

Poynton with Worth Town Council

Planning and Environment Committee Meeting – 20th April 2026

Application Reference Number: 26/1305/EIA

Application Type: EIA screening / scoping

Proposal: EIA Screening Opinion on a proposed a residential and employment development on land to the north of Adlington Business Park in Poynton.



(Note: EIA = Environmental Impact Assessment)

Introduction

Members will recall an EIA scoping request considered at the meeting on 30 March 2026 regarding proposals for 500 houses on land at Lostock Hall Farm. A similar request has now been made for a residential and employment development on land to the north of Adlington Business Park in Poynton. Note that this land is the eastern part of the former Woodford Aerodrome and includes part of the runway. It is owned by Harrow Estates, who are developing the part of the site in Stockport MBC.

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 24.4 hectares / 60.3 acres and is bounded by the Lostock Hall Farm to the north, the A523 Poynton Relief Road to the west and to the east by Poynton Brook and the railway, to the south by the Adlington Business Park.

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|  <p>Figure 1: Potential Application Site (Red Line Boundary)</p> |  |
| Map of the Site (from the applicant's EIA report) | Woodford Aerodrome Safeguarded Land (LPS 52) from the Cheshire East Local Plan |

The two maps above are from the applicant's EIA report (left) and the 2017 Cheshire East Local Plan, showing the Woodford Aerodrome Safeguarded Land (LPS 52). Note that Paragraph 15.613 in the Local Plan states the land covers 22 hectares, compared with the 24.4 claimed by the applicants. The applicant's map includes part of the A523 Poynton Relief Road, which most people would regard as highways land: is it in the applicant's ownership?

Planning Status

There is a major difference between this site and that at Lostock Hall Farm, which is Green Belt land. This site was removed from the Green Belt in 2017 and redesignated as “safeguarded land” under Policy LPS 52. Section 15.614 of the Local Plan states:

“Paragraph 85 of the NPPF requires authorities to identify safeguarded land to meet longer term development needs beyond the plan period. The land adjoins existing employment and residential areas in Poynton and is bounded by the route of the Poynton Relief Road.”

Note that the 2017 Local Plan was intended to last until 2030. This period has not elapsed. However, the general principle of developing this land was accepted in the 2017 Local Plan.

Proposals

The applicant’s report is nebulous and states:

“The potential development is anticipated to comprise a mix of residential and employment uses, the proportions of which will be determined through the design and assessment process.”

“A new site access would be delivered, potentially from the A523 Roy Chadwick Way, along with ancillary uses including public open space, roads, parking and landscaping.”

This contrasts with the applicants for the Lostock Hall Farm site, who state more factually that they 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.

Note that the applicants for this site wish to build an access onto the A523 Poynton Bypass, which will be a second new junction in addition to the proposed “four armed” roundabout for the Lostock Hall Farm site.

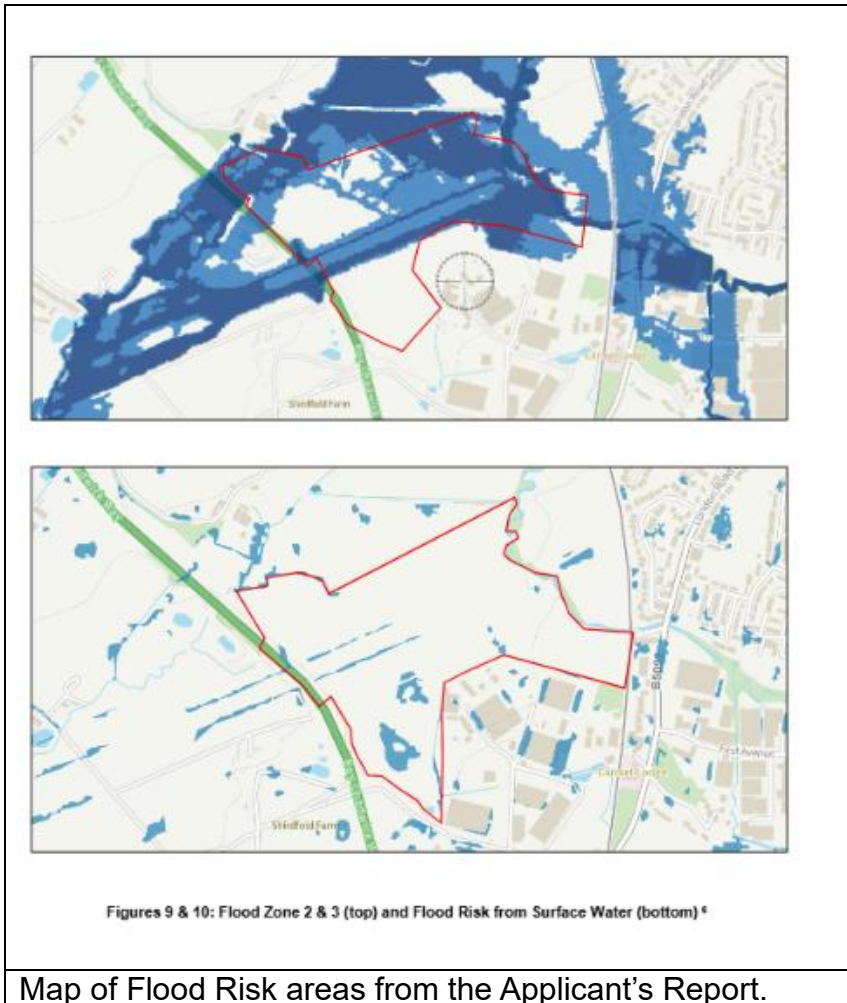
It is not clear if the safeguarded land site would also use the existing access road from London Road to the Adlington Business Park.

Flood Risk

A major concern regarding this site is that large parts of it are in the flood risk zone from Poynton Brook.

The applicants have published maps in their report (see below), which shows that most of the northern part of the site is at risk of flooding from Poynton Brook, while the southern part has areas of surface water flooding.

This is a major concern, both for the risk of any new buildings flooding, and also that attempts to prevent this may divert flood waters downstream. This would increase the risk of buildings in the western part of Poynton being flooded. Water might also back up and flood houses upstream.



Note the red line showing the extent of the site differs between the two plans above, and also from the border in the applicant's site plan on page 1 above.

Connectivity: Page 20 of the applicant's report states that: "... an existing pedestrian and cycle access point is located on the eastern boundary, providing connectivity towards Poynton". This is presumably referring to where Footpath 20 goes under the railway, by Lostock Road, in a cramped, unlit, muddy passage less than six feet high. It is dangerous in heavy rain and unusable when Poynton Brook floods. The applicants also suggest using this route to travel to the nearest bus stop on the corner of Weller Avenue and Copperfield Road.

Comments: If approved, this would be a major departure from the Local Plan, as this land was not to be considered for development until at least 2030. The site raises many issues of concern. The proposal for using the passage as an access point under the railway suggests the applicant's report may be a "desktop" exercise.

Recommended 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 is to send 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 concerned at these proposals to build an unspecified number of houses and employment facilities. We believe that these plans are contrary to established planning policy and are unacceptable for the reasons below:

Development Pressure: This EIA scoping application should be considered in conjunction with the recently received EIA application (26/0803/EIA) for 500 houses on neighbouring land at Lostock Hall Farm. Taken together, these plans will increase massively the pressure on Poynton's roads, services and environment.

Confusion as to Site Boundaries: The plans submitted by the applicants appear to include part of the A523 Poynton Bypass within the site. The applicants state the site is 24.4 hectares, while the Cheshire East Local Plan says 22 hectares. The two plans submitted by the applicants showing flood risk each have different southern site boundaries. These points should be clarified.

Safeguarded Land: The site is included in the Cheshire East Local Plan as safeguarded land, site LPS 52. The Local Plan states that the site is "*to meet longer term development needs beyond the plan period.*" Developing it now is premature and outside the scope of the Local Plan.

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 safeguarded land is considered for development.

Traffic and Transport: It is proposed that the vehicular access would be from a new junction with the Poynton Relief Road (A523). Despite claims (see page 21) that the site is only a "seven minutes" car journey from Poynton Railway Station, the distant location of this access would in practice make such trips much longer.

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. The applicants wish to build a new access onto the A523 Poynton Bypass, which will be in addition to the proposed new "four armed" roundabout for the Lostock Hall Farm site (see 26/0803/EIA).

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 a cramped, unlit, muddy passage less than six feet high. It is dangerous in heavy rain and unusable when Poynton Brook floods. This is the only 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) – but who would enforce this construction?

Bizarrely, the applicants claim (page 20) that: “... *an existing pedestrian and cycle access point is located on the eastern boundary, providing connectivity towards Poynton*”. As noted above, this access point is wholly unsuitable. The inclusion of this claim suggests a lack of familiarity with the site.

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 every two hours to Macclesfield. There is no service to Woodford, Bramhall or Wilmslow. The applicants suggest that residents could use the cramped, unlit and muddy passage under the railway line to travel to the nearest bus stop on the corner of Weller Avenue and Copperfield Road. This is an untenable proposal.

Poynton Town Council disagrees totally with the applicant’s claim that “it is not considered that traffic and highways impact from the development would be sufficient to warrant an EIA to evaluate the highway impact.” An EIA for traffic and transport is essential, covering both this site and the Lostock Hall Farm site.

Pollution: The applicant’s EIA scoping report includes no estimates of the traffic generated by the proposed development. In contrast, the Lostock Hall site applicant estimates that that development would produce “up to 2,112 daily two-way vehicle movements.”

Despite the lack of figures, it is clear this site would generate significant extra traffic 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 – the report makes no mention of providing any shops, schools, health services or public facilities of any kind. The statement (page 4) that the application will cover “public open space, roads, parking and landscape” implies that the applicants do not intend to provide any schools or other social infrastructure, just basic facilities for a high-density development.

Education and Health: Any residential development 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.

Recent figures released by NHS England show that the East Cheshire NHS Trust, which provides hospital and community health services for Poynton, is one of the worst performing trusts in England.

The NHS England performance figures for Quarter 3 of 2025/26 shows that the East Cheshire NHS Trust has truly dire scores in several categories. It is the very worst in

England for Percentage of cases where a patient waits 18 weeks or less for elective treatment, the difference between planned and actual 18 week performance and the percentage of emergency attendances dealt with within 4 hours.

Death Rates: These failings have real consequences for people's health. The NHS Trust figures show that, between December 2024 and November 2025, the East Cheshire NHS Trust had a death rate over 28 per cent higher than would be expected. It is the fourth worst hospital trust in England for this metric. (The figures include patients who died in hospital as well as those who died within 30 days of discharge).

It is clear that no new housing should be built as the local hospitals cannot care for the existing population.

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. Around Woodford there are five major new housing sites within 2 km / 1.2 miles of this site. Some residents of Woodford seek to avoid these problems by using public facilities in Poynton.

Flooding: A major concern regarding this site is that large parts of it are in the flood risk zone from Poynton Brook, which is classed by the Environment Agency as a "main river." Poynton Brook flooded in this area in 2016 and 2019.

The applicants have published maps in their report, which shows that most of the northern part of the site is at risk of flooding from Poynton Brook, while the southern part has areas of surface water flooding.

This is a major concern, both for the risk of any new buildings flooding, and also that attempts to prevent this may divert flood waters downstream. This would increase the risk of buildings in the western part of Poynton being flooded. Water might also back up and flood houses upstream. The LLFA should conduct a full review of this application.

Accidents and Disasters: Poynton Town Council was concerned at reference in the applicant's report to the risk of live munitions remaining at part of the site from the Second World War. There are other risks connected to the former use of the site for aircraft construction. Asbestos may have been used and remain within the site, and there may be other dangerous chemicals present such as benzene.

Risk of Radioactive Contamination: Radioactive Radium-226 was widely used until the 1970s to paint luminous dials, gauges, and switches in aircraft for night viewing. Former aircraft factories, repair depots, and airfields are often contaminated with radium due to the handling, breakage, or disposal of these instruments. These instruments would have been installed in aircraft built at Woodford.

Note that, even though the radioactive paint has often degraded to a sandy material and no longer glows in the dark, it remains highly dangerous. The radium decays, emitting radiation beta particles which strike molecules of phosphor, exciting them to emit visible light. When the phosphor degrades, the paint will stop glowing even though the radium remains radioactive.

Radium 226 has a half-life of 1600 years, and decays into Radon 222, a radioactive gas which is also a serious threat to life. The atoms then transmute into several other radioactive elements before finally becoming the stable isotope Lead 206.

The EIA should certainly assess this point. It may be necessary for the site to be checked for radioactive materials using a Geiger counter.

Heritage Asset: Whilst the Grade 2 listed Lostock Hall Farmhouse is not part of the site, it is close to the site boundary. Building a large housing or industrial estate nearby will irreversibly change the setting and environment of this heritage asset. The Town Council does not accept 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. Much of the site is Grade 2 agricultural land. The proportion of home-grown food consumed in the UK is rapidly 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 says little about wildlife present within the site. This is in contrast to the scoping report for the adjacent Lostock Hall Site, which concedes that “the proposed development may significantly affect on-site and nearby habitats, ... and protected species including roosting and foraging bats, breeding birds and badgers.”

A total of 42 bird species were recorded in the Lostock Hall site, with 38 possibly, probably or confirmed as breeding there. It seems clear that the current site will also include a similar level of wildlife, which should be considered as part of the EIA process.

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 network of footpaths across the former Aerodrome site 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 several issues of concern. The exact size and boundaries of the site should be resolved.
- The latest EIA should be assessed in conjunction with the request in March 2026 for an EIA scoping report for 500 houses on the adjacent Lostock Hall Farm site.
- There is no justification for this premature development on safeguarded land when there are numerous brownfield sites available in Cheshire East.
- The proposed development would cause major traffic congestion and air pollution problems and has poor connectivity to Poynton for road, cycle and pedestrian travel.
- The proposal that access on foot or cycle to Poynton village is obtained via a cramped, low roofed muddy tunnel under the railway is wholly unreasonable.
- 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.
- NHS England figures confirm that hospital services in East Cheshire are already on the point of collapse and cannot care for the existing population.
- 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.

Other Representations: The Town Council should also write to the following people:

1. The Chief Highways Officer at Cheshire East – to draw to his attention that the owners of this site are using maps which appear to show that part of the A523 Poynton Bypass is within their ownership.
2. Tim Roca MP – to express our concern at a second application for a major development in the west of Poynton and the impact these will have on public services. Also to suggest that, in view of the serious deficiencies in the recent performance of the East Cheshire NHS Trust, the government should suspend the “grey belt” rules and increased housing targets in this area until the Trust is in a position to properly treat the existing local residents.
3. To invite Pea Green Environmental Planning to view the passage under the railway line and to suggest that this should not be promoted as an access route to the site.