



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2318u
Your ref: JO/HINC E1L5 Aldridge Cotts

30 October 2025

Dear Mr John,

**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 E1L5 Aldridge Cotts

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 11kV freestanding transformer pole



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

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 Authority (“the LPA”). In particular, 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 National Park, SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site.
4. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) dated 21 January 2025 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
5. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated 20 March 2025 (“The Ecology Report”) was conducted by Wessex Ecology. The report identified potential ecological sensitivities including dormouse presence, woodpecker holes potential bat or bird roosts and reptile habitat. A number of recommendations to mitigate limited impacts on protected species and habitats were outlined. The Applicant must adhere to all recommendations outlined in the Ecology Report throughout the development.
6. Archaeological consultation was undertaken with the New Forest National Park Authority archaeologists on 14 July 2025 who advised that a Stone marker near Aldridgehill Cottage must be preserved and not be disturbed, and a watching brief should be implemented if works occur nearby.
7. Natural England was consulted and, in its response dated 26 June 2025 (ref: 1306250852JT), issued conditional assent for the works to proceed between 1 September 2025 and 28 February 2026, subject to ground protection and ecological safeguards.
8. The LPA was consulted regarding the proposed development and noted no objection to the development on 24 September 2025 (planning reference: 25/00720OHL)
9. Having considered the Habitat Regulations Assessment and the Ecology Report, the Secretary of State considers there may be likely



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

significant effects on a National Site Network site under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This is due to potential disturbance to qualifying habitats within the New Forest SAC, SPA, and Ramsar Site as a result of vehicle movements and excavation works.

10. 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, where excavations will be undertaken during the day and will not be left open overnight. The proposed development will be carried out outside of bird breeding season (1 September – 28 February).
11. Site vehicles will stay on will remain on designated access routes and avoid driving over sensitive habitats. Ground protection will be used where required, spoil will be stored on Teram sheets and reinstated in the correct order, and no refuelling or material storage will occur on site. Spill kits will be available on all vehicles. Visual checks for dormice, reptiles and bats will be undertaken prior to works, and a Watching Brief will be implemented near Aldridgehill Cottage to safeguard the archaeological stone marker.

These measures are secured through:

- Natural England Assent (ref: 1306250852JT) dated 26 June 2025.
- Condition #4 in the Section 37 Consent.

12. In light of 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.

Yours sincerely,

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