

1. Introduction & Purpose

This Landscaping Details Document accompanies a planning application for the installation of three agricultural polytunnels and an agricultural barn on an existing 4-acre grass field used for hay production.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate how the proposed development fits within the existing landscape, protects existing natural features, and enhances biodiversity in line with Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan policies **DM7**, **DM10**, and green-infrastructure aims.

2. Existing Site Description

- The site is a **4-acre agricultural field** primarily managed as **grassland for hay production**.
 - The boundaries are enclosed by **well-established mixed native hedgerows**, which are **retained, unaffected, and unaltered** by the proposal.
 - No existing buildings or hard landscaping features are present on the field.
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3. Proposed Development

The proposal includes:

3.1 Polytunnels

- **Three polytunnels**, each:
 - **Length:** 20 m
 - **Width:** 6 m
 - **Height:** 3 m
- Positioned at the **far end of the field**, away from road frontage and neighbouring boundaries.
- The structures will sit directly on the existing grass, with minimal ground disturbance.
- No hedgerow removal or alteration is required to install the polytunnels.

3.2 Agricultural Barn

To include a cold store for storing vegetables

A machinery storage

Hay, straw storage. Plant drying area, seedling production and seed collection.

- **Length:** 16 m
- **Width:** 10/15 m
- **Height:** 3.5 m
- Positioned at the **far end of the field**, away from road frontage and neighbouring boundaries.
- The structures will sit directly on the existing grass, with minimal ground disturbance.
- No hedgerow removal or alteration is required

4. Landscaping Strategy

The overall landscaping approach is to **retain the existing character**, **minimise visual impact**, and **increase biodiversity** through additional planting.

5. Existing Vegetation to Be Retained

- All **existing boundary hedges** will be retained in full.
 - These hedges act as natural visual screening, reducing the visibility of the polytunnels from surrounding land.
 - No trees or hedges are to be removed.
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6. Proposed Planting: Woodland & Hedgerow Enhancement Strip

A key part of the landscaping proposal is the creation of a **new 10-metre-wide, 140-metre-long woodland and hedgerow strip** along the bottom boundary of the field.

6.1 Purpose of the Planting Strip

- Provide **additional screening** for the polytunnels.
- Increase **biodiversity** and habitat connectivity.
- Strengthen the site's green infrastructure contribution.
- Support long-term landscape character.

6.2 Planting Composition

The strip will include **mixed native woodland planting** with integrated hedgerow species.

A typical mix may include:

Woodland Trees

- Oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

Understorey Trees / Shrubs

- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)

Hedgerow Species (reinforced sections)

- Hawthorn
- Blackthorn
- Hazel
- Dog rose
- Guelder rose

6.3 Planting Specification

- **Density:** approx. 2–3 trees per m² for woodland sections; 5 plants per metre for hedgerow sections.
 - **Size at planting:** 60–90 cm whips (bare root) for rapid establishment and lower environmental impact.
 - **Mulching:** 50–75 mm woodchip layer around young plants.
 - **Protection:** rabbit proof fencing around field
 - **Spacing:** Staggered double or triple rows depending on section.
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7. Hard Landscaping

- No hardstanding is proposed.
 - Polytunnels sit directly on grass.
 - Barn will have a bare earth floor or rammed earth floor.
 - No surfacing, tracks, or artificial materials will be added.
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8. Drainage

Collection of rain water essential as only supply of water for crops.

- Rainfall from barn will be collected into a water storage tank and utilised over time for the crops.
 - Additional hedge and woodland plantings will absorb additional rainfall.
 - Rainfall will infiltrate naturally through the remaining grass and woodland strip.
 - No surface water runoff will be displaced onto neighbouring land.
 - Polytunnels do not require sealed bases or concrete foundations.
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9. Biodiversity Enhancements

The project naturally enhances biodiversity through the **significant new woodland strip**.

Additional measures include:

- Use of **100% native species**.
 - Creation of a **continuous wildlife corridor** at the field edge.
 - Increased shelter and foraging for birds, insects, and small mammals.
 - Protection and strengthening of existing boundary hedgerows.
 - Managed on chemical free principles
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10. Management & Maintenance Plan

First 5 years

- Watering during prolonged dry periods (from collected and stored rainfall)
- Replacement of failed plants annually (winter season).
- Hedge sections trimmed lightly after year 2 to encourage bushiness.
- Woodland sections allowed to grow freely with only formative pruning of trees.

Ongoing

- Hedges trimmed annually outside bird nesting season.
 - Woodland monitored and thinned lightly once established.
 - No chemical herbicides or fertilisers used.
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11. Landscape Impact Summary

- The proposal has **minimal visual impact** due to distance from boundaries and retention of mature hedges.
- The new woodland strip provides **strong screening** and embeds the development into the rural landscape.
- Biodiversity and green infrastructure are significantly enhanced.
- The proposal accords with Hinckley & Bosworth policies supporting landscape protection, rural character, and habitat creation.