



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

John O'Reilly
Southern Electric Power Distribution Plc
New Forest Depot
Minstead
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PE

Energy Infrastructure Planning

3-8 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2JP

Email: S37consents
@energysecurity.gov.uk
Website: www.gov.uk/desnz

Our ref: 2159u
Your ref: JO/FOIN E1L5 River Avon SSSI

9 May 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/FOIN E1L5 RIVER AVON 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 a single wooden pole as part of an 11kV, 150 metre line



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 (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of New Forest 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 River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the development and concluded that ‘the proposal would not have a significant impact’ on 27 January 2025 (planning reference: ENQ/25/20007).
5. The Applicant consulted with the County Archaeologist who confirmed in communications on 9 January 2025 that they had no objections to the proposed development.
6. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted assent to the development from the period between 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025 (reference: 2510241120JC).
7. The works are scheduled to take place between April and June when water levels are typically at their lowest and dry conditions are more likely. If any active breeding sites are identified during this period works will be delayed and an extension to the NE assent will be applied for.
8. An ecological survey was conducted on 5 March 2025 at the site of the proposed development, and a subsequent “Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” was issued by Wessex Ecology. The survey found that the pole is located a few metres from the road, with shrubs growing in between. The shrubs offer potential nesting habitat for birds. While the area around the pole is heavily shaded and therefore considered unlikely to support reptiles, their presence cannot be entirely ruled out. As a precaution, it is recommended that the proposed works be carried out of the bird nesting season.

Yours sincerely,



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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