Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

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Matthew Norris
Southern Electric Power Distribution PLC
Walton Road
Drayton
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Our ref: 2302u
Your ref: MN-AWRE-BASI-Decoy Pit, Pools & Woods

19 September 2025

Dear Mr Matthew 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: MN-AWRE-BASI-Decoy Pit, Pools & Woods
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 two electricity poles supporting a 33kV overhead line approximately 610m.

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 West Berkshire 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 Decoy Pit, Pools and Woods SSSI, Ancient Woodlands 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 or consider the works will have a significant adverse impact on the designated site and therefore raised no objections on 1 September 2025.
5. The Applicant consulted Natural England who responded on 1 April 2025 granting assent. NE assent covers the period between 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025.
6. An Ecological Constraints Report was issued on 15 May 2025 by RSK ASDAS Limited. The report determined that the proposed access route to P63 and P64 followed a cleared woodland ride flanked by Pedunculate Oak and Silver Birch, with the pole route situated at its centre. The ride was dominated by cut Bracken, which became less frequent where the habitat became wetter and large tussocks of Purple Moor-grass increased in prevalence. P63 was located within a dry area of the ride, surrounded by cut Bracken. P64 was located further south of the ride within dry, open heathland, amongst a stand of Hawthorn and Gorse scrub.
7. 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.
8. 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