



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2521u
Your ref: JO/LANG E6L5 Lepe

15 July 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/LANG E6L5 LEPE

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 three wooden poles forming part of 423 metre, 11kV overhead line



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

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 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 North Solent Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, Lepe Point Local Nature Reserve, North Solent National Nature Reserve and New Forest National Park.
4. The Applicant produced a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in January 2026 which provided details on the working method, risks to protected sites, and proposed mitigation measures.
5. Natural England (NE) was consulted on the designated sensitive areas and on 22 January 2026 granted unconditional assent for the development for the period between 1 September 2026 and 31 March 2027 (reference: 0701261302JC).
6. The Applicant consulted with the LPA which had no objection to the development on 11 March 2026 (planning reference: 26/00066OHL).
7. An ecology survey was conducted at the site of the proposed development on 26 March 2026, and the subsequent “Ecological Constraints Report” was issued on 20 May 2026 by ADAS Ltd (reference: BRT69105-1728 (00)). The survey identified that at location B, dense scrub, grassland, hedgerows, reedbeds, tree bases, and woodland provided suitable habitat for Great Crested Newt, reptiles, hazel dormouse, nesting birds, bats, and badger. Five ponds were identified within 250m of the proposed works; however, these could not be accessed during the survey to assess its suitability for Great Crested Newt. As a precautionary measure, the ponds have been assumed to be suitable, with potential for movement between the ponds and the works area. A number of recommendations to mitigate the limited impacts on protected species and habitats were outlined,



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

these will be followed by the Applicant during the proposed development.

8. 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 wetland habitats, non-breeding birds and over wintering waterfowl, as a result of vehicle movements & intrusive excavation. The Secretary of State has considered whether there could be an Adverse Effect on Integrity of the protected site. The works are scheduled to take place at the end of the bird breeding season. Vegetation will be checked before and during works to ensure breeding birds are not present. If active nests are identified, alternative access routes will be used where possible, otherwise, works will be postponed until nesting activity has ceased. Given the proximity of the poles to residential properties, the likelihood of overwintering species being present is considered low. Site access will follow the proposed route, avoiding significant stands of vegetation. Only essential vehicles will enter the designated habitats, and all vehicles will carry spill kits. These measures are secured by condition four of the consent issued under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
9. 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.
10. 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