



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2297u
Your ref: (TN/ MILA E4L5/ Hungerford)

20 November 2025

Dear Miss Noble,

**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: (TN/ MILA E4L5/ HUNGERFORD)

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 five low voltage wooden poles
- Replace approximately 592 metres of a 240/415v overhead line



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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 The New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), The New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and New Forest National Park.
4. The County Archaeologist responded on 11 September 2024, following a consultation, stating that there were no recorded or visible heritage assets affected by the pole replacement or access route.
5. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 12 November 2024 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 8 January 2025 by ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1454(00)). The survey identified that, at the Hungerford location, only three of the five poles required an ecological assessment. Of these, one pole was situated within an area of bracken, scrub and heath, another was located on open ground adjacent to a fence line with overhanging tree branches and the third was positioned deciduous woodland, which provides suitable habitats for nesting birds and widespread reptiles. 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.
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 on 12 June 2025 granted conditional assent to the



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development from the period between 1 October 2025 and 28 February 2026 (reference: 2105251339AS).

8. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who responded with no objection to the development on 11 August 2025 (planning reference: 25/00695OHL).
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 bog woodland, European dry heath, North Atlantic wet heaths, and alluvial forest habitats along with breeding birds, southern damselfly, and stag beetle, 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. Mitigation measures to reduce impacts include ensuring vehicles remain on designated routes to limit their movement onto the designated habitat and always carrying spill kits. Access routes and work areas will be inspected prior to the works taking place to confirm the absence of reptiles. Additionally, the development will be scheduled outside of the bird breeding season. These measures are secured by condition 4 of the consent issued under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
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