



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2115u
Your ref: JO/YETM E2L5/Ryewater Farm SSSI

28 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/YETM E2L5/RYEWATER FARM 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 three wooden poles as part of an 11kV, 365 metre line
- Refurbish one 11kV wooden transformer pole



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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 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 Bracket's Coppice and Ryewater Farm Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Bracket's Coppice Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dorset National Landscape.
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who responded with no objections to the development and concluded that an EIA is not required ‘due to the short-term nature of the works, the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects’ on 24 October 2024 (planning reference: P/STA/2024/05811).
5. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in January 2025 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 15 July 2025 and 30 September 2025 (reference: 1909241624FG).
7. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 22 January 2025 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 21 February 2025 by ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1524(00)). Pole seven contained a potential roost feature (PRF-M) suitable for multiple bats to use for breeding and hibernation. The site provided ideal conditions for bats to commute and forage, as well as for Hazel Dormouse, widespread reptile species, amphibian, and nesting birds. No evidence of badgers or setts was found during the survey however, the site offered suitable habitat. The hedgerow adjacent to pole six was protected under the Hedgerows



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Regulations 1997. While the hedgerow bank might be impacted, the hedgerow itself will remain intact, therefore not requiring a hedgerow removal notice. Mitigation measures included conducting three endoscope surveys for pole seven between May and September, spaced at least three weeks apart. If a bat roost is discovered, a licence would be required before any works commence. A non-licensed method statement should be prepared for badgers and Hazel Dormice. This should also include a method statement for widespread amphibian and reptile species. As works will take place during the bird nesting season, a nesting bird check should be conducted no more than 24 hours prior. If an active nest is found, a 5m buffer should be maintained around it until any chicks have fully developed. Additionally, all works should be carried out during daylight hours to minimise disturbance to bat and badger foraging and commuting behaviour.

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. This is due to potential disturbance to Molinia meadow habitats and Bechstein's bat, 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. The works are expected to take two days to complete during a period of dry weather. As such any open excavations will be closed the same day and reinstated in the original order of removal. Vehicles will remain on the approved access route identified in the assent plan, with spill kits readily available. All works will be conducted during daylight hours, and no additional light sources will be installed.
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