



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2434u
Your ref: JO/CHRI E10L5 Marsh Farm

22 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/CHRI E10L5 MARSH FARM

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 two wooden poles forming part of a 969 metre, 11kV 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 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 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 Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Avon Valley Special Protected Area (SPA), and Avon Valley Ramsar.
4. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in February 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 on 21 February 2025 granted unconditional assent to the development from the period between 1 September 2025 and 31 December 2025 (reference: 2102250758JC). 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 22 April 2025 and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 30 June 2025 by ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1535 (00)). The survey identified reed, bramble scrub and willow as providing suitable nesting habitat for Cetti’s Warbler. Ditches and wet grassland were present with potential to support Great Crested Newt, while grassland, ditches and hedgerow



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offered suitable habitat for reptiles. A wet ditch approximately 25 metres from the site of works provides suitable foraging habitat for water vole. To mitigate ecological impacts, works are recommended to take place between September and November to avoid peak wintering and breeding bird seasons. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be prepared before in advance of the works, setting out measures to avoid pollution of the ditches and the SSSI. A Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) covering Great Crested Newt, water vole and Cetti's Warbler is required, alongside a method statement for widespread reptiles.

7. The Applicant consulted the County Archaeologist, who confirmed on 3 October 2025 that there were no concerns regarding impacts on archaeological remains.
8. The Applicant consulted with the LPA who had no objection to the development on 22 January 2026 (planning reference: P/25/03806/PDNOT).
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 lowland grassland habitats, 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. The risks will be mitigated by:
 - scheduling the works outside the bird breeding season
 - the short and localised nature of the proposed development – works are anticipated to take up to two days to complete
 - vehicles will access the site via designated access routes, avoiding significant vegetation where possible. Where this cannot be avoided, including small areas around the poles, a supervising ecologist will carry out visual checks to confirm that breeding birds are not present
 - all excavations will be opened and reinstated on the same day to avoid reptiles and mammals getting stuck in the holes

These mitigations are secured by condition three of the associated consent granted 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.



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Yours sincerely,

John McKenna
Head of Network Planning team
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