

MARCH TOWN COUNCIL



PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

"March Town Plan by March Town People"

VISION, AIMS & OBJECTIVES ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED



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Background

Following the designation of March as a Neighbourhood Area by Fenland District Council in December 2013, March Town Council has been actively engaged with the community to help identify the shape, scope and content of its emerging Neighbourhood Plan, which is known as the March Town Plan.

Work began with the carrying out of detailed town wide survey in early November 2013, which was posted to almost 11,000 properties in the town. This prompted a healthy response from the community, which led to the production of an issues and options consultation paper, which was initiated by a public exhibition in the town in May 2014. The event was well supported with over 150 visitors at the exhibition and a number of comments forms submitted.

Further analysis of the feedback and information provided by a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report helped identify a Vision for the plan, supported by a number of Aims and Objectives, which were the subject of further consultation, launched by an exhibition in October 2014.

This report provides some analysis of the feedback received.

Draft Vision, Aims & Objectives

The Draft Vision, Aims and Objectives are set out in Appendix 1. These were the subject of a public exhibition held in March on 11 October 2014. The event was well attended with over 100 people. A comments form was also available for visitors to provide written feedback. A supplementary event was also held at a local school with children in the 6-12 and 13-18 age groups.

Analysis of Feedback.

A total of 150 comments forms were submitted. However, 24 of these could not be used, as they were incomplete. Notwithstanding this, 126 comments forms represent a very healthy response rate. A summary schedule of comments received is set out in Appendix 2. This provides an indication of the level of support for the Vision, Aims and Objectives and highlights some additional comments received, which clearly influences the thinking of some respondents. It also profiles respondents into age ranges and provides some indication of those who have been involved in earlier stages of consultation. Each respondent has been given a reference number, which is cross-referenced where any additional comments have been made in Tables A, B and C, which relate to the Vision, Aims and Objectives respectively.

The name of each respondent is identified and the address is limited to the street name for the purposes of broad profiling. The address is not shown for respondents under the age of 18.

Level of Support

Table 1 demonstrates that the level of support for the Vision, Aims and Objectives is high, which is unsurprising given that they are the product of previous engagement work with the community. The results show that the Town Council took the right decision to invest considerable time in preliminary engagement with the community in order to establish the right scope and content of the plan.

Table 1 Level of support for the draft Vision, Aims and Objectives

Heading	Support	%	Object	%
Vision	117	96	5	4
Aims	115	93	8	7
Objectives	103	89	12	11

Age Profile

Lessons have also been learned from earlier consultation work where there was a significantly high response rate from those over the age of 50. Table 2 profiles the respondents by age group, demonstrating that on this occasion that 80% of respondents were below the age of 30.

Table 2 Age profile of respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents	%
6-12	34	27
13-18	56	45
19-30	10	8
31-50	7	5
51-65	12	10
65+	7	5
TOTAL	126	100

Previous Involvement

In terms of any previous involvement respondents have had, 28% took part in the town wide survey, 13% took part in the last issues and options consultation, with 12.5% having been involved in both. Whilst this might at first glance suggest that the same people are not being carried forward, it should be born in mind that the data will have been distorted significantly with the high input from people under the age of 18. This does not give rise to any concerns as it indicates that a more balanced cross section of the community are getting involved, which creates a strong platform for the more formal stages of consultation to come.

Conclusions

The level of support shown for the Vision, Aims and Objectives is strong and provides a clear mandate for developing these into land use policies and proposals in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.