

Planning Statement

In support of

Application for full planning permission for change of use of an agricultural building (barn 8) for Class E and associated operational works.

at

Ivy House Farm, Bilstone Road, Congerstone, Nuneaton, CV13 6LW

Applicant

Mr T Sinnott

Agent

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Application Summary	
Description	Planning Statement in support of: Application for full planning permission for change of use of an agricultural building (barn 8) for Class E and associated operational works.
Site address	Ivy House Farm, Bilstone Road,, Congerstone, Nuneaton, CV13 6LW
Applicant	Mr T Sinnott
Local Planning Authority	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Planning portal reference	PP- 13651092
Job reference number	J1008911
Agent details	The Rural Planning Co, The Farm Office, Millridge Farm, Parsons Lane, Hartlebury, Nr Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 7YQ. Telephone: 01299 667344 Email: team@theruralplanningco.co.uk
Documents submitted	Planning Statement Location Plan Existing Block Plan Proposed Block Plan Existing Plans and Elevations Proposed Plans and Elevations

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On behalf of our client Mr Tim Sinnott (the applicant), The Rural Planning Co. is instructed to submit this planning application for full planning permission to change the use of an existing agricultural building (barn 8) to commercial use Class E located on the site outlined in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Ordnance Survey plan of existing site layout (barn and area subject to the change of use outlined in red)
[Source: Land App]

- 1.2 The site, which forms part of Ivy House Farm, is located within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.
- 1.3 Ivy House Farm is situated off Bilstone Road on the southern end of Congerstone and comprises several agricultural buildings. This application specifically pertains to the change of use of one agricultural building (barn 8) located to the southeast of the site.

- 1.4 The proposed change of use will feature a large area dedicated to a woodwork workshop. The anticipated customer volume will be low to non, and sufficient on-site parking will be provided for any anticipated employees.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement supports the application by presenting the relevant site context, planning policies, and assessments, including those related to rural setting, heritage, ecology, and biodiversity.
- 1.6 The proposal aligns with national and local policies on rural economic development and farm diversification.
- 1.7 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying plans and documents submitted with the application.

2.0 Site Context

- 2.1 The planning application relates to an agricultural building with an established access point at Ivy House Farm, Bilstone Road, Congerstone, Nuneaton. The applicant's agricultural land ownership at Ivy House Farm extends to circa 161 hectares (398 acres).
- 2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly agricultural and of rural character. While the site lies outside any designated areas, it is located adjacent to the Congerstone Conservation Area.

Barn 8

- 2.3 Barn 8 is 833 sqm modern, part open-sided steel portal frame shed with Yorkshire boarding that has been used for the storage of agricultural machinery.

Background on Farm

- 2.4 In winter 2021 the farm's dairy herd was sold. Although the applicant is proposing to continue with arable farming on the landholding, many of the buildings and land on the farm are now either surplus to agricultural requirements or are no longer used to capacity. The applicant is therefore seeking to diversify and repurpose these (in full or part) for alternative uses that can generate an additional commercial revenue stream for the farm.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 Proposed concrete yard surrounding the agricultural buildings, approx. 610sqm for agricultural use (24/00559/AGDO) – General Development Order.
 - 3.2 Application for an agricultural track (24/00186/FUL)- Permitted
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- 3.3 Change of use of an agricultural building (barn) to Class E(g) (commercial) and Class B8 (storage and distribution) and associated works (23/00798/FUL)- Permitted.
- 3.4 Change of use of agricultural building to B8 storage use (23/00371/P3CR). Prior Approval Given.
- 3.5 Change of use of an existing barn to a holiday let (Class C1), including partial reconstruction, refurbishment, and provision of ancillary hardstanding (22/01174/FUL)- Permitted
- 3.6 Full planning permission was granted in July 2021 for the siting of storage containers (Class B8) on land to the east of the farm building cluster (20/00997/FUL). This proposal required, amongst other things, the access arrangements into Ivy House Farm from Bilstone Road to be amended, including the widening of the existing access road to 3.5m and laying out of a passing bay to increase the width to 5.5m at that point. The storage facility has been constructed and is now operational, and the works to the access road have been completed.
- 3.7 The majority of other records for Ivy House Farm on HBBC's online register relate to a range of agricultural development and engineering operations prior to the sale of the dairy herd.

4.0 Proposed Development

Description of Use

- 4.1 The proposed development is for the conversion of an existing agricultural building into a woodworking workshop under Class E(g)(iii): light industrial.
 - 4.2 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) seeks to assign a class to each use of land and buildings. In England, these are contained within the text of Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).
 - 4.3 In this case, the future occupier of building 8 will be a small enterprise that will make custom made exhibition stands. The small business will not be open to the wider public and all orders will be delivered to their locations as required.
 - 4.4 These activities will be carried out inside the converted building and as such it is not considered that they will cause detriment to the amenity of the area. In light of this, the proposed is considered as a commercial use.
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Description of building

- 4.5 The building is constructed with Yorkshire boarding on a steel frame with concrete panels and features a pitched roof (see Figure 2). It is proposed to enclose building 8 with steel cladding in grey. For an example, see figure 3. The structure appears to be in good overall condition. Therefore, it can be regarded as a permanent and substantial structure, suitable for conversion.



Figure 2 – north and east elevation



Figure 3- Example of proposed design.

- 4.6 The parking area is located just north of the proposed conversion. As can be noted from the photo in Figure 4, the area has existing hardstanding.
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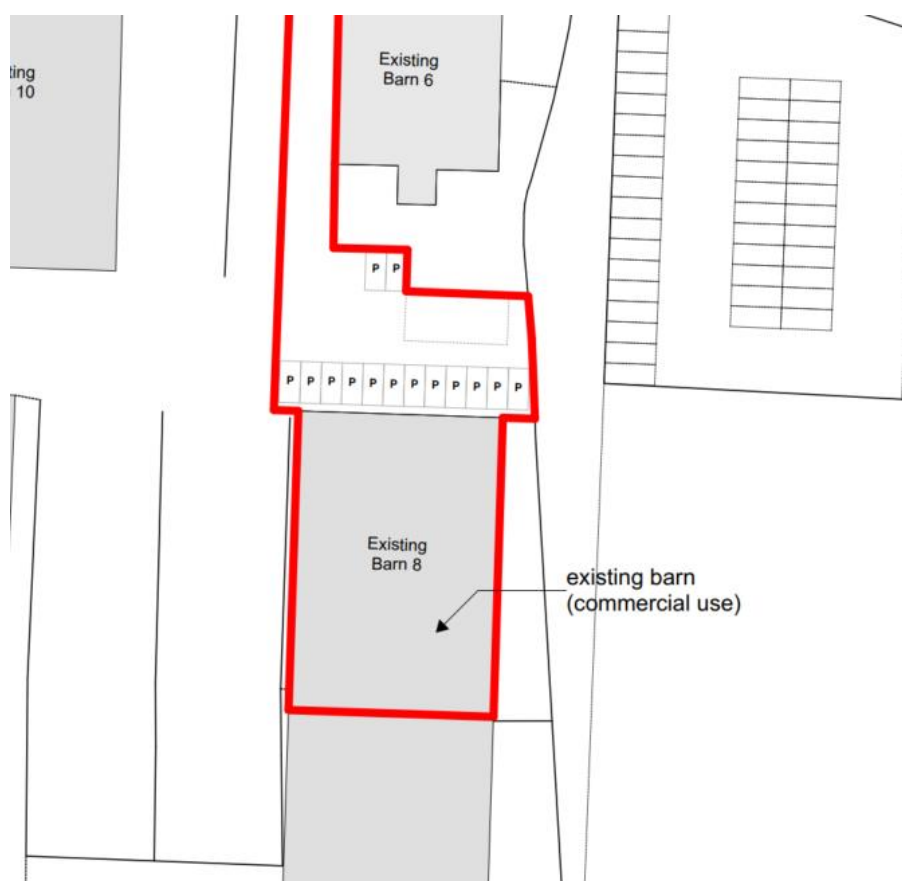


Figure 4: Area of land proposed to be used as parking

- 4.7 The application is for the change of use of the building to be used as a Class E (g) (light commercial/business).

Justification and Need

- 4.8 The change of use aligns with the applicant's vision to diversify Ivy House Farm's economic activities, following trends in farm diversification to ensure long-term viability. The proposed business operations are expected to generate local economic benefits and sustain the farm's rural enterprise without adversely affecting openness or local character. Further justification can be found below.

5.0 Planning Policy

- 5.1 England operates under a 'plan-led system'. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with local development plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise. National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2 The NPPF was revised in September 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs).
- 5.3 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states that "at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development", with paragraph 11 stating that, "for decision-taking this means ... approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay".

Other key paragraphs of the NPPF include:

- 5.4 Paragraph 85 states that "significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development...".
- 5.5 Paragraph 88 states that "planning policies and decisions should enable:
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.
 - b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- 5.6 Paragraph 89 states that "planning policies and decisions should recognise that in order to meet local business and community needs in rural areas, sites may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads...".

Local Planning Policies

- 5.7 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.8 The adopted Development Plan is the Local Plan 2006 to 2026. The relevant parts of the Local Plan in the determination of this planning application are the Core Strategy DPD, adopted December 2009 ('the CS'), and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, adopted July 2016 ('the SADMP').

Core Strategy (CS)

- 5.9 The area is administered under the Core Strategy which was adopted and published December 2009.
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- 5.10 **Policy CS12** - Resist the loss of local shops and facilities in rural villages unless it is demonstrated that the business or facilities can no longer operate in a viable manner. Initiatives to establish local stores and facilities will be supported
- 5.11 **Policy CS17** - That employment facilities adjacent to the settlement boundary will be permitted subject to criteria which includes that the development is 'of a scale and design which fully respects the character of the settlement concerned and the level of need identified'.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP)

- 5.12 The area is administered under the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies which was adopted and published July 2016.
- 5.13 **Policy DM4** – The re-use of disused buildings in the countryside can afford a number of benefits, including supporting the vitality of rural communities, minimising the need for new built development and retaining historic features which reflect the local vernacular. Any proposal which relates to the re-use of redundant buildings in the countryside must have specific regard to Policy DM15. In recognition of the need to support rural communities and in line with national policy, proposals which assist the diversification of the rural economy without detriment to the environment will be supported in principle. Rural enterprise can entail a variety of activities which can all contribute to job creation and economic growth, including but not exclusively, uses related to agriculture, tourism, business and community uses.
- 5.14 **Policy DM10** – Design plays a crucial role in building conversions, ensuring that developments do not adversely affect the privacy, amenity, or quality of life of nearby residents through issues like noise, air quality, or visual intrusion. High-quality designs must complement the character of the surrounding area by respecting scale, materials, and architectural features, while incorporating energy efficiency, sustainable drainage, and landscaping.
- 5.15 **Policy DM12** – Development proposals outside conservation areas, where applicable, are required to show that the development proposal does not detrimentally impact upon the setting or key views into or out of the conservation area.
- 5.16 **Policy DM15** - Proposed development outside the settlement boundary for the reuse and/or adaptation of redundant or disused rural buildings will be supported where:
- a) The applicant demonstrates the building is no longer viable in its current use; and
 - b) The applicant has adequately demonstrated the building is in a structurally sound condition and is capable of conversion without significant rebuild or alteration; and
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c) Any proposed extension(s) or alterations are proportionate to the size, scale, mass and footprint of the original building and situated within the original curtilage; and

d) The proposed development accords with Policy DM10: Development and Design and relevant design guidance, DM11: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment and DM12: Heritage Assets.

All development proposals for the re-use of redundant rural buildings should result in the enhancement of the immediate setting.

6.0 Planning Assessment

6.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an assessment of the key material considerations against the most relevant planning policies contained within the Local Development Plan. Each planning application needs to be assessed on its own merits, taking account of the key material considerations which in this case include:

- Farm diversification
- Economic policies
- Design
- Heritage
- Sustainable transport
- Access
- Biodiversity
- Drainage/ Water Management
- Flooding

7.0 Farm Diversification

7.1 Farming is vital for the British economy and food security. As a sector, it is worth over £120 billion and employs over 4 million people with over 149,000 businesses. Because of this, farming offers huge potential to the rural economy as a whole.

7.2 However, the farming industry is exposed to a large amount of risk, volatility and uncertainty, not least that caused by outside political and economic factors. For example, Brexit.

- 7.3 The Government has declared that farm businesses will be losing their subsidy / direct farm payments next year which will not be directly replaced, placing even further strain and pressure on the business.
- 7.4 The National Farmers Union is clear that access to a competent and reliable workforce is vital for UK food production. However, changes to the immigration system and the end of the free movement of EU workers that will result from the UK leaving the Single Market have resulted in labour shortages.
- 7.5 The industry is dependent on the weather which is impacted by the effects of climate change. If it's too dry, crops won't grow. If the season is too wet, crops can rot and suffer from mould or simply drown in the standing water. A late or early frost can leave an entire field worthless. This all impacts on the farmer's profitability which can be felt for many years after a particularly bad harvest.
- 7.6 Given this, 65% of all farm businesses in England also run other enterprises - such as farm shops, commercial ventures and B&Bs - generating an income of £740 million, in 2018/19, to the UK economy (Department of Rural Affairs, Farm Accounts in England Results from the Farm Business Survey 2019/20).
- 7.7 Seeking alternative forms of income is absolutely essential for the survival of family farms.
- 7.8 The Core Strategy is supportive of farm diversification schemes in principle, setting out the criteria in policy DM4 of the SADMP:
- 7.9 The site is outside the settlement boundary of Congerstone and does not form part of an existing employment site allocation in the Development Plan. Policy DM4 of the SADMP therefore applies which allows for sustainable development within the countryside providing it meets certain criteria. In land-use terms, the criterion relevant to this commercial use would be:
- 'c) it significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation **and/or** diversification of rural businesses' [our emphasis].
- 7.10 As identified in the introductory section of the statement, the dairy herd has been sold and some of the buildings, including said building, are now surplus to operational agricultural requirements. The letting out of the unit for uses within Class E would generate an additional income stream for the farm, and as such constitutes a rural diversification project for which there is in principle support under both Policy DM4 of the SADMP and the NPPF.
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- 7.11 Policy DM4 also identifies other factors which should be considered as part of this proposal in terms of design and impact on the countryside. These are considered below, together with compliance with other development management-related policies and associated paragraphs of the NPPF.

8.0 Economic

- 8.1 Sustainable development is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework and is likened to a 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 8.2 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF gives significant weight to development which supports economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Delivering economic prosperity is a key objective of Hinckley & Bosworth Core Strategy and is entirely consistent with the NPPF in this regard.
- 8.3 In weighing the planning benefits and potential impacts of the proposed development, careful consideration has been given to the overall site context and the evolution of its intended use. Due to changes in the operational requirements of the existing agricultural business, the current building on-site has become disused, as it no longer aligns with the demands of modern farming practices. The intention behind this application is that the site can transition to a diversified, economically productive use, contributing to local economic growth while maintaining the integrity of rural land use in accordance with policy DM4 of the SADMP.
- 8.4 Policy CM4 specifically encourages farm diversification to support economic vitality in rural areas, provided it respects the local character and agricultural legacy. The proposal aligns with this policy by promoting sustainable development that enhances the site's economic value without detracting from its rural setting. This approach ensures the site remains viable and continues to contribute to the regional economy, aligning with broader planning goals for rural regeneration and sustainable land use

9.0 Design

- 9.1 Policy DM4 of the SADMP also requires that development in the countryside 'does not have an adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside'.
- 9.2 Policy DM10(d) of the SADMP seeks to ensure that the use and application of building materials 'respects the materials of existing, adjoining/neighbouring buildings and the local area generally'.
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- 9.3 Policy 17 of the CS states that employment facilities adjacent to the settlement boundary will be permitted subject to criteria which includes that the development is 'of a scale and design which fully respects the character of the settlement concerned and the level of need identified'.
- 9.4 The proposed operational development does not include any extensions to the building, and is limited to steel cladding on all elevations, and insertion of loading and pedestrian doors. The cladding would be a grey to complement the existing colour and material palette of adjacent buildings at Ivy House Farm. The size and number of openings are proportionate to the function and scale of the existing building, and similar to adjacent units.
- 9.5 The design is entirely consistent with the existing agricultural appearance and character of the farm complex and wider area.
- 9.6 Accordingly, the proposed development should be considered to comply with Policies DM4, and DM10 of the SADMP and Policy 17 of the CS in respect to design and conservation.

10.0 Heritage

- 10.1 In terms of heritage impacts, Policy DM12 of the SADMP states that development proposals should ensure the significance of conservation areas, and their settings is 'preserved and enhanced'.
- 10.2 Ivy House Farm does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets. The nearest designated heritage asset to the site is understood to be the Congerstone Conservation Area which at its nearest point is over 168m to the building (measured from the curtilage of the Horse and Jockey Public House).
- 10.3 The design is entirely consistent with the existing agricultural appearance and character of the farm complex and wider area, and accordingly would also not lead to harm to the significance of Congerstone Conservation Area and its setting.
- 10.4 Accordingly, the proposed development should be considered to comply with Policies DM12 of the SADMP in respect to design and conservation.

11.0 Sustainable Transport

- 11.1 While paragraph 109 of the NPPF encourages that development is focused on sustainable centres, it recognises that transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. This needs to be considered in the decision-making process.
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- 11.2 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF furthers this in encouraging decision-makers to recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.
- 11.3 Considerations of sustainable transport need to be assessed against that set out in the NPPF paragraphs along with the economic benefits of the scheme.
- 11.4 Given that the great majority of farms lie outside 'sustainable' centres and diversification schemes such as this are encouraged by the NPPF and Core Strategy, it must be recognised that the proposed is one such situation that needs to be considered in rural areas.

12.0 Access

- 12.1 It is proposed to utilise the existing access that connects the site to Bilstone Road. The access currently serves the existing farm and had been in situ for 15+ years. As such there are not considered to be any issues of that proposed with regards to highway safety.

13.0 Parking

- 13.1 The Leicestershire County Council Highway Design Guide (The 6Cs Design Guide Part 3) from 2022 interim guide, outlines maximum parking standards, with specific requirements by land use detailed in Table DG11: Normal maximum parking standards. For commercial use, such as general industry, the standard is 1 car parking space per 65 square meters within the rest of rural town. Based on this standard, the site requires 13.29 spaces, and 14 parking spaces will be provided to meet this need.
 - 13.2 Table DG12: Minimum provision for disabled parking spaces, also specifies the requirement for accessible parking for business premises. This includes providing designated bays for each disabled employee and either 2 bays or 5% of the total parking capacity, whichever is greater. Accordingly, the site plan includes 2 accessible parking bays to ensure compliance.
 - 13.3 Overall, the proposal meets the Leicestershire parking standards as set forth in the Supplementary Planning Document, ensuring adequate and inclusive parking provision for the site.
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14.0 Biodiversity

- 14.1 The site has been assessed for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and determined to have a zero baseline due to its existing condition as entirely hardstanding with no vegetation or natural features present (less than 25sqm). As the site does not support any biodiversity value in its current state, it is considered exempt from the requirement to demonstrate net gain under the applicable planning regulations. This aligns with the guidance that BNG obligations apply only to sites with existing biodiversity value, ensuring that efforts are focused on developments with the potential to enhance ecological assets.

15.0 Water Management

- 15.1 Policy DM7 of the SADMP requires that developments demonstrate that any site drainage and runoff will be managed in a sustainable way and disposed of appropriately. The level of information required will depend upon the development proposed.
- 15.2 In this case the development relates to the change of use of an existing building, rather than construction of a new building or an extension which may increase surface water runoff.
- 15.3 A drainage system is already in place within the farmyard to manage the roof water run-off from the building. However, as part of this development the applicant will explore options for sustainable drainage systems including the fitting of with water butts to collect the rainwater which would be used on the agricultural land to the south of the site. Consideration could be given to a soakaway if required.
- 15.4 The site is outside any areas at risk of flooding from rivers and seas, reservoirs or surface water as designated by the Environment Agency, and no known flooding issues have occurred on the site. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as seen in figure 5.

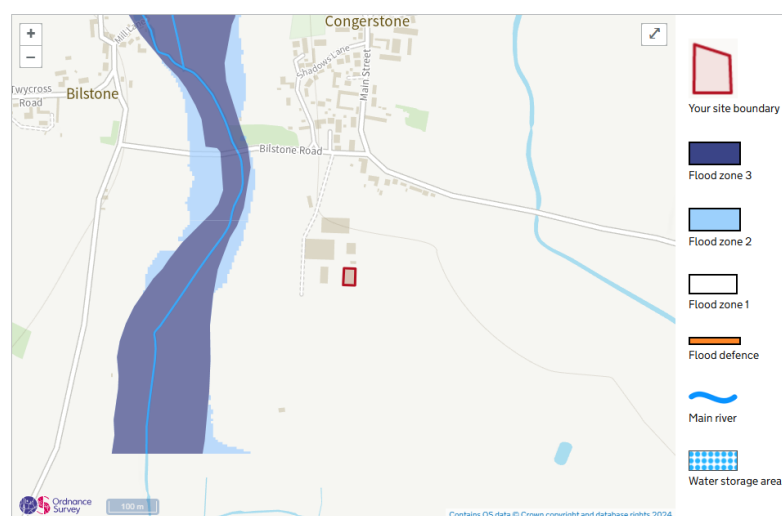


Figure 5: Flood Zone- Environment Agency Flood Map

16.0 Conclusion

- 16.1 The proposed change of use of the agricultural building at Ivy House Farm represents a sustainable and economically viable diversification of the existing agricultural enterprise. The proposed development aligns with both local and national planning policies, particularly in the context of farm diversification, which is essential for the long-term viability of rural businesses.
- 16.2 The introduction of a woodwork workshop not only adds value to the local economy but also caters to community needs without compromising the character of the local area or the surrounding heritage asset.
- 16.3 The conversion of the building will be achieved with minimal external alterations, preserving its agricultural appearance and ensuring the integrity of the landscape. This approach maintains the openness of the wider area while introducing a low-impact commercial use that is compatible with the rural setting. Additionally, the proposed parking arrangements and access points adhere to local standards, further ensuring that the development integrates smoothly with the existing infrastructure.
- 16.4 As the site does not support any biodiversity value in its current state, it is considered exempt from the requirement to demonstrate net gain under the applicable planning regulations.
- 16.5 Overall, this development represents a balanced approach to rural economic growth, aligning with the objectives of Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. We respectfully urge the planning authority to support this application, facilitating a positive contribution to the local economy while enhancing the sustainability of Ivy House Farm and its operations.
- 16.6 Planning Officers and Committee Members (if appropriate) are as such encouraged to support this application and determine it for approval.

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December 2024

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