

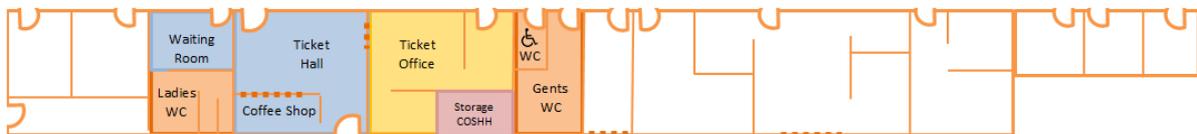
March Railway Station. Platform 1 Building: Internal Redesign

Consultation Results Report 2020

Introduction

The March Railway Station Masterplan (2016) sets out the improvements needed for March Station. These improvements include the redesign of the internal space in the Platform 1 building. The purpose of this redesign is to improve the space available to users of the station and make better use of the building.

Existing layout-



March Railway Station, whilst not a listed building, is an important local asset and is of local historic interest. Therefore the proposals are for the internal layout only.

Consultation

To establish the best internal layout for the building three high-level designs were produced.

Option 1 –



Option 2 –



Option 3 –



These three designs were then put to public consultation using Survey Monkey where the public was asked to vote for their preferred option and provide comments.

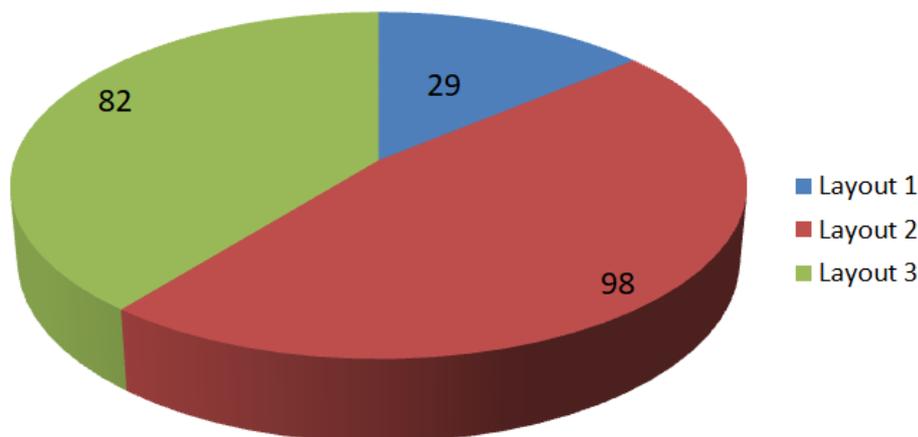
The survey was promoted via Facebook, Twitter and a press release circulated online and in the local newspaper (<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/14910/Consultation-launched-on-next-Fenland-station-regeneration-project>). Councillor Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council’s Transport Portfolio Holder, was also able to promote the consultation through Cambs Radio.

The consultation ran from 17th April 2020 until 9th May 2020 and the results are detailed in this report.

Survey Results

The consultation received 213 responses and a total of 209 votes. 4 participants completed comments on the survey but did not vote for a preferred option.

The total vote responses are shown on the pie chart below-



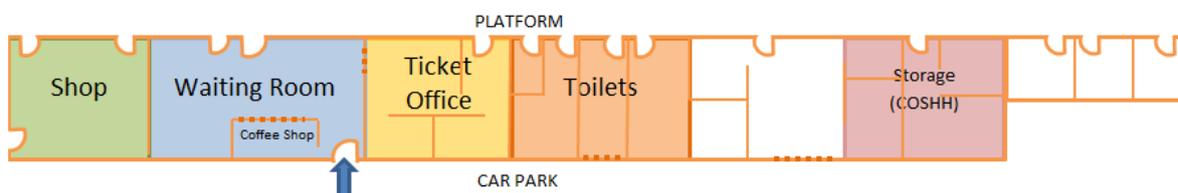
The most popular layout was **Option 2** which received 98 votes (47%).

Respondent comments

All the comments received through this survey are important to the next design phase of the project. These comments are set out for each layout option and are detailed below.

Layout Option 1

- Main entrance is in the same location
- Waiting Room and Ticket Hall merged and enlarged
- Ladies toilets relocated next to existing male and disabled toilets
- Ticket office location remains the same
- Creation of a shop or business premises at the western end of the building



Comments received by respondents who voted for Option 1:

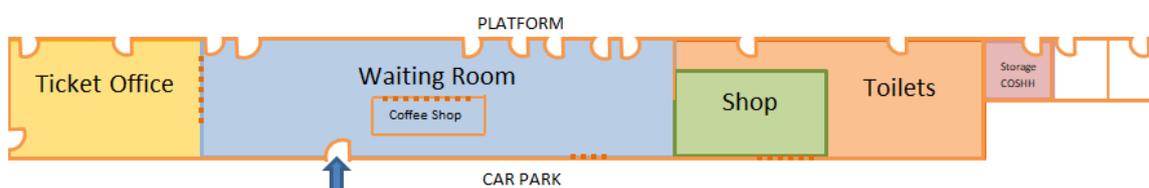
If the waiting room and coffee shop are in the same space I think it should be clearly signed that it's ok to sit in there and not make a purchase, the waiting room should be for all.

This is the option that keeps the coffee shop easily accessible and the toilets all together rather than spread about the place.

I think the shop should be near the waiting rooms for better trade and easy access.
Why on earth would you want to put the loos anywhere near a food outlet? Madness! If there are plans for a shop why not incorporate that with the waiting room?
I would support option one but with the shop located between toilets and storage so that it is passed by people going to and from the station entrance, as passers buy.
Moving the ladies toilets next to the male ones would be better as many women do not know where the ladies toilet is at the moment
Don't build a shop near a toilet it is basic hygiene!
Don't matter you will do want anyway, overspend, late delivery of project and destroy more heritage.
Don't like option 2. Toilets look almost as if they're in the shop. Hopefully the shop will sell snacks so there needs to be a suitable distance/division. Can't we have a cafe?
I'd prefer layout 3 but swapping the shop and toilet, so shop is nearer the ticket office.
I would love it if March station was more like Ely station, they've done a great job there.
I feel it is most important that there are no physical changes to the external appearance and only enhancements. Also poor quality previous alterations to the external fabric should be made good.
This absolutely must be carried out without any change to the aesthetic feel of the building. There should be some investment in restoring the canopy that was removed from Platform 1 also.

Layout Option 2

- Main entrance is in the same location
- Waiting Room and Ticket Hall merged and enlarged
- All toilets relocated to the eastern end of the building – accessed from waiting area and the platform
- Ticket office relocated to western end of the building
- Creation of a shop or business premises in the centre of the building

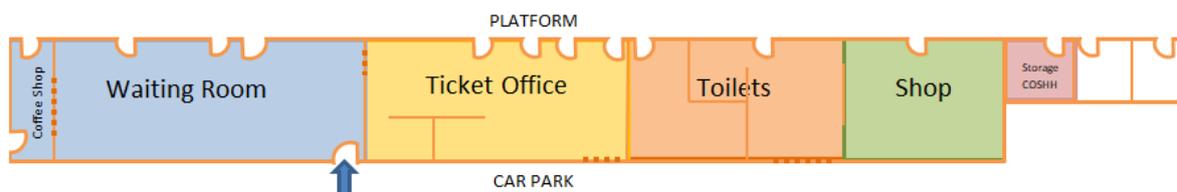


Comments received by respondents who voted for Option 2 (most popular):

<p>March has a national reputation as a railway station and should have some of its services restored. The Fens is a rather deprived area and March has links to London via Cambridge and Peterborough and connections to other key parts of the country. As a native who has recently returned to the area after many years away, I can possibly appreciate the town's potential as well as many. The station would benefit from increased amenities, such as a coffee shop, cafe and small bar. A modest shop selling mementoes of the historic Fens (Boadicea, Hereward, Cromwell, Clarkson, plus its agricultural and wildlife/fowling past) might also be worth pursuing.</p>
<p>Maximum space for amenities is essential with coffee shop and café with character as the station/residents deserve. Wyndham station has done an excellent job with original railway carriage seats adding real character with practicality.</p>
<p>It would be good to retain as many of the original features of this historic building including utilising existing openings and retaining internal walls wherever possible.</p>
<p>The shop will be a useful "draw" for the steadily increasing number of houses around the station. I hope you are also working in plans for better waiting facilities on the east bound platform.</p>
<p>Development of platform 2 is long overdue, needs provision of toilets and consideration of a lift linking the two platforms.</p>
<p>Maximises the use of space available. Shop is not isolated as it is in design 3. Biggest waiting room. Welcome these potential improvements. Could you use the unused platforms as housing development? And use the generated funds to continue with this work?</p>
<p>I like the idea of a larger waiting room with the coffee shop inside and accessible to the ticket office. Also having a shop is a good idea. I think this is the best layout.</p>
<p>The bigger the waiting room, the better.</p>
<p>What about modernising platform 2? People do use this as well.</p>
<p>The sooner it starts the better.</p>
<p>Provide access to toilets directly from waiting room as well as from platform.</p>
<p>Option two creates more public realm and makes maximum use of the building space to good effect. The enlarged waiting room offer good access to shops and toilets.</p>
<p>Option 2 is the most sensible design - it keeps the central space available for a combination of possible uses</p>

Layout Option 3

- Main entrance is in the same location
- Waiting Room and Ticket Hall merged and enlarged
- Ladies toilets relocated next to existing Gents and Disabled toilets
- Ticket office location remains the same and is enlarged
- Creation of a shop or business premises at the eastern end of the building



Comments received by respondents who voted for Option 3:

Would love to see general tidy up and made more modern. Also being able to access the facilities for longer.
The design should allow access to the waiting room and toilets when the ticket office is closed. Otherwise an excellent plan to make full use of all the station buildings.
Toilets need a revamp
FOMRS to have the spare rooms if not occupied at the end of the project.
I've never actually been to March or intend to (I initially thought it was an outdated thing where the deadline had passed for March), but after seeing this on Twitter, I followed along anyway and love option 3, which Shirley could be like that :-)
The waiting room should be open from 5.30 a.m. for the early morning commuters The coffee shop should be within or accessible from the waiting area
More seating on platform too
Be aware of partially sighted, good clear signage
The layout flows better.
I really cannot see that there could not be a business justification for a shop and coffee shop. I think the areas need to be merged and use the extra space for the coffee shop to have tables and chairs. The gents toilets need to be modernised.
Should have toilets on platform 2
I think it would be good for March Station to have expanded facilities, as it is an expanding station with lots of people using it.
Lifts could also be installed as it is a long not easy getting from Platform 1 to Platform 2

In option 2, is it to be assumed that the shop is accessed from the waiting room or from the toilets? The plan assumes that it is accessed from the toilet area
FOMRS to have the spare rooms or will they be used for other things.
Display boards are good but larger versions of these would make it easier for people with impaired vision to see the messages about the trains.
Shame can't keep the current layout. So this one looks the best.
The shop needs to be open all the time, there is no point having it if its only open 3 afternoons a week or something.
This would also be good for Wisbech.
I think all three are viable options and liked different elements of all of them (particularly the option of accessing the toilets from the waiting room in 2) but overall I think option 3 provides the best use of space. I did like 1 but it wasn't clear what the empty unit is for and if there's no guarantee in the current market of filling it I think you're better to use the space productively.
Increase car parking area and bus stop picking up connection to town with improved taxi rank and cycle bays. Increase trains stopping for Norwich and Birmingham. More direct train to Harwich for ferry to hook of Holland reinstate boat train from either Manchester Liverpool Peterborough
The best layout is one where the toilets are accessed from both inside and out.
The 2 blank rooms, will FOMRS be allowed to use them?

Miscellaneous comments (no layout vote submitted):

The coffee kiosk/shop is always cold and draughty and not encouraging. Only one design has it placed well...design 3. BUT I would prefer it to have the green 'shop' area, adjacent to the waiting areas. As on Cambridge station at 'our end'. People want to sit and be comfortable when taking refreshments, and since the various 'coffee' kiosks have been there, they suffer from the through draught. Waiting areas should also be isolated from general through traffic for the same reason. Don't make a wind tunnel which all 3 seem to do. Please preserve the few original acid stained etched glass windows remaining, as in the waiting room.
Can you secure the right to set down passengers in the BRAZA car park? I believe that this site was originally owned by British rail and the public should have the facility to do the above.
Contact request from Railway Heritage Trust
Contact request from Silver Oak Coffee Shop
Baby changing facility

Project Responses to Comments

Some key themes and specific questions were raised by respondents to the survey. Project responses to these comments are set out below-

- Toilets - The exact location and accesses to the toilets will be determined in the next design stage. This will include full adherence to accessibility and health and safety rules. Option 2 shows the toilets next door to the shop as each area will be separated.
We intend to include baby change provision in the design.
- Waiting room and Café – It is expected that the refreshment facilities at the station shown on the options as ‘café’ will be similar to the current provision. The layouts include this within a larger waiting area to accommodate areas to sit and enjoy your purchases and/or wait for your train.
- Shop – The ‘shop’ area on the design would be suitable for a range of purposes. This includes business or community use. The appetite and opportunity for this space will be explored throughout this project.
- Building Aesthetics – This project does not include changes to the outside of the station building. The intention is to improve the internal layout of the building to fit with modern requirements whilst retaining the historical feel and charm of the station.
- Car Parking – The car park is not included in this project but is part of the Fenland Station Regeneration Programme. For more details please view https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/16879/Fenland-Station-Projects-QA/pdf/Fenland_Stations_Regen.pdf
- Braza Club Car Park – The yellow cross hatched space within the Braza Club Car Park is a designated drop off point for disabled passengers.
- Platform 2 and Disused Platforms – This project relates to the internal layout of the Platform 1 building. No other buildings or any platforms are included in this project.
- Contact requests – Both the Railway Heritage Trust and Silver Oaks Coffee shop were contacted during the consultation.

Next Steps

The preferred layout design (Option 2) will be taken forward initially to a final outline design. This will involve the completion of detailed surveys of the existing structure to establish the suitability for the amended layout. The operational requirements of the space will also be reviewed in detail as part of this process.

A strong focus on protecting the historical charm of the building will be maintained. The new design will take into account comments submitted in this consultation along with accessibility requirements and the needs of the station.

This project will be delivered by Greater Anglia on behalf of Fenland District Council. The project is funded by the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Combined Authority as part of the Fenland Station Regeneration Programme.

The project is expected to complete during 2021.