

## **Councillor Pratt**

### **East Anglia GREEN Consultation: Feedback from parish councils in Ringshall and Battsford Ward**

The National Grid's plans for a new high voltage network includes routes that pass through or close to the settlements of Offton, Ringshall, Barking Tye and Battsford.

As the planning authority ward member for these parishes I would like to report on the representations made by parish councils and concerned residents to myself.

In summary, there is a wide acceptance that new infrastructure is required to meet our future energy demands from renewables. However, the nature of the network and proposed route location has drawn numerous concerns and objections from landowners, residents and community leaders. Whilst many are concerned about the impact on their properties, the issues I wish to highlight concern the impact on our local natural and historical heritage assets.

There is wide support for an offshore cable which is not in the current proposal strategy documents. Dr Dan Poulter MP is one of many MPs from the OffSET (Offshore Electricity Grid Task Force) Group campaigning for an offshore route. Sub-sea cabling is being installed in other parts of the UK and there is little justification provided for not using them in East Anglia. I believe we should cautiously support this approach as a first preference, provided a thorough impact assessment carried out on the seabed environment and ecology during installation and operation.

On the National Grid's proposal for an overhead line between the Bramford substation and Norwich, there are many unprotected but sensitive landscapes as well as protected natural and historical sites on the boundary or close proximity to the graduated swathe.

For clarity, I have listed some of the sites.

#### Offton:

- Middle Wood (SSSI), Offton sits on the boundary of the swathe and is an ecologically sensitive site
- The site of Offton Castle (scheduled ancient monument) and moat is on the boundary of the swathe. Castle Farm and its 16<sup>th</sup> Century barn are Grade II listed buildings.
- Castle Farm is situated on a hill with panoramic views of the area that are cherished by the local community and served by many footpaths.
- Holly Road was recently designated a 'Quiet Lane' and because it is valued by residents in Offton, Willisham and Ringshall for its tranquillity. It is frequently used for walking, cycling and horse-riding.
- A disused Lime Kiln opposite the Limeburners public house west of Ipswich Road

#### Battsford:

- Gibbon's Farm and the track leading borders the swathe. It is situated in a valley setting with a large amount of tree cover and has outstanding natural beauty, although not designated or protected as far as I understand.

#### Barking:

- The Old Rectory is a Grade II listed building and is situated next to St Mary's church on the boundary of the swathe. There are footpaths connecting passing through this

property connecting Needham to Battisford. The fields behind the property are managed to maintain grassland habitat.

- The swathe partially bisects The Causeway between the Old Rectory and Needham Market, which has both historical and natural significance and is an important recreation track. The views from the park would certainly be impacted.
- Bungeon's Farm, a Grade II listed farmhouse sits in the middle of the swathe
- Barking Tye common is partly bisected by the swathe. The Tye is managed in a wildlife sensitive manner by the parish council and is hoped to be a candidate county wildlife site. The Tye is also very important green space and recreation facility used by walkers and families.
- A coarse fishery operated by GVAC is situated in the middle of the swathe close to Barking Tye.
- A woodland called 'Ladies' Walk' is within the swathe

Taken together, it is clear that an overground line would cause substantial impact to the landscape, and it's natural and historical assets.

Offton and Willisham Parish Council have currently stated a preference for a hybrid option of subterranean and overground lines to reduce the impact on the valley landscape, however, this option would be an expensive and possibly less efficient in terms of transmission. The parish council will hold a separate meeting to discuss the lines and preferred options.

Barking Parish Council is to hold a meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss their position on the line scheme.