



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2415u  
Your ref: JO/BOVI E4L5 Winfrith Heath

15<sup>th</sup> May 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/BOVI E4L5 Winfrith Heath

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:



## Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

- The replacement of a single 11kV wood pole on an existing overhead line approximately 174m.

### Secretary of State considerations:

1. 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 Dorset Council (“the LPA”). In particular, in reaching his decision the Secretary of State notes the following factors:
  - a) The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 (mandatory EIA);
  - b) 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.
  - c) The proposed development is located within the Winfrith Heath SSSI, Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar and Impact Risk Zone.
  - d) On 11 August 2025 the LPA concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects, and a full EIA was not required. The LPA raised no objections to the proposed development.
  - e) Natural England was consulted regarding the designated sensitive areas and granted assent to the development from the period between 1 September 2026 and 28 February 2027 based on the HRAs submitted regarding the proposed development (Natural England reference: 1606251335JC).
  - f) The Applicant consulted the County Archaeologist, who advised, provided that the appropriate mitigation measures described in email correspondence dated 18 September 2025 are implemented, no archaeological concerns are anticipated.
  - g) A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was prepared by Wessex Ecology on 4 December 2025, which identified that the site lies within multiple designated sites known for its Northern Atlantic wet heath, lowland and wetland heathlands. The survey identified the heathland offers suitable for breeding and ground nesting birds, including Dartford Warbler and Nightjar. The Heathland also provides optimal habitat for smooth snake and other common reptiles. The report concluded that the pole



## Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

replacement is unlikely to result in significant ecological harm, provided the mitigations set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (reference: Winfrith Heath SSSI (part of Dorset Heathlands SAC, SPA & Ramsar) Blacknoll, Dorset. Wessex Ecology December 2025) are implemented.

h) The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) on 16 June 2025 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.

2. Having considered the HRA, the Secretary of State considers that in the absence of mitigation the proposed development could give rise to adverse ecological effects. This is due to the excavations and vehicle movements which may cause disturbance to habitats and possible disturbance to species.
3. The Applicant has outlined appropriate mitigation measures in the HRA, including works will be undertaken when ground conditions are driest and following the completion of bird breeding season in line with Natural England assent period, vehicles will stay on designated routes (and will not drive widely on habitats beyond these route) and a competent person will be employed to check for reptiles prior to excavations.
4. The proposed development is a minor modification to an existing infrastructure. Having considered the evidence and proposed mitigations the Secretary of State is satisfied beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there will be no Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site.

Yours sincerely,

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