



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Matthew Norris
Southern Electric Power Distribution Plc
Walton Road
Drayton
Portsmouth
PO6 1UJ

Energy Infrastructure Planning

3-8 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2JP

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

Our ref: 2102u
Your ref: MN/ARNE-HINC(BLUE)

19 May 2025

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: PS006759 ARNE-HINC (BLUE)

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 four wooden poles as part of an 33kV, 3,668 metre 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 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 Ancient Woodlands, The New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), The New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), New Forest Special Protected Area (SPA), New Forest Ramsar and New Forest National Park.
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the development on 10 February 2025 (planning reference: 24/01487OHL).
5. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in December 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 conditional assent to the development from the period between 1 October 2025 and 30 December 2025 (reference: 1212241230LJ).
7. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 9 January 2025 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 23 January 2025 by ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1488(00)). The survey found that poles 20, 36, and 37 are in wetland habitats, and pole 41 lies within dense scrub between two woodland strips. Cracks in poles 20, 36 and 37 provide potential bat roosting sites, with additional suitable roosting habitat in trees near poles 20 and 41 and along their access routes. Surrounding areas of poles 20, 37 and 41 support habitats for Sand Lizard, Smooth Snake, and ground nesting birds, while tree nesting opportunities exist near pole. There were opportunities for ground nesting birds around poles 20, 37 and 41 and tree nesting opportunities along the access routes to poles 20 and 41. Poles 20 and 41 also provide suitable



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habitats for Hazel Dormouse, Great Crested Newt and Badger, and the nearby Avon Water watercourse near pole 20 is suitable for Otter.

8. To mitigate ecological impact, access to poles 36, 37 and 41 should be rerouted via existing tracks to avoid potential damage to Annex I habitats. Pole 20 should receive up to three endoscope surveys for bats, and poles 36 and 37 should each have one. If not feasible, equivalent emergence surveys should be conducted between May and September. A non-licensed method statement and presence of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) are recommended to avoid impacts to widespread reptiles, Great Crested Newt, bats, badger, hazel dormouse, otter, nesting birds, and schedule 5 and schedule 8 species. Excavations near poles 20 and 41 must follow Street Works (NJUG Volume 4) guidance. Vegetation clearance should occur from September to February, outside of this window, an ECoW must check for nesting birds. Work may be delayed if Schedule 1 birds are present and a 5-metre buffer must be maintained around all other nests.
9. 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. This is due to potential disturbance to bog marshes, heath scrub and coniferous habitats and breeding birds, as a result of excavations and vehicle movements. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site.
10. The works are expected to take 1 to 2 days to complete during a period of dry weather. As such any open excavations will be closed during the same day. An assessment of access routes will be conducted by a competent person prior to conducting works. The proposed development will be carried out outside of bird breeding season and works vehicles will stay on proposed access routes and will not drive on habitats beyond these routes.
11. 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