sett was observed within the woodland to the east of the pole. The site also provides suitable habitat for widespread reptiles. Pole P19247 is situated within a broadleaved



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woodland clearing, positioned approximately 2 metres away from a disused rabbit warren which could provide a potential habitat for Hazel Dormouse. This location also offers suitable habitat on site for Great Crested Newts and widespread reptiles. The report recommends a Non-Licensed Method Statement should be prepared outlining appropriate working methods to mitigate impacts on these species and three dusk bat emergence surveys should be conducted during active bat season. If a bat roost is identified, a Natural England licence will be required for the works to proceed. Additionally, the guidelines set out by Street Works UK should be followed to avoid damage to any trees.

8. Having considered the 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. These effects could result from disturbance to dry grassland, broad-leaved deciduous and coniferous woodland habitats, due to excavations and vehicle movements. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site. The works are expected to take two to three days and will occur during dry weather conditions. As such any open excavations will be closed during the same day. A competent person will assess access routes prior to commencement of work, and all works vehicles will remain on designated access routes. Refuelling will occur offsite, and spill kits will be present on all vehicles. Additionally, any excavated materials will be retained and returned to the trench in the correct order of layers.
9. In light of the proposed mitigations, 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