

**Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy
Matters and Issues for Examination
Proposals for Places
Matter 9- March (Policy CS9)**

**Further Statement by
Cllr Peter Tunley**

Further to my previous representation to this document of 3rd March 2013 and 24th July 2013 please find below further representation.

Firstly I must comment on the actions of Fenland District Council in firstly approving the Core Strategy at the Council meeting held in December 2012, only to amend this policy by removing the March North East allocation a few weeks later at a Council meeting held in January 2013. [A decision that I support] Nothing had changed during that period, the Leader of Council announced he had taken note of public opinion, public opinion had not changed, the arguments against had not changed.

What did emerge during the debate at that meeting of January 2013 was that the proposed allocation for North East March was not the most appropriate location, the land is on a flood plain, it is grade two agricultural land, there is major infrastructure problems in the North of March and the foul water drainage system is currently well above capacity and requires major investment just to meet current demands.

March has seen major development over the past twenty years with little to no improvements to the infrastructure to support this, knowing that the town is growing and to develop land close to the railway crossing at Station Road March knowing that rail traffic will only increase has removed any opportunity of providing an alternative means of crossing the railway at this location, a northern bypass has been ruled out on cost grounds by Cambridgeshire County Council, and it is unlikely future developers will provide the investment required, in any event a northern bypass would do nothing to assist residents gaining access to the town by crossing an already increasing bottle neck across the railway. A major failing on the part of Fenland District Council, and means that today we have a Town that is bisected by the railway, with all the main facilities the town can offer i.e.:- schools, doctors and shopping to the South.

The Core Strategy as proposed is high on aspiration and low on substance, it makes projections on 7200 jobs being created from the proposed development but does not give detail, are these long term job opportunities or are they jobs associated with the

development projects only to disappear when the proposed development is completed, or are they manufacturing or service industry jobs, historically the jobs base within the fens has been from agriculture.

The Core Strategy does not justify the level of growth by quantifying need? Do we need to quantify growth in this way; Fenland has historically seen a consistent level of growth, which to a large extent satisfied need. Where Fenland District has failed is to have a strategy to provide infrastructure to support development, and that is why the Town finds itself in this position today. The Core Strategy makes reference in SC9 to 450 residential properties being developed in the proposed March North East allocation, given that a density factor of 16.2 dwellings per acre this would equate to some 1200 residential properties and in the latest housing report a density factor of 12.6 dwellings per acre was stated this would equate to 1000 residential dwelling, this is a major increase on the 450 dwelling made reference to in the Core Strategy. To refer back to my previous comment regarding access to the south of the town from the north to impose an additional 2000 vehicle movement across this rail crossing would result in major gridlock, and impose great pressure on the current road network system in the town.

My final comment must be that no one is opposed to the general principle of development, it is essential for a town to survive and grow and prosper, but what must happen and be of consideration is firstly, need, and when the need has been accepted consideration must be given to the supporting infrastructure, something that has been lacking in the past.

Cllr Peter Tunley

March North Ward