



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2166u
Your ref: SP/NC81542

29 May 2025

Dear Mr Wade,

**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: POTTER HOUSE - HIGH FLATTS 66KV OVERHEAD
LINE REBUILD**

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 66kV H pole with a single pole
- Rebuild 150 metres of 66kV overhead 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 Northern Powergrid (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Durham County 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 Congburn Wood Ancient Woodland and Walldridge Fell Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
4. The Applicant consulted Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT), who confirmed in communications on 24 January 2024 that no poles are located on DWT land.
5. An ecology survey was conducted at the proposed development site on 21 February 2024, and the subsequent ‘EcoCheck’ report was issued on 29 February 2024 by ADAS Ltd (reference: WNT69105-1810 (00) NPG). The report identified that the pole set for replacement is located within broadleaved deciduous woodland, approximately eight metres from the edge of the SSSI; however, no suitable habitats were present at its base. One of the poles positioned on the border of SSSI provided a suitable habitat for nesting birds, with a recommendation that a competent person checks for nests before any vegetation related work begins.
6. The Applicant consulted the LPA who raised no objections to the development on 27 March 2025 (planning reference: DM/24/01979/FPA).
7. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive area and granted assent for the development from 12 May 2025 to 10 June 2025 (reference: Walldridge Fell SSSI). If the assent period expires before work commences, the Applicant is not required to consult Natural England again, as the proposed development is considered unlikely to disturb or harm the notified features of the SSSI.
8. In communications with the Ecologist who conducted the ecology survey, they confirmed on 22 May 2025 that a follow up site visit had



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taken place, with the recommendation that NE assent would not be required.

Yours sincerely,

John McKenna
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