



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2401u
Your ref: MN/BIRDHAM E1L5

20 March 2025

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: BIRDHAM E1L5 11NI - PS006102

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 four wooden poles as part of an 11kV, 240 metre 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 Chichester District 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 Chichester Harbour National Landscape, Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protected Area (SPA), and Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar.
4. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in October 2025 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
5. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted unconditional assent to the development from the period between 22 October 2025 and 21 June 2027 (reference: 1010250849JT).
6. The Applicant consulted with the LPA, which raised no objection on 26 November 2025, subject to the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to the commencement of development (planning reference: 25/02527/OHL).
7. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 3 December 2025 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 14 January 2026 by ADAS LTD (reference: BRT69105-1665 (00)). The survey identified potential roost features suitable for multiple bats (PRF-M) on poles P26253 and P26254, with all four poles also containing features suitable for individual bats (PRF-I). The woodland and hedgerow on site provided suitable habitat for nesting birds hazel dormouse, while wet woodland and waterlogged areas may support otter, commuting great crested



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newt and widespread reptiles and amphibians. A stream approximately five metres north of pole P26252 provided suitable habitat for water vole and otter. Access routes to poles P26253 and P26254 were partially waterlogged in areas at the time of survey and may be difficult for vehicle access. Recommended mitigation measures indicated that poles P26253 and poles P26254 should each undergo three detailed endoscope inspections of their PRF-M features at least 3 weeks apart, with additional endoscope inspection of the PRF-I holes on all four poles and within the early mature grey poplar, which can be undertaken on the day of works prior to felling. A non-licensed method statement (NLMS) should be prepared for great crested newt, hazel dormouse, badger, otter and widespread reptiles and amphibians. An ecological clerk of works should be present during works to perform the required species checks. Any vegetation clearance should be undertaken between September 2026 and February 2027 to avoid the main bird nesting season, however, if an active nest is identified at any time, works must pause immediately and an appropriate buffer maintained until the young have fledged. All works should be carried out during daylight hours to avoid disturbance to bat foraging and commuting activity. Any excavations should either be backfilled, covered, or provided with a suitable means of exit for wildlife. Temporary track matting will be required to facilitate access and minimise ground disturbance across waterlogged areas along access routes to pole locations P26253 and P26254.

8. ADAS LTD produced a CEMP in March 2026 which identified environmental requirements to be followed during the development.
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 intertidal mud and sand flats and deciduous woodland habitats and breeding birds, as a result of excavations. 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 one to two days to complete and will be scheduled to minimise any likely significant effect to designated habitats. All vehicles will remain on designated routes, with spill kits readily available. An ecologist will assess vehicle access routes and areas around the poles for breeding birds and associated nests prior to works commencing. These measures are secured by condition 3 of the consent issued under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.



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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