



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2413u
Your ref: JO/CHRI E3L5 North Ripley

2 April 2026

Dear Mr O'Reilly,

**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/CHRI E3L5 NORTH RIPLEY

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, 189 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 New Forest 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 the New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and New Forest National Park.
4. The Applicant consulted with the LPA which had no objection to the development on 27 May 2025 (planning reference: 25/00438OHL).
5. Natural England (NE) was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted conditional assent to the development from the period between 1 October 2025 and 30 December 2025 (reference: 1212241230LJ). The conditions require that, where vehicles are required to cross wet or soft ground, low ground pressure vehicles are used to avoid ground damage, and that the replacement pole is well seasoned to minimise risk of chemical leaching to the soil. Although the assent period has expired and works are now scheduled to take place between 1 September 2026 and 31 December 2026, further consultation with Natural England confirmed that a new assent is not required, as the proposed development is considered unlikely to disturb or adversely affect the notified features of the SSSI.
6. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 15 October 2025, and the subsequent “Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” was issued by Wessex Ecology. The survey found that, at location 3, lowland heath, dwarf shrub and acid grassland provide suitable habitat for reptiles and nesting birds. To mitigate potential ecological impacts, where works are scheduled to take place outside the reptile hibernation period, vegetation should be cut back by hand or strimmer the day prior to works. Works should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season, where this is not possible, the habitat



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must be checked for nesting birds by an ecologist immediately prior to works, with all excavations to be backfilled the same day.

7. The proposed development is a minor modification to an existing piece of infrastructure and is likely to have minimal visual impact on the National Park in which it is located.

Yours sincerely,

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