

Feedback on potential development sites at Seaton and Beer; and Green Wedge designation at Seaton, Beer, Colyton, and Colyford

August 2024

In the Spring of 2024 we undertook further consultation on the East Devon Local Plan under Regulation 18 of the plan making regulations. This consultation ran from Thursday 16th May 2024 to Thursday 27th June 2024.

The consultation was centred around a series of topic matters, see [Further Draft Local Plan Consultation - East Devon](#) with three, in particular as noted below, specifically relevant to potential land allocations for development in areas covered by this report.

- Green wedge areas,
- New Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

We received consultation feedback through the Commonplace on-line consultation platform as well as receiving feedback in the form of emails and pdf documents that were sent in directly. This report primarily draws on information received through the consultation portal. We have used Artificial Intelligence (AI) to produce the summary comments contained in this report. We would stress, however, that the AI outputs have been reviewed and considered by officers alongside original submissions. The AI outputs are regarded as providing an accurate and very useful summation of matters raised in feedback and the strength of comment. All comments made through the online system can be viewed at: [Have Your Say Today - East Devon Local Plan Further Consultation - Commonplace](#)

To date we have not summarised non-on-line submitted comments that we received, though from officer review we would consider that those submitted by members of the public are in line with the sentiments and views expressed through the on-line route. There were, however, also some comments made by agents (typically acting for land owners promoting development) and by various bodies and organisations that did not come in through the portal. In these non-general-public submitted comments there were some differing views expressed (differing to the general public feedback that tended to be opposed to development). We make some specific note in this report to some of the concerns raised.

We would highlight that this further round of Regulation 18 consultation should be considered alongside the first Regulation 18 consultation that we undertook and which ran from 7 November 2022 to 15 January 2023. Comments from the first round of consultation can be viewed at [Comments made during the Draft Local Plan Consultation and Feedback Report - East Devon](#)

To gain a full picture of feedback both sets of comments should be reviewed. It may well be that some individuals and organisations did not comment at the second round of consultation as they considered that they had raised all relevant matters that they wished to comment on at the first stage of consultation.

Summary of main issues raised on sites at Seaton and Beer

Seaton

How do you feel about the option to allocate site Seat_13a? Why do you feel this way and do you have any other comments?

Summary: The responses to the option to allocate site Seat_13a express significant opposition. Many respondents cite concerns about the site's proximity to sensitive environmental and heritage assets, such as the Beer Quarry Caves SAC and a Roman Villa Scheduled Monument. There are also major worries about the risk of increased flooding, both on the site itself and in the surrounding residential areas.

Comments highlight the site's location within a designated Green Wedge and the importance of preserving these valuable green spaces, both for environmental and community benefits. The inability of Seaton's existing infrastructure, including roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, to support additional development is another frequently raised issue.

Some respondents suggest that there are more suitable sites available for new housing that would have less impact. A few acknowledge the need for new homes but argue that this particular site is inappropriate due to the various constraints and concerns outlined.

Key points raised, in order of frequency:

1. Environmental and heritage concerns
 - Proximity to Beer Quarry Caves SAC and scheduled Roman villa
 - Potential impact on biodiversity and landscape connectivity
2. Flooding and drainage issues
 - Existing flooding problems in nearby residential areas
 - Concerns about exacerbating flood risk through development
3. Opposition to development within the Green Wedge
 - Importance of preserving the Green Wedge between Seaton and Colyford
4. Infrastructure and capacity concerns
 - Inadequate roads, schools, healthcare, and other services to support new housing
5. Preference for alternative sites or reduced housing allocations
 - Suggestion to focus development on more suitable sites
 - Argument to reduce overall housing targets
6. Specific concerns about site layout and access
 - Impact of new access road through existing residential area
 - Potential loss of landscape features like Devon banks and trees
7. General opposition to the allocation
 - Respondents simply state their objection without providing detailed reasons
8. Potential benefits of development
 - Acknowledgement of need for new homes, but concerns about this site
9. Criticism of the consultation process

- Perception of lack of consideration for smaller development sites

Beer

How do you feel about site Beer_03 NOT being allocated? Why do you feel this way and do you have any other comments?

Summary: The responses to the question about site Beer_03 not being allocated express general support for this decision. Many respondents cite concerns about the potential impact on the local landscape, heritage assets, ecology, and infrastructure capacity. There are worries that development on this site would be intrusive and exacerbate existing issues like flooding. Some comments emphasize the need to protect agricultural land and green spaces, especially in light of climate change. A few respondents simply state their approval of the decision without providing additional details.

Key points raised, in order of frequency:

1. Concerns about landscape, heritage, and ecological impacts
 - Site's proximity to sensitive natural and historic assets
 - Intrusion into the surrounding countryside
2. Infrastructure and flooding issues
 - Inadequate roads, schools, and utilities to support development
 - Exacerbation of existing flooding problems in Beer
3. Preference for preserving green space and agricultural land
 - Importance of retaining natural areas for environmental and climate resilience
 - Need to protect farmland for future food security
4. General support for not allocating the site
 - Respondents simply express approval without further explanation
5. Criticism of the consultation process
 - Concern about lack of site information provided
6. Opposing views
 - One respondent dismissively labels opposition as "NIMBY"
7. Indifference
 - One respondent expresses no opinion on the matter

Summary of main issues raised on Beer to Seaton Green Wedge

How satisfied are you with the proposed Green Wedge between Beer and Seaton? Why do you feel this way and do you have any other comments?

Initial Summary: The responses to the question about the proposed Green Wedge between Beer and Seaton show a mix of opinions, with a majority expressing support for maintaining or expanding the Green Wedge. Many respondents emphasize the importance of preserving the distinct identities of Beer and Seaton, protecting the environment, and preventing urban sprawl. Some residents express concerns about potential development in the area, while others feel the proposed Green Wedge is adequate. A notable number of respondents indicate they are not familiar enough with the area to comment. There are also suggestions for specific extensions or inclusions to the Green Wedge.

Key points raised, in order of frequency:

1. Support for maintaining or expanding the Green Wedge
 - Importance of preventing urban sprawl

- Desire to protect countryside and green spaces
- 2. Lack of familiarity with the area
 - Some respondents felt unable to comment due to unfamiliarity
- 3. Specific suggestions for extension or inclusion
 - Inclusion of specific fields, woodlands, or archaeological sites
- 4. Satisfaction with the proposed Green Wedge
 - Agreement that it creates an appropriate corridor between settlements
- 5. Concerns about development and environmental protection
 - Worries about impact on local services and infrastructure
 - Emphasis on protecting areas of beauty and environmental significance
- 6. Criticism of the Green Wedge concept or implementation
 - Questioning the definition of Green Wedges
 - Concerns about the effectiveness of the policy
- 7. Calls for stronger protection or expansion
 - Suggestions to prohibit all development in Green Wedges
 - Desire for inclusion of more areas in the Green Wedge
- 8. Comments on maintaining distinct community identities
 - Importance of separating Beer and Seaton to preserve their individual characters
- 9. Requests for clarification or additional information
 - Some respondents found the question unclear or needed more details

Summary of main issues raised on Seaton to Colyford Green Wedge

How satisfied are you with the proposed Green Wedge between Seaton and Colyford? Why do you feel this way and do you have any other comments?

Summary: The responses to the question about the proposed Green Wedge between Seaton and Colyford reveal strong opposition to any development within the Green Wedge area. Many respondents emphasize the importance of maintaining separation between the two settlements, preserving wildlife habitats, and protecting the area's natural beauty. There are significant concerns about potential flooding, increased traffic, and the impact on local infrastructure if development occurs. A large number of comments specifically oppose development on sites Seat_03 and Seat_05, viewing these as threats to the integrity of the Green Wedge. Some respondents call for expanding the Green Wedge, while others express confusion about the question or the concept of Green Wedges.

Key points raised, in order of frequency:

1. Opposition to development within the Green Wedge
 - Strong resistance to any building on Green Wedge land
 - Concerns about setting precedents for future development
2. Environmental and wildlife protection
 - Importance of preserving habitats, especially for bats and birds
 - Proximity to Seaton Wetlands and its ecological significance
3. Maintaining separation between Seaton and Colyford
 - Desire to prevent settlement coalescence
 - Preserving distinct community identities
4. Specific opposition to Seat_03 and Seat_05 developments
 - Viewed as particularly threatening to the Green Wedge's integrity
 - Concerns about proximity to existing settlements and natural areas
5. Flooding and infrastructure concerns
 - Worries about increased flood risk from development
 - Strain on local services, roads, and sewage systems

6. Calls for expanding the Green Wedge
 - Suggestions to include more areas in the protected zone
 - Desire for stronger environmental protections
7. Landscape and visual impact concerns
 - Importance of preserving views and rural character
 - Concerns about skyline development
8. Criticism of the consultation process or question
 - Confusion about the meaning of the question
 - Scepticism about the effectiveness of Green Wedges
9. Support for some development or balanced approach
 - Limited backing for housing if it meets local needs
 - Suggestions for specific areas that could be developed
10. Lack of familiarity or difficulty commenting
 - Some respondents felt unable to comment due to lack of local knowledge

Summary of main issues raised on Colyford to Colyton Green Wedge

How satisfied are you with the proposed Green Wedge between Colyford and Colyton? Why do you feel this way and do you have any other comments?

Summary: The responses to the question about the proposed Green Wedge between Colyford and Colyton reveal a mix of opinions, with a majority supporting the current extent or calling for its expansion. Many respondents emphasize the importance of maintaining separation between the two communities and preserving the rural character of the area. There are concerns about potential development, particularly regarding skyline visibility and infrastructure capacity. Some respondents suggest specific extensions to the Green Wedge, while a few express confusion about the question or lack familiarity with the area.

Key points raised, in order of frequency:

1. Support for maintaining or expanding the Green Wedge
 - Calls to extend the Green Wedge, particularly to the west and north
 - Emphasis on preserving the separation between Colyton and Colyford
2. Environmental and landscape protection
 - Preservation of rural character and natural beauty
 - Protection of wildlife corridors and biodiversity
3. Opposition to development in the Green Wedge
 - Concerns about urban sprawl and loss of green space
 - Resistance to any future development in the area
4. Infrastructure and service capacity concerns
 - Issues with road capacity, drainage, and sewage systems
 - Worries about pressure on local services
5. Alignment with local plans and policies
 - References to the Colyton and Colyford Neighbourhood Plan
 - Mentions of the 200-foot contour development limit
6. Lack of familiarity or difficulty commenting
 - Some respondents felt unable to comment due to lack of local knowledge
7. Concerns about skyline development
 - Worries about visual impact of development on higher ground
8. Flood plain considerations
 - Importance of preserving flood plains and managing water
9. Suggestions for specific boundary adjustments
 - Proposals to include or exclude particular areas from the Green Wedge
10. Criticism of the Green Wedge concept

- Questions about the purpose and effectiveness of Green Wedges