

Site SEAT_01

I would like to support the conclusion in the 'Appendix 2: Site Selection – Interim findings at Tier One and Two Settlements' document (Page 22) that site SEAT_01 off Beer Road, Seaton, should **NOT** be allocated for future residential development. This Greenfield on the western boundary of the town is sensitively located and its elevated character means that it can be seen from multiple viewpoints, which includes the South West Coastal Path, Axe Cliff Golf Club on the eastern boundary, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the east of it and from the top of Seaton Hole.

The adopted *Seaton Design Statement* (Page 38) for this area of Seaton states: "Open spaces, pastureland and private gardens should be retained to maintain the character of the area, the coastal views [and] the coastal footpath..." Because of the rising character of this site, any attempt to build on it would impact on the natural landscape.

SEAT_01 has a Landscape Character Type (LCT) 4D which has key characteristics of "Multiple branching valleys that can range from narrow and steep including scarp slopes to more open shallow systems. [There is] coastal influence in exposure, vegetation and extensive views. High, open and exhilarating on top slopes, grading to intimate and enclosed in lower valleys," (*East Devon Land Character Assessment*, 2019, page 79). The 'Landscape Aims are that: "The surrounding agricultural landscape, rich in history and biodiversity, should remain managed and valued," (*East Devon Land Character Assessment*, 2019, page 80). Therefore, any proposal to develop SEAT_01 would erode the special character of this area of Seaton and also its impact on the landscape.

The site also provides a natural habitat for wildlife and enables their movement to and from the neighbouring coppice in Bunts Lane. The site is also a well known corridor used by bats (for foraging and commuting), being in the Beer Quarry & Caves Special Area Conservation zone, with the January 2022 bat count figures suggesting there are 392 bats using the Beer Caves to hibernate, with 255 bats being of the rare Greater Horseshoe species. Given the site's elevated location above existing dwellings in Beer Road and there being no overspill of light pollution into it, this supports findings that SEAT_01 is an important corridor used by various species of bats.

A further consideration must be the fact this site also serves as a firebreak between the existing built environment and the adjacent woodland, which itself has no vehicular access points from Bunts Lane. Therefore extending the current built up area boundary into SEAT_01 would reduce this open buffer as a protection from possible wildfires.

The current 2013 – 2031 East Devon Local Plan (adopted 28th January 2016) states under Strategy 25 for 'Seaton: The Future' that "We will enhance Seaton's role as an attractive place to live, work and visit by: "b) Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the world-class natural environment, understanding of its value, and non-damaging access to it as well as recognising Seaton and surrounding important built heritage assets. e) Restricting any further significant housing developments beyond the existing Built-up Area boundary by locating the majority of the required 150 houses within the existing town," (Paragraph 13. 6, Page 82).

In conclusion, this evidence demonstrates the impact any development on site SEAT_01 would have on eroding the special backdrop for Seaton on the Western boundary. It would also have an adverse impact on safeguarding wildlife habitats, including those which are protected species, and their foraging and commuting support systems, as well as the loss of a firebreak.

Based on these reasons, I therefore **support** the recommendation in the '*Appendix 2: Site Selection – Interim findings at Tier One and Two Settlements*' document that site SEAT_01 should **NOT** be allocated for future residential development.