

Our Ref: 22001719

1<sup>st</sup> April 2022

The Planning Department  
Winchester City Council  
The Guildhall, City Offices  
Colebrook Street  
Winchester  
SO23 9LJ



4 Bredon Court  
Brockridge Park  
Twyning  
Gloucestershire  
GL20 6EE

Dear Sir/Madam,

**The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 – Request for Screening Opinion**  
**Scheme name: EUN985 – Brockwood House EIA Screening Opinion Request**

We write on behalf of our client, Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD), to request a Screening Opinion in accordance with Regulation 10(1) of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations'), to establish if the proposed works to upgrade the existing Overhead Line (OHL) to 3-phase from 2 wires would constitute "Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development".

The request is being made in accordance with Regulation 10(1) as our client intends to make an application for an Electricity Act 1989 Section 37 Consent regarding this proposed development.

The information provided in this request satisfies the requirements outlined in Regulation 10(2) of the EIA Regulations.

**Proposed Development**

SEPD is a regulated utility company with statutory responsibilities for the supply of electricity. Section 9(1) of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) state:

- (1) "It shall be the duty of an electricity distributor –
- a. To develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity distribution."

The proposed development is located adjacent to Mill Lane, to the west of Brockbridge and to the north-east of the village of Droxford and will consist of the following works (as shown on the accompanying information plan and design document):

- The installation of 80m of 3 phase 95ABC to the existing overhead electric line over two spans at Mill Lane, Brockbridge, SO32 3AJ (National Grid Reference: SU 61222 18674).
- This will involve removing the existing overhead line and reinforcing this with a new upgraded line to 3 phase 95ABC. No pole replacements will be required.
- Bucket trucks will be used to carry out the reinforcement works. During the works, bucket trucks will be situated at both ends of the line and linesmen will pull the overhead cables up by hand and onto the line. As the works are located above the highway, no new accesses will be required. Traffic management will be put in place during the works to ensure minimal disruption to traffic flows on Mill Lane.

No vegetation clearance will be required to facilitate the works.

The proposed upgrading of the OHL to 3-phase is required in order to provide an increased load to ensure a suitable supply can be maintained to Brockwood House.

### **The Electricity Works (EIA) Regulations**

The requirement for EIA is either mandatory or conditional, depending on which Schedule of the EIA Regulations the development is classified as. Regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations defines 'EIA development' as being any of the following:

Development of a description set out in Schedule 1;

Development of a description set out in Schedule 2 if –

- o An EIA report is provided to the relevant authority in connection with an application for a Section 36 or 37 consent, or a Section 36 variation for the development; or
- o The relevant authority makes a screening decision that the development is EIA development;

Development of any other description for which an application for a Section 36 or 37 consent, or Section 36 variation, is made (or may be made) if the relevant authority makes a screening decision that the development is EIA development.

The proposed development is considered to constitute Schedule 2 development requiring a screening opinion as it involves the installation of an above ground electric line within one or more 'sensitive areas', namely the South Downs National Park.

In the context of the EIA Regulations an 'electric line' is defined in Section 64 of the Electricity Act 1989 which states:

*"electric line' means any line which is used for carrying electricity for any purpose and includes, unless the context otherwise requires—*

- a) any support of any such line, that is to say, any structure, pole or other thing in, on, by or from which any such line is or may be supported, carried or suspended;*
- b) any apparatus connected to any such line for the purpose of carrying electricity; and*
- c) any wire, cable, tube, pipe or other similar thing (including its casing or coating) which surrounds or supports, or is surrounded or supported by, or is installed in close proximity to, or is supported, carried or suspended in association with, any such line;"*

Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations details the selection criteria by which Schedule 2 developments are assessed on the likelihood of having a significant environmental impact. Three key criteria are set out:

Characteristics of the development

The environmental sensitivity of the location; and

The characteristics of the potential impact (magnitude and duration).

Therefore, we have considered the development against each of these criteria.

### **Characteristics of the Development**

The proposed development is small in scale, consisting of the reinforcement of the existing 2 wires to 3-phase 95ABC along two spans of existing OHL. The upgraded OHL will not look significantly altered from the existing line, to be in keeping with the current setting and the rest of the electricity network in this area.

All waste materials will be removed from site and disposed of appropriately following the completion of the works. The proposed development is anticipated to have no significant, permanent effects on pollution and nuisances as the work only constitutes replacement/reinforcement works. Appropriate traffic management will be implemented during the works to ensure minimal disruption to traffic flows on Mill Lane. Installation of these types of assets are standard and common place and therefore, the risk of accidents or impacts on human health during construction and operation are considered to be low. The works have not yet been programmed in but will likely commence following receipt of Section 37 Consent from the Department of Business, Industrial Energy and Strategy (DBEIS). They are expected to take one full day to complete.

Other than the associated works, there are no other known developments proposed within the locality which could result in an accumulation of effects on receptors. The proposed works are minor in nature and impact and therefore no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated to result.

### **Environmental Sensitivity of the Location**

The location of the proposed development within the South Downs National Park, this designation is considered to be of moderate sensitivity. This designation is sensitive to landscape and visual changes, however, due to the small-scale nature of the proposed development and the minor changes that would result from the proposed works, the impacts are not considered to be significant. The installation of the 3-phase 95ABC OHL will be in keeping with the surrounding network and not require any new structures, therefore, no adverse impacts on landscape views are expected as a result of the OHL upgrade which will be seen in context with the existing infrastructure.

The proposed development is not located within any other environmental statutory or non-statutory sites, designated for their environmental or ecological sensitivity or rarity. The closest environmental designation, 'Old Winchester Hill' Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR) is located 3.3km north-east. These sites are designated for their complexes of broadleaved mixed and yew woodland and calcareous grassland. Due to the distance from the designations and the minor nature of the works, it is not expected that the works will have any impact on these designations. Additionally, the current existing land use for the surrounding area is predominantly agricultural with scattered dwellinghouses with lengths of hedgerow and trees bordering Mill Lane. Whilst no impacts are expected on the hedgerows or trees and no vegetation clearance will be required to facilitate the works, it is considered that the area the works will take place in is of low sensitivity and the risk of there being a significant impact on the ecology and biodiversity of the area caused by undertaking the works is considered to be low.

The works are located within Groundwater Source Protection Zones 2 and 3. The proposed development is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 which has the lowest annual risk of flooding (less than 0.1% annual chance of flooding). The replacement of the OHL will have a negligible effect on groundwater sources and flood risk in the areas as the works will not cause an increase in the amount of impermeable surface and would constitute minimal refurbishment of an existing OHL.

In terms of archaeology and heritage, the proposed development site is not within an area known to have high archaeological potential and there are no Scheduled Monuments in the immediate vicinity of the Site. The closest heritage assets are twelve Grade II listed buildings, 'Fir Hill, The Bakers Arms, Millers Cottage, The Malt House, The Small House, Northend House, Manor Farm Cottage, Mill Cottage, Stable and Coachhouse 40m south-west of Fir Hill, Eden Lodge, Meon House, Granary 40m north-east of the

Manor House. The closest of these, Fir Hill is located 170m north-west of the site. Due to the distance and nature of the works proposed, no adverse impacts on these listed assets are anticipated.

There is one monument within 250m of the proposed works, recorded on both the Historic England Research Records (239080) and the Winchester HER and Winchester UAD (MWC66): the site of a dark circular soil mark indicating a ring ditch at this site, possibly a barrow site at Goat House Farm. Further records in the area comprise a hoard found at West Lodge, the Church of the Holy Trinity, flints from the edge of a sandpit at North Boarhunt, opposite entrance to West Lodge, ridge and furrow or later cultivation marks at Kiln Wood, West Lodge at Rooksbury, Woodview – possible early post-medieval dwelling, part of the Forest of Bere, earthwork pits and Kiln Farm.

The proposed works do not involve the undergrounding of any wires, excavations or pole replacements and will therefore not result in any ground disturbance. As such, there is no risk/harm to any buried archaeological assets.

The site and the wider landscape forms part of the South Downs National Character Area (NCA) known for its natural beauty, diverse and complex landscape with considerable local variation reflecting its physical, historic and economic influences. The National Character Area comprises a spine of chalk which extends from the Hampshire Downs to the cliffs of Beachy Head in East Sussex, the South Downs National Park and the urban coastal areas of Brighton and Hove (NCA Profile: 125 South Downs, Natural England)<sup>1</sup>.

Views of the site from the surrounding landscape are fairly limited, particularly due to screening provided by the existing vegetation, tree coverage and road network. As such, the upgrading of the existing OHL to 3-phase is considered to be in accordance with its current land use, due to the presence of the existing electricity infrastructure in this location. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact upon the setting and the visual amenity of the local landscape and the NCA.

### **Characteristics of the Potential Impact**

The construction works are expected to be short in duration, likely to be completed in one day between the hours of 08:00 and 16:00, and the spatial extent of the proposed development is negligible especially in the context of the wider landscape and presence of the existing overhead line.

As aforementioned, no vegetation clearance will be required to facilitate the works. As such, the impacts on ecology as a result of the proposed development are considered to be negligible.

Bucket trucks will be used to carry out the reinforcement. When the vehicles are not in use, these will be parked in the compound at Brockwood House. When carrying out the line reinforcement, bucket trucks will be situated at each end of the line. Staff will have to hold the traffic for approximately 2 minutes whilst the cables are being brought up to the existing poles. As the site is situated on public highway, there will be no risk of rutting and the physical impact on the working areas and access routes is considered to be negligible.

The installation of the replacement infrastructure into the landscape is not expected to have a significant impact due to the nature of the infrastructure, the materials being used, and the presence of

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/7433354?category=587130>

the existing overhead line network within the area. All of the screening on site will be retained with no vegetation or tree clearance required to facilitate the works. During operation only low frequency maintenance is expected similar to the existing, unless in an emergency; therefore, any impact of the development is expected to be low intensity.

**Request for a Screening Opinion**

The proposed development is subject to a Section 37 Consent application in accordance with the Electricity Act 1989. In accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 the proposed development requires a screening opinion determination as it constitutes Schedule 2 development in a 'sensitive area', namely the South Downs National Park.

As outlined, it is our view that the proposed development would not result in any significant impacts on the environment by virtue of factors such as the nature, size, sensitivity or location and as such, is not EIA development.

It is requested, provided they are in agreement with the above, that Winchester City Council issue a Screening Opinion confirming that the proposed development is not considered EIA-development.

Yours Sincerely

Lucy Davies  
Encls.

Plan	Reference
Information Plan	22000523_PLN_INFO_5.1
Design Document	ETA049_004_20210914_Design Document