

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Development:

Installation of 3 Polytunnels, Construction of an Agricultural Barn, and Creation of a Native Woodland/Hedgerow Planting Strip

Site:

4-acre agricultural field used for hay production

Applicant:

Sarah Fall

Local Authority:

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement accompanies an application for the installation of three agricultural polytunnels, the construction of an agricultural barn, and the creation of a 10 m × 140 m native woodland and hedgerow planting strip on an existing 4-acre field currently used for hay production.

The purpose of the proposal is to support small-scale horticultural and agricultural production while enhancing the landscape and biodiversity value of the site.

2. Site Description

- The site is a 4-acre grass field in active agricultural use (hay).
 - Boundaries are enclosed by well-established, mature native hedgerows, which will be retained in full.
 - The land is open and rural in character.
 - There are currently no buildings, structures, or hardstanding present on the site.
 - The site is not within a designated conservation area or protected landscape.
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3. Proposed Development

The proposal consists of:

3.1 Polytunnels

- Three polytunnels for horticultural use
- Each measuring:
 - 20 m long
 - 6 m wide
 - 3 m high
- Positioned at the far northern end of the field.
- Structures will sit directly on grass with no permanent foundations or hardstanding.
- No hedgerow removal or excavation is required.

3.2 Agricultural Barn

- Construction of one L-shaped agricultural barn for storage of machinery, agricultural equipment, feed, produce, and associated materials.
- The barn will measure:
 - Main length: 16 m
 - Lower section width: 10 m
 - Upper section width: 15 m
 - Slopping ridge roof max height 3.5 m
- The barn will be agricultural in appearance and constructed using appropriate rural materials and muted external finishes.
- The structure will be positioned to operate efficiently alongside the polytunnels and wider agricultural use of the site.

3.3 Landscaping and Biodiversity Enhancement

- Creation of a native woodland and hedgerow planting strip measuring 10 m wide × 140 m long along the bottom boundary.
 - Planted with 100% native species including oak, birch, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, and dogwood.
 - Designed to:
 - Strengthen boundary enclosure
 - Provide substantial visual screening
 - Increase habitat connectivity
 - Enhance the rural landscape character
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4. Planning Policy Compliance

4.1 Local Policy – Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

The proposal aligns with key local planning objectives, including:

Policy DM7: Landscape & Settlement Character

- Development respects the existing rural character.
- Mature hedgerows are fully retained.
- Woodland planting significantly enhances the local landscape.
- The agricultural structures are appropriately scaled and designed for their rural setting.

Policy DM10: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity

- The proposal provides measurable biodiversity gain.
- Native planting supports wildlife corridors and ecological networks.
- Existing ecological features are protected and enhanced.

Agricultural / Rural Economy Support Policies

- The polytunnels and agricultural barn directly support agricultural and horticultural activities.
 - No change of land use away from agriculture is proposed.
 - The development supports sustainable rural enterprise.
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5. Design & Visual Impact

- The site is enclosed by established hedgerows, which help to screen the proposed development from external views.
 - The new woodland and hedgerow planting strip will provide additional long-term visual screening and landscape enhancement.
 - The polytunnels are modest in scale, with a low height of 3 m and a lightweight agricultural appearance appropriate to the rural setting.
 - The proposed barn is functional in design and typical of agricultural buildings commonly found within the countryside.
 - External materials and colours will be selected to minimise visual prominence and integrate with the surrounding landscape.
 - No external lighting, urban-style boundary treatments, or extensive hardstanding are proposed, ensuring minimal landscape intrusion.
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6. Biodiversity Considerations

- All existing hedgerows will be retained and protected.
- Native woodland and hedgerow creation will deliver significant long-term habitat enhancement.
- No trees will be removed as part of the proposal.
- Ground surfaces will remain largely permeable, minimising hydrological impact.

- The proposal contributes positively toward biodiversity enhancement and ecological resilience.

7. Access, Highways & Drainage

- No new access points are required.
- Vehicle movements will remain consistent with normal agricultural use.
- The site can accommodate agricultural vehicles and machinery associated with the proposed development.
- All surfaces will remain permeable, allowing natural drainage and rainwater infiltration.
- No additional drainage infrastructure is required.

8. Conclusion

The proposal represents a low-impact and appropriate form of rural development that:

- Supports agricultural and horticultural activity
- Provides essential agricultural storage infrastructure
- Enhances the rural landscape
- Significantly increases biodiversity
- Protects all existing site features
- Remains proportionate in scale and agricultural in character
- Is well screened within the landscape

The proposal is fully consistent with the aims of the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Local Plan and national planning policy.

Approval is therefore respectfully requested.