



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2084u
Your ref: TN/ MILA E4L5/ New Town

17th April 2025

Dear Miss Tara Noble

**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: TN / Mill Lane E4L5 / New Town

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 a single 240/414V low voltage wooden electricity pole on the New Forest SSSI.



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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 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, the New Forest SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar and an Impact Risk Zone.
4. The Applicant consulted the county Archaeologist on 28 June 2024 who responded via email on 11 September 2024 advising the pole near Rippleside is within the Red Alert buffer zone of a Scheduled Monument but not within the Scheduled Monument area and therefore should keep ground disturbance to a minimum.
5. The Applicant consulted Natural England. Natural England responded on 30 October 2024 granting assent for the proposed development covering the period of 1 October 2025 – 28 February 2026 subject to adherence to the conditions laid out on the document (reference:1010240713JT).
6. The Applicant consulted the LPA on 28 June 2024. The LPA concluded their checks and had no objections to make on the proposed development on 28 August 2024.
7. An Ecological Constraint Report was issued on 8 January 2025 by RSK ADAS Limited (reference: BRT69105-1454(00)). The report determined the ground around the pole contained no ground flora. The pole is directly adjacent to a line of trees, with the branches of a Holly tree encroaching on to it, which provides suitable habitat for nesting birds. No trees are proposed to be impacted by the works. However, the works should avoid the root area of any surrounding trees. The proposed development is likely to adversely impact a widespread of reptiles and the Ecology of the site in the absence of mitigations, especially in relation to nesting birds. It is therefore recommended that the Applicant follows the recommendations outlined in the Ecological Constraints report to minimise the risk of impacts on Wildlife and protected species.



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8. The Applicant provided a Habitat Regulations Assessment ("the HRA") which was carried out 8 October 2024, the document provided details on work methods, risks to the protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures. Having considered the HRA and Ecological Constraints 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 disturbance to the Heathland and Heathland habitats located in/ around the proposed site. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site. The Applicant has provided appropriate mitigations on the HRA advising that the proposed works will be scheduled for a period of dry weather, vehicles will only use the proposed access routes (as per assent plan), and vehicles present on site will carry spill kits in event of an oil leak.
9. All soil will be separated during excavations and retained on Teram sheet to ensure that it can be reinstated in correct orders of layers. All excavations will be opened and closed on the same day, unsupervised excavations will not be left open overnight for the protection of the public and animals. The proposed development will be carried out outside of the bird nesting season. Subsequently, the Applicant has advised that pre-work checks will be carried out prior to works to ensure breeding birds are not present - where reptiles are identified, the advice of an Ecologist will be sought.
10. Considering 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.
11. The proposed development is a minor modification to an existing piece of infrastructure and not likely to have a significant effect on the Natural Landscape.

Yours sincerely,

John McKenna
Head of Network Planning team
Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team