

Local Plan Team
Rutland County Council

2 December 2024

By email: localplan@rutland.gov.uk

Dear Local Plan Team,

Pre-submission draft Local Plan Consultation (Regulation 19)

Seaton

I write on behalf of my client, Robin Clarke, who is a landowner within Seaton, to make representations to the above consultation.

The purpose of the Regulation 19 consultation is to invite comments on whether the draft Local Plan meets the tests of ‘soundness’ as set out in the NPPF, before being submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination.

The spatial strategy of the draft plan, plans for growth up to 2041 and Chapter 3 sets out the Vision and Objectives of the plan. This section states *“The Local Plan establishes a clear vision for the future and should set out objectives for delivering that vision during the plan period. This establishes the framework upon which the policies and proposals of the plan are built.”*

A key vision of the draft plan is to protect and preserve the natural environment and heritage assets and their settings including enhancement and recovery of biodiversity. Moreover, the vision also states that the rural character of the countryside will be protected and support given to rural diversification and adapting rural activities to meet the challenges of climate change.

Strategic Objective 5 and 8 seek to protect and enhance the County’s heritage assets and their setting, landscape character and identity.

However, the vision also states that small scale development will also be permitted in smaller settlements. Seaton is identified in the list of “small villages and hamlets” in draft policy SS1 (Spatial strategy for new development) where development will be limited to small scale redevelopment and infill opportunities only. The policy states that windfall provision will be provided in Oakham and

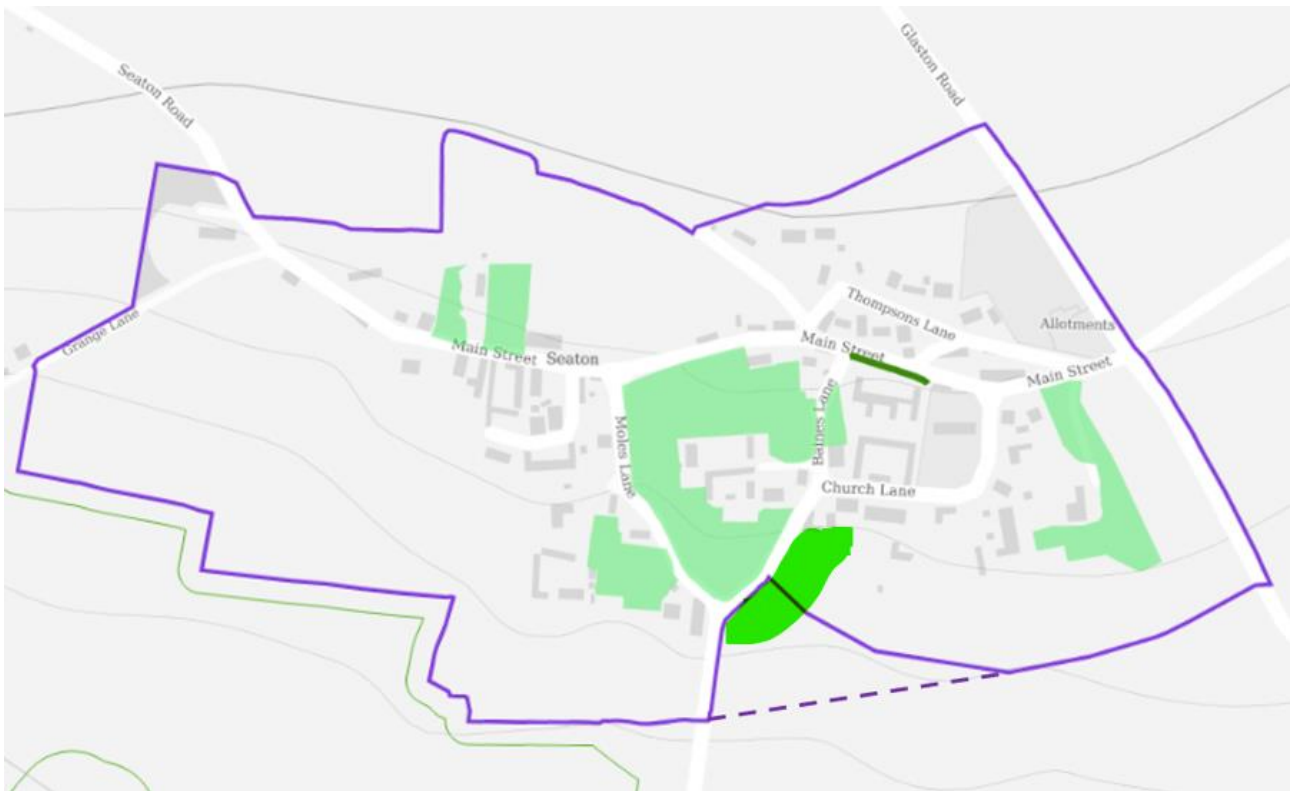
Uppingham, and the larger settlements. Seaton does not have a Planned Limits of Development (PLDs) yet the policy allows for some small scale development. Moreover, Table 3 for Policy H1 states that provision for 37 dwellings are assumed to be delivered through infill/windfall sites in small villages and hamlets.

It is unclear how this policy can be applied effectively to prevent speculative windfall applications coming forward in Seaton and other small villages and hamlets without a PLD. It is recommended that only infill development is supported in small villages and hamlets.

Seaton is a rural village set within the Welland Valley and Middle Valley West, which is characterised by the undulating farmland landscape in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA, December 2022) which formed the evidence base for the draft local plan. The LCA also states that Seaton occupies a locally prominent hillside site in the valley and goes on to say that there is some visual variety across the Welland Valley where panoramic vistas are possible from the upper parts of the northern valley side such as from the A6003 south of Uppingham and above Seaton, particularly south and eastwards. The LCA also acknowledges that the Conservation Area completely overlies Seaton's attractive historic settlement.

Therefore, as Seaton is not proposed to have a PLD, my client is concerned that this could lead to/encourage inappropriate speculative development coming forward, which could have a detrimental impact on the unique character of the village. In order to discourage speculative development, my client proposes that the land to the east of Church Lane and Thorpe Road should be identified as 'Important Open Space' similar to the other parts to the west of Moles Lane amended (see green area in the below extract from the draft Policies Map). This would provide additional protection to the southern part of the village, which would appear vulnerable to potential development. This would also be supported by the LCA in landscape terms, which recognises views south (from Seaton over the Welland Valley) are important in landscape terms.

My client also suggests that the Conservation Area boundary should be amended (see dashed line in the below extract from the draft Policies Map). The southern part of the Conservation Area extends into the village at Church Lane, which is unusual when viewed in the context of the wider boundary which buffers the village. This anomaly in the Conservation Area boundary appears arbitrary and so regularising the boundary as shown would achieve consistency around the village. This would also be supported by the LCA which acknowledges the attractive historic settlement of Seaton.



(Figure 1: extract from draft Policies Map)

Therefore, it is considered that the draft Local Plan should be amended to make the plan effective insofar as the protection of the countryside and particularly small villages and hamlets such as Seaton. The protection to the countryside and settlements without PLD will help to focus development within locations that are most sustainable and suitable, whilst also allowing for small scale infill development. One way to do this, in our view, is to amend the Conservation Area boundary, as shown above, and identify the greenfields to the south of Church Lane as 'Important Open Space'. This would enable policy H1 to be consistent with policy SS1 and the key vision and objectives of the emerging growth strategy of the Local Plan.

I trust that this representation will be taken into consideration prior to the submission of the draft plan to the Secretary of State for examination.

Yours Sincerely



Sav Patel

Associate Director

