

Poynton with Worth Town Council

Planning and Environment Committee Meeting – 30th March 2026

Application Reference Number: 26/0803/EIA

Application Type: EIA screening / scoping

Proposal: EIA Scoping request for development of up to 500 new dwellings and including access, public open space, landscaping, affordable housing, and associated engineering and infrastructure works

(Note: EIA = Environmental Impact Assessment)

Introduction

This EIA scoping request is part of the “pre-planning” process before a planning application is submitted. The document states that it is intended to submit an outline planning application for the site.

The site covers an area of some 26.7 hectares / 65.9 acres and is bounded by the Birds estate to the north, the A523 Poynton Relief Road to the west and to the east by the Aqualife nursery, agricultural land and part of Wigwam Wood.

Note that the site does not include Lostock Hall Farmhouse, a Grade 2 listed building. This forms an enclave, surrounded by the site.



Map of the Site (from the applicant's EIA report)

Proposals

The applicants want to build a development of up to five hundred new dwellings, including access, public open space, landscaping, affordable housing, and associated engineering and infrastructure works.

The scheme includes a new “four armed” roundabout on the A523 Poynton Relief Road. The EIA report states this will be the vehicular access, with “emergency and non-motorised user access” from Lostock Hall Road, which opens onto Chester Road. The western “arm” of the roundabout will presumably be used to access land within Stockport MBC.



Applicant's "Development Framework Plan"

Comments: If approved, this would be a major development in Green Belt land. It follows changes in Government planning policy in 2024, with the introduction of the so-called "grey belt" and the imposition on Cheshire East of a substantially increased annual housing target.

Possible Actions: The EIA scoping report is not actually a planning application. It is intended to set out the applicant's view of the environmental issues that should be addressed. The best approach at this stage may be a statement to Cheshire East, setting out Poynton Town Council's concerns at this proposed development and listing the major issues and the impact on environmental matters.

Proposed Comments to Cheshire East

Poynton Town Council is deeply concerned at these proposals to build five hundred houses in an important part of the Green Belt. We believe that these plans are contrary to established planning policy and are unacceptable for the reasons below:

Green Belt: The site is in the Green Belt as defined in the Cheshire East Local Plan. Development would be contrary to long standing planning policy. It would result in a loss of openness and introduce urban sprawl into what is open countryside.

The planned developments of several thousand houses at Woodford will effectively turn it from a village into a town. This scheme, the western border of which is just a few feet from the border with Woodford and Stockport MBC, will produce a single conurbation and create urban sprawl, merging Poynton and Woodford. This is contrary to all planning policy since 1948.

Brownfield First: The Register of Brownfield Land for Cheshire East lists 172 sites. There may be other brownfield sites which are not so far included, registration being voluntary. All such sites should be developed before any Green Belt land is considered for development.

Traffic and Transport: It is proposed that the **only** vehicular access would be from a new roundabout to be built on the Poynton Relief Road (A523). Despite claims (see paragraph 2.22) that the site is only about one mile and a “three minutes” car journey from Poynton Railway Station, the distant location of this access would in practice make such trips much longer.

Public Transport: There are no bus services to the site, and no bus stops closer than Chester Road. Bus services are limited to one bus per hour to Stockport and Macclesfield. There is no service to Woodford, Bramhall or Wilmslow.

Poor Connectivity - Vehicles: Vehicles would have to exit from the site onto the Relief Road (A523) and then drive either south to Adlington and then head north along London Road South (B5092) or go north to the junction with the A555 then east along Chester Road (A5149).

Either trip would take at least ten minutes to reach the centre of Poynton, and much longer at busy times. Traffic would increase substantially on both London Road South and Chester Road. These roads are already badly potholed and poorly maintained by Cheshire East.

Loss of Bypass: The whole point of building the A523 Poynton Relief Road was as a bypass for Poynton (see the SEMMMS Final Report of 2001). If new accesses are built off it, it will cease to be a bypass and become an ordinary, congested urban road. At the Public Enquiry into the construction of the Poynton Relief Road, the owner of the Lostock Hall site argued for a roundabout to be built near this point. The Inspector refused this request.

Poor Connectivity – Footpaths: There is poor connectivity for travellers on bicycle or foot for active travel between the site and the centre of Poynton.

The only path to cross the railway (Poynton with Worth Public Footpath 80) goes under the railway line by Lostock Road, in an unlit, muddy passage less than six feet high. It is dangerous in heavy rain and unusable when Poynton Brook floods. This is the most direct route to walk from the site to Poynton High School and the southern part of Poynton village. It is wholly unsuitable for active travel. Remedying this would require a footbridge to be built over the railway (at the expense of the developer).

Pollution: The EIA scoping report (paragraph 9.8) estimates that the development would produce “up to 2,112 daily two-way vehicle movements” which will contribute to air pollution and congestion. Note that electric vehicles also create air pollution by releasing particulates from tyres and brake-pads. Construction of the site will take several years and require many journeys by HGVs and contractors’ vehicles.

Public Facilities: The site lacks all public facilities – there is no mention of providing any shops, schools, health services or public facilities of any kind. The EIA scoping report admits that: “No social infrastructure is proposed as part of the proposed development ... it will be residential development only.”

An estate of 500 houses and at least 1,500 people will impose significant burdens on local schools, GPs, dentists and other facilities. Local schools and medical facilities are already used to capacity. The nearest hospitals at Macclesfield and Stepping Hill are well known for overcrowding and lengthy queues at A&E.

The draft Stockport Local Plan proposes several thousand new homes, which will increase pressure on local services in Stockport, especially schools and Stepping Hill Hospital. The EIA report identifies five major new sites within 2 km / 1.2 miles of the Lostock Hall site. Some residents of Woodford seek to avoid these problems by using public facilities in Poynton.

The applicant's claim that "social infrastructure has been scoped out of the EIA" is wholly unacceptable for the above reasons.

Flooding: The Environment Agency's maps show the site includes numerous areas of surface water flooding, while the southeastern part of the site is at risk of river flooding and possibly also groundwater flooding. The risk of river flooding is predicted to increase by 2035. The Town Council is surprised that Cheshire East's Flood Risk (LLAFA) team have declined to comment on the EIA report. We urge the Director of Planning to instruct the LLAFA to prepare a full analysis of flood risk.

Heritage Asset: Whilst the Grade 2 listed Lostock Hall Farmhouse is not part of the site, the Hall and its immediate grounds form an enclave within it. Building a large housing estate nearby will irreversibly change the setting and environment of this heritage asset. The Town Council does not accept the applicant's assertion that Built Heritage can be "scoped out" of the EIA report. The Cheshire East Heritage Officer should be consulted.

Agriculture: The proposed development will result in the loss of a significant area of agricultural land, at present used mainly for grazing. The proportion of the food consumed in this country which was produced here is declining.

This poses a major strategic risk for the United Kingdom. Current events show the vulnerability of merchant ships to hostile states and militias; we cannot afford to lose good agricultural land to housing development. It is essential that brownfield land should be developed first. As noted above, Cheshire East currently has identified 172 such sites.

Ecology: The EIA scoping report confirms the presence of bats and badgers, both protected species, within the site. The scoping report concedes that "the proposed development may significantly affect on-site and nearby habitats, including Wigwam Road Local Wildlife Site and protected species including roosting and foraging bats, breeding birds and badgers."

A total of 42 bird species were recorded within the site, with 38 possibly, probably or confirmed as breeding there. This shows the richness of the site, which far exceeds the threshold of 25 breeding species to be regarded as being of local importance. The farm buildings are a nesting site for swallows and other birds.

Streetlighting and exterior lights on housing will be a particular threat to nocturnal wildlife, including bats, insects (such as moths and glow-worms), frogs, toads and small mammals.

Biodiversity: Poynton Town Council has a biodiversity plan, which seeks to protect green spaces, enhance ecological networks and promote environmental education. This would be totally undermined by this development.

Similarly, the development wholly conflicts with Cheshire East's strategy to 'enhance green infrastructure and protect biodiversity' as part of a commitment to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045.

Public Health: Green space is vital to both physical and mental health and wellbeing (see Cheshire East's Mental Health Plan). The local network of footpaths in the Lostock Hall area is used by many local residents. These paths allow walkers access to the countryside, without any nearby traffic, and to see the many trees and birds in the area.

Conclusion

Poynton Town Council believes that this development is not justified or supported by the submitted EIA scoping report. Our concerns include:

- The EIA scoping report is deficient in many ways and fails to identify many of the issues of concern.
- There is no justification for this major development in the Green Belt when there are numerous brownfield sites in Cheshire East.
- The proposed development would cause major traffic congestion and air pollution problems and has poor connectivity to Poynton for both road and pedestrian travel.
- The lack of "social infrastructure" for education, health and public services is a major concern, in view of the stress such services already face in Poynton.
- The planned development would have a devastating effect on the ecology and biodiversity of this area of Poynton. Protected species including roosting and foraging bats, breeding birds and badgers would be endangered.
- The loss of open space would negatively impact the mental and physical health of local people.