

RESPONSE TO OPTIONS CONSULTATION FROM EAST HARPTREE PARISH COUNCIL.

Having reviewed the measures for sustainability proposed to assess the suitability of villages such as East Harptree for further development, and to be included in the forthcoming update to the Local Plan, the Parish Council considers that these measures are too broad to allow a proper evaluation as to the suitability or otherwise of East Harptree and other small villages, for future development.

Explanation: Whilst we can see some merit in aspects of Options 1 and 2, and Option 3 could appear 'fair' to some, we find it very difficult to choose one of these three scenarios as they all depend upon the assessment and consequent scoring of facilities and other elements that do not include key elements that we consider to be essential when assessing our future sustainability. The Parish Council considers that all of the following elements must be taken into account and we request that they should be written into the Local Plan. We also note below the significance of their inclusion as part of any sustainability assessment of future development in East Harptree:

Parking and Accessibility – The roads around East Harptree, which is on a hill-side, are narrow and often restricted by on street parking, causing difficulties for large vehicles and agricultural tractors and equipment. A current small housing development in the village has caused chaos and left village roads covered with mud.

Pedestrian Safety – Many roads and lanes around East Harptree do not have pavements. For instance, the route between the school and the playing field where games take place is along the High Street, the main route into the village from the north, and has no pavements. An increased volume of traffic would increase the possibility of accidents along this already dangerous route.

Public transport – This is very limited in the area and additional developments will only serve to increase the volume of traffic on local roads.

Utilities and services – These are at or near capacity and would require a major upgrade should more housing be proposed.

Local employment – There is little local employment in East Harptree meaning that additional development would add to the volume of commuters using the already congested roads in the area.

Context: Currently twenty plus houses are planned or under construction in East Harptree and in addition there will inevitably be 'infill' developments that will further increase the housing provision within this parish. Proposals for further development must be taken in the context of the current village, ongoing infill and windfall developments, and its ability to sustain further development.

Conclusion: It is the view of the Parish Council, that the current 'broad brush' approach is insufficient to assess properly whether East Harptree is suitable for and could accommodate additional future developments. If a more sophisticated measure of sustainability is used, reflecting the items mentioned above, then on balance, we would marginally prefer Option One.