



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2156u
Your ref: MN-CERA-PIDD-P78

25 June 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: PS007388 CERA-PIDD-P163

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 within a span of approximately 310 metres of a 33kV overhead line

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 Settlement and field system on Black Hill Scheduled Monument, Black Hill Down Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Cerne & Sydling Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dorset National Landscape.
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who responded with no objection to the development and concluded that an EIA is not required on 9 April 2025 (planning reference: P/STA//2025/01678).
5. The Applicant consulted with Historic England, who advised in communications dated 14 February 2025 that a minimum distance of 10 metres should be maintained from the official monument boundary.
6. 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.
7. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted assent to the development from the period between 1 October 2025 to 30 December 2025 (reference: 1701251203NG).
8. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 17 February 2025 and the subsequent "Ecological Constraints Report" was issued on 12 March 2025 by ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1506(00)). The survey identified that the pole was classified as PRF-I. Suitable habitats present were recorded for reptiles, Hazel Dormouse, Roman Snail, and nesting birds. A section of woodland along the access route may require clearance. Additionally, the access route offers suitable habitat for badger sett creation, and the potential presence of hidden setts in isolated scrub

areas within the field where the pole is located. A number of recommendations to mitigate the limited impacts on protected species and habitats were outlined and will be followed by the Applicant throughout the development.

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 dry grassland and heath, 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 be completed within one to two days when ground conditions are dry, with any open excavations backfilled or closed on the same day. A competent person will assess access routes prior to the commencement of works. The proposed development is scheduled outside of bird breeding season. All works vehicles will remain on designated access routes and will be equipped with spill kits in the event of mechanical failure.
10. 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