



Department for
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& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2172u
Your ref: JO/HINC E2L5 New Forest SSSI

25 June 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/HINC E2L5 NEW FOREST 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 within a span of approximately 377 metres of an 11kV 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 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 New Forest National Park, New Forest Ramsar, The New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), The New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and New Forest Special Protected Area (SPA).
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who responded with no objection to the development on 15 November 2024 (planning reference: 24/01169OHL).
5. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in July 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 September 2025 to 28 February 2026 (reference: 3107241619CG).
7. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 20 March 2025, and the subsequent “Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” was issued by Wessex Ecology. The survey identified that, at location two, gorse shrub and bracken habitats near access routes and poles may provide suitable conditions for ground nesting birds and reptiles. Woodpecker holes found in pole two may provide nesting or roosting opportunities for birds and bats. 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.
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 the potential disturbance to European dry heath and alluvial forest habitats along with 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. The works are expected to take two days to complete, with any open excavations closed on the same day. A visual assessment of access routes and work areas will be carried out in advance. The proposed development is scheduled outside the bird breeding season, with vehicles accessing the site via designated routes. Only those essential for pole replacement will be permitted within the designated habitats. All vehicles will be refuelled offsite and spill kits will be available in the case of mechanical failure.

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