

# Key Messages from the Issues and Options Consultation Exercise and what a Neighbourhood Plan could achieve

THEME	MARCH TOWN PLAN
<p><b><i>HOUSING – The Scale of Housing Development Projects</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Possible Approach</i></b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scale of housing growth, as set out in the Fenland Local Plan, is excessive and the town cannot cope with it.</li> <li>• The necessary infrastructure must be put in place in order to ensure that the scale of growth can be accommodated.</li> <li>• Development should be phased in smaller areas to reduce the impact on existing residents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan cannot reduce the scale of housing growth for the town as set out in the Fenland Local Plan. To attempt to do so would mean that the March Town Plan would be at odds with a Strategic Policy of the Local Plan, and would not meet the basic conditions for a Neighbourhood Plan.</li> <li>• However, it is recognised that the broad strategic housing allocations for March as set out in the Fenland Local Plan provide insufficient detailed information to show how and when these areas will be developed, and in particular, what standards will be provided.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1182 453 2011 746">• The March Town Plan could aim to provide a masterplan for the development of the District Council's strategic housing allocations, which would clarify matters such as land zoning/uses, access and traffic management/mitigation, drainage, urban design, phasing and the sequence of development, land management and maintenance, and the role of Section 106/CIL in ensuring the provision of community infrastructure.</li><li data-bbox="1182 794 2033 928">• The March Town Plan could also have a number of detailed policies aimed at setting minimum standards for matters such as the provision of open space, private amenity space etc.</li></ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>HOUSING – The Type and Mix of Housing Coming Forward</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a desperate need to provide a range of housing that will allow first time buyers onto the housing market.</li> <li>• The type of housing built should help meet the actual needs of the Town to ensure a mixed and balanced community. This should be based on an up to date assessment of actual housing need as well as housing demand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could supplement the Fenland Local Plan by having a policy for meeting housing type targets within the Town based on an up to date Housing Needs Study and Housing Market Assessment.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>HOUSING – The Location of Future Development</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no need for any more large strategic housing sites beyond what is allocated in the Fenland Local Plan. However, the situation regarding the contribution from windfall sites within the town is unclear, and this in itself could compound the infrastructure capacity issues and loss of land of community benefit.</li> <li>• Development should be focused on brownfield opportunities within the town with a strong focus on land within the town centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could make a number of non-strategic housing allocations with the aim of using the windfall allowance to secure the delivery of sustainable sites and help with the provision of a 5-year supply of housing land, which in turn will empower the District Council to resist development on inappropriate sites. It could alternatively provide detailed guidance on the suitability of windfall sites with a criteria based policy.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>EMPLOYMENT – The Focus of Employment and Business Coming Forward</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town centre should be the main focus of business with industrial uses located on the edge of town with good access to the A141.</li> <li>• Provision needs to be made for jobs in proportion to housing growth to ensure the growth is sustainable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could allocate sites for business and industry at different locations within the town based on actual need as set out in an up to date employment needs analysis.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>TOWN CENTRE &amp; RETAIL – Achieving the right balance of town centre uses</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although its recognised that the role of town centres are changing, the retail function must be revitalised with a good range and mix of shops.</li> <li>• The traffic congestion in the town centre must be addressed and more parking spaces provided.</li> <li>• A large part of the town centre is virtually redundant with derelict and underused backland areas as well as high street frontages, with space needed for large food retail outlet. This can only be addressed as part of a major town centre regeneration program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could look to encourage the regeneration of the town centre with a masterplanned approach and supporting policies where there is a promoter keen to take an ambitious project forward. The masterplan would look to address traffic and parking problems, integrate spaces, improve movement and connectivity and define areas/uses; providing a catalyst for investment and its revitalisation.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>TRAFFIC &amp; TRANSPORT – Reducing Car Dependency</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More needs to be done to provide a viable alternative to the car for a range of trips. The public transport offer must be improved (Buses and Trains) with more dedicated/segregated cycle routes provided. More parking enforcement would help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of better public transport and parking enforcement is not the statutory function of the Town Council and is not therefore a matter that the March Town Plan should attempt to tackle. However, the Plan could contain policies to ensure that segregated cycle routes (on site and off site) are provided/improved as part of new development schemes.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>ENVIRONMENT – Ensuring Appropriate Levels of Open Space Provision</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a severe shortage of open space and recreation provision in the town and more accessible space is desperately needed</li> <li>• The Estover Playing Fields are a highly valuable community facility and should be safeguarded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could attempt to address this problem by firstly designating all open space and community facilities and protecting their loss from development pressure. Secondly, it could provide policies designed to maximise the provision of open space in all new developments (on and off site) to better meet the needs of new and existing residents, measured against national standards of provision.</li> </ul>



<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>ENVIRONMENT - Maximising the Use of Renewable Energy</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New development should incorporate appropriate forms of renewable energy with a focus on solar power. However, large-scale wind, solar and Fracking projects should be resisted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could attempt to address this by providing policies to maximise appropriate renewable energy sources on new schemes, and applying strict tests for large scale projects in and around the edge of the town.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>ENVIRONMENT – The Protection and Enhancement of Wildlife</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a shortage of wildlife areas in the town, and access to existing sites should be encouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could attempt to address this problem by mapping all existing wildlife areas and protecting them from development pressure, or ensuring appropriate compensation if a case can be made for their loss. It could also contain policies designed to encourage the creation of new wildlife areas (on and off site) as part of development proposals.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>ENVIRONMENT – Reducing the Risk of Flooding</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All homes, new and proposed should be protected from the risks of flooding. Development should not be permitted in high flood risk areas. Existing drains should be better maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The issues of flooding and drainage is not the statutory responsibility of March Town Council. However, should the Neighbourhood Plan choose to make a number of smaller housing allocations, the risk of flooding will form part of the assessment of the overall sustainability of the site.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>SPORT &amp; ACTIVE LEISURE – Improving Leisure Facilities Through New Development</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More leisure facilities are required in the town, and the existing leisure centre and swimming pool is sub-standard.</li> <li>• More facilities are need for the safe enjoyment of children such as smaller play areas and parks.</li> <li>• Access to school facilities should be improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The March Town Plan could partly address the issue by mapping all community facilities and seeking to resist their loss through development or ensuring appropriate mitigation where a case can be made. It could also contain policies designed to encourage the creation of new facilities (on and off site) as part of development proposals.</li> </ul>

<b>THEME</b>	<b>MARCH TOWN PLAN</b>
<b><i>INFRASTRUCTURE – Ensuring Appropriate Infrastructure to Meet Growth</i></b>	<b><i>Possible Approach</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The correct level of infrastructure must be provided to meet planned growth, and should also attempt to address the current deficit in provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The March Town Plan could attempt to strengthen the focus on this issue by containing policies that ensure that new development meets its infrastructure demands through Section 106 Agreements. The masterplanned approach referred to in the Housing section could also provide more transparency in this area.</li> <li>With a Made Neighbourhood Plan, March Town Council would be eligible for 25% of any CIL receipt to depute to its own infrastructure priorities, should Fenland District Council choose to pursue the adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy.</li> </ul>