



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Our ref: 2394u
Your ref: Old Kiln Museum

16th February 2026

Dear Miss Pain,

**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: Old Kiln Museum

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:

- Upgrade an existing 11kV overhead line approximately 1.2km from single-phase to triple phase and replace six electricity poles.



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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 PLC (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Waverley Borough Council (“the LPA”). In particular, 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 is located within the Surrey Hills National Landscape, Ancient Woodland and Wealden Heaths National Nature Reserve (NNR).
4. The Applicant consulted the LPA, which reviewed the proposed development and on 21 October 2025, confirmed that an EIA was not required and raised no objections.
5. The Applicant consulted the County Archaeologist who advised that the proposed development is not within an area of high archaeological potential and as no large areas of ground disturbance are expected, no archaeological concerns were raised on 7 October 2025.
6. The Applicant consulted the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board who concluded that the proposed development is to improve reliability and capacity of electricity network in the area. The existing poles are being replaced with new wooden pole of the same height as the existing, and the two wires would be replaced with three wires. No trees or hedgerows are expected to be cleared and therefore no visual impact on the landscape are anticipate. Therefore, the National Landscape Board responded with no concerns on 20 September 2025.
7. Following consultation with the LPA, the Applicant received a concern from the landowner who is a local tree warden regarding aspects of the proposed development. The landowner expressed strong concerns about what they considered unacceptable methods of tree works and vegetation clearance carried out by the Applicant and its contractors in previous works. The following issues were raised;



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- a. Prescribed ecological safeguards were not adhered to, including undertaking works at inappropriate times of the year and failing to have an ecologist present.
 - b. Contractors reportedly drove vehicles into an area of Ancient Woodland during both bluebell flowering season and bird nesting season each of which represents a protected period.
 - c. Vegetation was cleared to ground level unnecessarily, creating a 10m wide open corridor which the landowner states now act as a barrier to bats, as they avoid flying across open spaces.
8. The landowner reported that similar excessive clearance has occurred repeatedly in the area, resulting in parts of priority mixed deciduous woodland being turned into what they describe as a “10m wide motorway” beneath the electricity line. Although issues have been raised with the LPA on several occasions, the landowner feels lessons are not being learned.
 9. The Applicant consulted Natural England (NE) on 16 September 2025, which confirmed the development is partly within Wealden Heaths NNR. However, based on the information provided by the Applicant, NE is satisfied that there won't be any significant impacts upon the site and concluded with no objections on 10 October 2025.
 10. An Arboriculture Impact Assessment was prepared by A.T. Coombes Associates Limited on 8 October 2025. The assessment evaluated the tree- related constraints and potential impacts arising from the proposed development and set out detail's recommendations for tree protection throughout the construction. The site is a 1.5 ha section of Ancient Woodland, predominantly pedunculate oak and sweet chestnut, with understory bird cherry and holly. The report concluded that all trees can be retained subject to careful implementation of the specified protection measures.
 11. The proposed development is likely to adversely impact the Ancient Woodland, particularly its soil and adjacent veteran oak in the absence of mitigations. It is therefore recommended that the Applicant follows the measures set out in the Arboriculture Impact Assessment to minimise these impacts and safeguard the woodland throughout the works.
 12. Having considered all matters, including the proposed works and concerns raised by the landowner, the Secretary of State has requested the following conditions:
 - Within one month of completing works, the Applicant must submit to the LPA, for review, a schedule of condition posts and a short statement confirming that the arboricultural protection measures set



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out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment were followed, and that appropriate ecological safeguards were applied during the works.

- Reason: To ensure the safeguarding of Ancient Woodland, including its soil and veteran trees, and to avoid adverse impacts on protected habitats and species by ensuring adherence to both arboricultural protection and ecological good practice, in line with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and relevant policy.

13. The proposed development is a minor modification to an existing infrastructure and is not likely to have a significant effect on the National Landscape in which it is located.

Yours sincerely,

Anna-Maria Inglis
Consent Manager
Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team