



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2238u
Your ref: JO/MILA E4L5 Hyde New Forest

11th September 2025

Dear Mr John 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/MILA E4L5 Hyde New Forest

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:

- The replacement of 3 11kV electricity wood poles in New Forest SSSI.

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 PLC ("the Applicant") in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of New Forest National Park ("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 New Forest SSSI, The New Forest SAC, New Forest National Park and Impact Risk Zone.
4. The Applicant consulted the LPA. The LPA concluded their checks and advised that the proposed development is not considered EIA and had no objections to make on 27 May 2025.
5. The Applicant consulted Natural England. NE responded on 22 January 2025 granting conditional assent subject to strict adherence with the following conditions:
 - Vehicle access routes and protective measures to avoid damage to SSSI features on these routes are to be agreed with landowners in advance of the works commencing.
 - The new poles to be used as replacements should be such that contamination of ground in SSSI habitat from the poles is avoided.
6. Natural England assent covers the period between 1 September 2025 to 28 February 2026.
7. The Applicant consulted the County Archaeologist who responded on 26 March 2025 with no issues with all three poles.
8. An Ecological Constraints Report was issued on 16 May 2025 by RSK ASDAS Limited. The report determined that the Heathland and Gorse habitat offered suitable habitat for widespread reptiles and nesting birds including schedule 1 ground nesting birds. P1 was located within other neutral grasslands and P3 was located within Bracken.
9. The proposed development is likely to adversely impact the Ecology of the site in the absence of mitigations. It is therefore recommended that the Applicant follows the recommendations outlined in the Ecological Constraints Report to minimise the risk of impacts on Wildlife and protected species.

10. The Applicant provided a Habitats Regulation Assessment ("the HRA") which was carried out 13 January 2024, the document provided details on work methods, risks to the protected sites and proposed mitigation measures.
11. 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 excavation and vehicle movement causing disturbance to the Heathland habitats located in/around the proposed site. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site.
12. The Applicant has provided appropriate mitigations on the HRA advising that the proposed works will be undertaken outside of bird nesting season and is anticipated to take approximately two days. Work vehicles will remain on designated access routes (as per assent plans) and will not drive on habitats beyond these points. Excavated spoil will be retained on Teram sheet and returned to excavation in correct order of layers. Excavations will be opened and closed on the same day and not left open overnight. There will be no storage of materials or equipment beyond designated routes. Although works are expected to be conducted outside of bird nesting season some species may still be present. Therefore, where vegetation is present around the poles and cannot be avoided a visual assessment will be undertaken by the construction team in advance to ensure that breeding birds are not present.
13. Considering the proposed mitigation, 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.
14. The proposed development is a minor modification to an existing piece of infrastructure and not likely to have a significant effect on the Natural Landscape.

Yours sincerely,

John McKenna
Head of Network Planning team
Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team