



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2350u
Your ref: MN-WoolmerForestSSSI

8 January 2026

Dear Mr 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: LANCE4

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 one wooden pole as part of an 11kV, 2600 metres 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 East Hampshire District Council/South Downs 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 Woolmer Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (SPA), and South Downs National Park.
4. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 30 July 2024 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 2 August 2024 by ADAS Ltd (reference: SEA69105-193). The survey found that the area surrounding the pole provides suitable habitats for ground nesting birds, badgers, and all twelve native species of reptiles and amphibians, including Great Crested Newt, Sand Lizard and Smooth Snake. It also supports hazel dormouse. Additionally, a woodpecker hole in the pole may offer potential roosting opportunities for 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.
5. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in November 2024 which ruled out the risk of likely significant effects on the qualifying features of the SPA.
6. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who responded with no objection to the development on 25 June 2025 (planning reference: SDNP/25/02098/BBPN).
7. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and on 11 November 2025 granted unconditional assent to the development from the period between 1 January 2026 and 30 March 2026 (reference: 0311251419AS).



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8. Having considered the HRA, the Secretary of State considers there will not be any likely significant effects on a National Site Network site under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This is due to the works being small in scale and temporary, resulting in no changes to the existing layout or habitats, and will be completed during winter, outside of bird nesting season for all qualifying species of the SPA.
9. In light of these considerations, 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