

Date: 06 July 2023
Our ref: 440206
Your ref: 20230668



Ms R Harrison
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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Ms Harrison,

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening consultation: Request for a screening opinion in accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 in respect of the one new shaft headhouse and one new cable sealing end compound

Location: Eastcourt Marshes Electricity Substation, Mark Lane, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2HR

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 29 June 2023 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that there are potential likely significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes and further assessment is required.

Schedule 3(2) of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 requires consideration of the selection criteria for Schedule 2 EIA development and identification of 'environmental sensitivity'.

The proposed development is located within/partly within or has the potential for adverse effects on the following designated nature conservation sites or designated landscapes:

- South Thames Estuary & Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Mucking Flats & Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Halling to Trottiscliffe Escarpment Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- North Kent Marshes Functional Land
- North Downs Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC),

- Thames Estuary & Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar Site

Methodology (provided within our overarching advice letter). Without this information Natural England will not be in a position to comment on the significance of the impacts. For large scale developments, Natural England may provide advice on a cost recovery basis through our [Discretionary advice service](#).

All queries in relation to the application of this methodology to specific applications or development of strategic solutions will be treated as pre-application advice and therefore subject to chargeable services.

Natural England has not assessed the significance of any impacts on these designated sites or landscapes. The proposed development may therefore be likely to have significant effects on the interest features for which these sites are notified or the purposes of designation and we advise you to consider further whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required.

Should you decide that an EIA is not required, Natural England advises that sufficient information on the potential impacts of this proposal upon these designated sites/areas is submitted with any subsequent planning application. We would be pleased to discuss this further with the applicant through our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this proposal is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The developer must provide sufficient information for your authority to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected and, if so, whether appropriate avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures can be put in place. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. This development proposal may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an EIA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the proposed development before determining whether an EIA is necessary.

Should you determine that an EIA is not required in this case, you should ensure that the application is supported by sufficient biodiversity, landscape and other environmental information in order for you to assess the weight to give these material considerations when determining the planning application.

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment then, in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England should be consulted again.

Please note that this response relates only to the EIA screening consultation. Natural England may wish to provide advice should your authority consult us on any subsequent planning application and associated environmental assessments. Guidance on when to consult Natural England is [here](#).

Please send any new consultations, or any further information on this consultation to: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sally Ireland
Consultations Team