DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING

Application No:	**H08-0036-26**	**Applicant:**	**Mr M Verdegaal**
Proposal:	Erection of one agricultural polytunnel for horticultural production		
Location:	Risegate House Hedgefield Hurn Gosberton		
Terminal Date:	11th May 2026		

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
04	Approach to Flood Risk
29	The Historic Environment

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

Section 4 - Decision-making
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 - Making effective use of land
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	0	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	0
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
WELLAND AND DEEPINGS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	0	0	0	1
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	1	1
OTHER STATUTORY BODIES	0	0	0	2

RESIDENTS	0	0	0	1

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

This is a full planning application seeking permission for the erection of a single agricultural polytunnel.

The proposed polytunnel is sought for horticultural production and would comprise a structure of 9.1m by 40m in size, with a maximum height of 3.7m.

During the course of the application, amendments have been received in regard to Biodiversity Net Gain. This has included an updated position from the applicant that the proposed development would be subject to the mandatory Biodiversity Gain requirements, with an udpates metric having been submitted to support the proposal.

Site Description

The application site comprises land to the west of Risegate House, Hedgefield Hurn, within the postal area of Gosberton Risegate.

The application site currently forms agricultural grassland, with the proposed polytunnel being located to the north east section of the wider parcel of land. The site lies immediate to the south, but outside of, the defined settlement boundary for Gosberton Clough and Gosberton Risegate as identified by the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, and the accompanying policies map; as such, the site forms a countryside location.

The site is within Flood Zone 3, as identified by the Environment Agency's flood risk maps.

The grade II listed building of No.28, Risegate lies to the north west of the site, albeit with ample separation.

Relevant Planning History

No planning applications have previously been submitted within the application site.

It is noted that the neighbouring site of Risegate House Farm, Hedgefield Hurn has been subject to recent applications; however, these lie notably outside of the application site for this application.

Consultation Responses

The responses received from consultees during the consultation period are summarised below. The responses can be viewed in their entirety on South Holland District Council's website.

Conservation Officer: No objections.

Environmental Protection: No EP comments or objection.

Lincolnshire County Council Highways & SuDS : No objections.

Historic Places Tea (Archaeology): Having reviewed the application documents and the updated available Historic Environment information for this application, the proposal is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological remains. Consequently, no further archaeological input is necessary for this application. It is not necessary to consult us on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals.

Internal Drainage Board: Further to receipt of the above, I confirm that Welland & Deepings IDB have no comment to make.

BNG Ecologist: BNG Comments and Notes to applicant
- We require a full BNG assessment to be provided for this application as the development site will impact over 25sqm of habitat onsite, therefore this application is not exempt through the de minimis exemption.
- The temporary nature of the impact does not exempt a development from meeting the de-minimis thresholds or the mandatory requirement.
- There is some advice regarding temporary structures - such as this proposed polytunnel - on page 35 of the BNG user guide.
Conclusion: We will require a full BNG assessment to be provided pre-determination.

Following the submission of a biodiversity net gain metric, the following comments were received:

Senior Ecologist: The authority can be confident that this proposal will achieve the mandatory 10% BNG requirement. However, note that applicants must also submit a biodiversity gain plan to the authority to discharge the gain condition pre-commencement to be in line with national requirements. The template for the gain plan can be found here (Biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK). This form summarizes the relevant BNG information contained in the metric and provides a standardized and transparent record.

Public Representations

This application has been advertised in accordance with the Development Procedure Order and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. In this instance, one letter of representation has been received. This can be summarised as:

- Whilst I have no objection to the erection of the polytunnel per se; I would like clarification on one specific point. As this structure is for horticultural production; will this involve 24 hour lighting either now or at some time in the future. If so, will there be shielding from possible light pollution?

Key Planning Considerations

Evaluation

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019, forms the development plan for the District, and is the basis for decision making in South Holland. The relevant development plan policies are detailed within the report above.

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (updated December 2024) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

Furthermore, where a Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted, this alongside the adopted Local Plan, forms part of the Development Plan for the District, and must be considered when assessing development proposals. In this instance, no relevant neighbourhood plans have been adopted.

The main issues and considerations in this case include the following:

-Principle of Development;
-Visual and Amenity Impact;
-Impact on Heritage Assets; and
-Biodiversity Net Gain.

These matters are assessed in turn below.

Principle of Development

The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out the settlement hierarchy in respect of

delivering sustainable development that meets the social and economic needs of the area whilst protecting and enhancing the environment; in order to provide enough choice of land for housing to satisfy local housing need, whilst making more sustainable use of land and to minimise the loss of high-quality agricultural land by developing in sustainable locations and at appropriate densities.

Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out a spatial strategy for delivering sustainable development across South East Lincolnshire to 2036. Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy) expresses this sustainable framework of settlements, ranking the settlements deemed to be most sustainable in descending order.

The most sustainable locations for development are situated within the 'Sub-Regional Centres', followed by 'Main Service Centres'. Lower down the hierarchy in respect of sustainable development are areas of limited development opportunity including 'Minor Service Centres', with areas of development constraint comprising 'Other Service Centres and Settlements'. The countryside is at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy and represents the least sustainable location.

Part D of Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out permitted development types within the open countryside. It states that *The rest of the Local Plan area outside the defined settlement boundaries of the Sub-Regional Centres, Main Service Centres, Minor Service Centre and Other Service Centres and Settlements is designated as Countryside. In the Countryside development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.*

In this case, the site comprises land outside of any settlement boundary and as such, comprises a countryside location.

Within the supporting text for policy 1, paragraph 3.2.16 states that "Some land uses may also require a countryside location because of their functionality". In this regard, paragraph 88 of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

The proposal in this instance, although located within a countryside location, seeks permission for an agricultural polytunnel. The application site comprises existing agricultural land, and the proposed development, through the introduction of a polytunnel for horticultural purposes, seeks to provide a development of an agricultural nature. As such, it is evident that such a proposal would be appropriate and bets suited to a countryside location. It can therefore be considered that the proposal necessitates such a location, in accordance with the requirements of Policy 1.

As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) when viewed in principle. This is subject to the assessment against site specific criteria; including (but are not limited to) the impact of the proposal on the character or appearance of the area, impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers, impact on highway safety and flood risk, which are discussed in turn as follows.

Consideration of the Character and Appearance of the Area

Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) specifically relates to 'Achieving well-designed places' and details that the "creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve" and as such, it is generally accepted that good design plays a key role towards sustainable development.

Paragraph 135, contained within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), goes on to establish that it is important that new development should be of the highest quality to enhance and reinforce good design characteristics, and that decisions must have regard towards the impact that the proposed development would have on local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting such as topography, street patterns, building lines, boundary treatment and through scale and massing.

Policy 2 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) outlines sustainable development considerations for development proposals, providing a framework for an operational policy to be used in assessing the sustainable development attributes of all development proposals.

Furthermore, Policy 3 accords with the provisions of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), in that it requires development to comprise good design; identifying issues that should be considered when preparing schemes so that development sits comfortably with, and adds positively to, its historically-designated or undesignated townscape or landscape surroundings.

Proposals for new development would therefore require the aforementioned considerations to be adequately assessed and designed, including the siting, design and scale to be respectful of surrounding development and ensure that the character of the area is not compromised.

Impact on Heritage Assets - Policy

The application site, when considering thew wider parcel of agricultural land, lies within close proximity to a grade II listed building, No.27 Risegate. The proposed siting of the polytunnel is set as to have an ample separation distance form the asset; albeit, it lies within closer proximity to the wider site.

In assessing proposals of this nature, the Local Planning Authority must ensure special regard to preserving the Listed Buildings and their settings in relation to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 'Act'). No harm should be caused with the historical assets and their surroundings requiring to be preserved or enhanced.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) expresses the importance of considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets; advising that development and alterations to designated assets and their settings can cause harm. These policies ensure the protection and enhancement of the historic buildings and environments. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance should be treated favourably.

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) states that "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance".
Policy 29 (The Historic Environment) states amongst other matters that the distinctive elements of the South East Lincolnshire historic environment will be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced, in keeping with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Development proposals will expected to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including archaeology, historic buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, street patterns, streetscapes, landscapes, parks (including Registered Parks and Gardens), river frontages, structures and their settings through high-quality sensitive design.

Character Assessment

The proposal in this instance, given the aforementioned separation distances, coupled with the nature of the development comprising a polytunnel located on established agricultural land, coupled with the modest height (albeit the overall size of the struct reis large), the proposal is not considered to give rise to an unacceptable impact upon the setting of the nearby listed building and as such, the proposed development would not harm the significance of the listed asset.

In this regard, South Holland's Conservation officer has outlined no objections to the scheme.

The proposal, although located within close proximity to residential plots, is situated as to be sited to the rear of this surrounding built form. It is noted that the proposed polytunnel is of a notable size and comprises dimensions of 40m by 9m, it is also noted that the agricultural land in which the proposal would lie would be partially visible form some vantage points; however, the proposal comprises a modest height and forms a polytunnel, and as such, forms an appropriate and natural development for its countryside location. Whilst the proposed development would be visible to some extent, the resultant development would be somewhat innocuous in respect of its surrounding area and would be an appropriate and acceptable addition for its landscape.

Taking account of the scale and nature of the development, as detailed above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable. The proposal would not cause an adverse impact to the character or

appearance of the area and would not cause harm to the significance of the nearby grade II listed building. Therefore, the proposal would be in accordance with Policies 2, 3 and 29 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

Impact on Residential Amenity/Land Users

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Policies 2 and 3 of South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions.

The proposal is located to the south of a number of residential properties that lie fronting Risegate Road, and to the west of properties along Hedgefield Hurn, including that of the host property. Notwithstanding this, the proposed polytunnel would be sited as to have a separation distance of 22m to the northern properties along Risegate Road, with a separation distance of 13m being proposed to those to the east.

This separation distance, which itself is considered to be ample, is further assisted by the fairly modest height of the proposed development. The development seeks a polytunnel to a height of 3.7m and as such, is not considered to give rise to an unacceptable imapct upon the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

The proposed use of the polytunnel would remain agricultural/horticultural and as such, the nature and intended use of the site would not be vastly altered by the proposal, given that it currently comprises agricultural grassland.

It is noted that a single letter of representation has been raised during the application process. This raised a query regarding lighting. The proposal does not identify the installation of any external lighting, and as such, no unacceptable imapct is considered to arise in this regard. A condition has been recommended, which ensures that any future floodlighting or external lighting that would otherwise require permission, is subject to a formal submission to the LPA.

As detailed above, the scale and design of the proposal is considered to be such that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of adjacent properties or land users, when also taking account of the conditions recommended. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of the Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and Policies 2 and 3 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019).

Flooding Considerations

Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) explains that "Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere".

Paragraph 173 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) goes on to state that "A sequential risk-based approach should also be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in future from any form of flooding", by following the steps set out within Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

Paragraph 174 goes on to state that, "Within this context the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding", with the strategic flood risk assessment being the tool to demonstrate this.

The South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides an overview of how flood risk has been considered in shaping the proposals of the Local Plan; including the spatial strategy and the assessment of housing and employment sites. Policy 4 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) is clear in that "Development proposed within an area at risk of flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the Environment Agency's flood map or at risk during a breach or overtopping scenario as shown on the flood hazard and depths maps in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) will be permitted" in instances where specific criteria is met.

The site lies within Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Maps. These have been created as a tool to raise awareness of flood risk with the public and partner organisations, such as Local Authorities, Emergency Services and Drainage Authorities. The Maps do not take into account any flood defences. It is worth noting that large parts of the district of South Holland lie within Flood Zone 3. It is therefore necessary to use the refined flood risk information (Hazard and Depth maps) within the South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017) as a basis to apply the sequential test.

The site in this instance lies within an area identified as no hazard within the SFRA present day hazard mapping. Irrespective, in this instance the proposal necessitates this location given its agricultural nature and association with the wider land.

Overall, the proposal accords with Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and the intentions of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) in this regard.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) requires developers to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain using standardized biodiversity units measured by statutory biodiversity metrics. This is often referred to as the mandatory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain.

"Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits".

The biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition. This relates to a condition that seeks, once planning permission has been granted, a Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development, alongside the need to submit a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

The effect of Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition".

The effect of this "biodiversity gain condition" is that development granted by this notice must not begin unless:
(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan, or
(c) the development is exempt from the biodiversity gain condition.

When taking the above into account, the development is subject to the mandatory biodiversity gain condition. The application, following discussion, was accompanied by a BNG metric, which identifies the existing biodiversity value of the site. The Partnerships Ecologist has identified that the metric is adequately completed and can be confident that a net gain can be achieved on site. As such, the proposal will be subject to the mandatory biodiversity gain conditions.

Planning Balance

As detailed above, Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposed development is appropriate and would not materially harm the character or appearance of the locality, would not harm the significance of the nearby listed building, or the amenity of nearby residents. Overall, the proposed development accords with the Local Plan and the NPPF.

Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:

A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).

C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

Conclusion

Taking the above considerations into account, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 1, 2, 3 and 29 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, along with the identified sections contained within the NPPF. There are no significant factors in this case that indicate against the proposal and outweigh the consideration in favour of the proposal and the policies referred to above.

Recommendation

Based on the assessment detailed above, it is recommended that the proposal should be approved under delegated authority.