

## INTRODUCTION ON THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### Welcome

Welcome to the exhibition and Spring Hill Nursery. The exhibition has been prepared by the applicants who are Evesham Vale Growers Ltd and R & L Holt Ltd. The applicants are progressing a joint venture for a new commercial glasshouse which will grow tomatoes for British supermarkets.

Evesham Vale Growers farms over 2500 acres in the vicinity of Evesham. With a wide range of agricultural and horticultural enterprises including the growing of tomatoes, spring onions, asparagus, fennel and courgettes, as well as combinable and forage crops, and beef production, EVG has grown to be one of the largest farming businesses in the Midlands. R & L Holt is a family business originally formed in 1979 by Rick and Laura Holt and now includes their son and daughter Roly and Felicity Holt. R & L Holt operate glasshouses at Offenham, Fladbury and Badsey and specialise in growing tomatoes.

### Aims

The exhibition seeks to present the emerging proposals and seek feedback from the communities around Rotherdale Farm. The applicants are jointly progressing pre-application discussions with Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council Highways in advance of submitting a planning application for a new commercial glasshouse development. The application is anticipated in the summer of 2017 and this event provides an opportunity for the communities and interested parties to offer feedback on the proposals prior to any formal application being made.

### The Site

The applicants require a site to expand and consolidate their businesses due to increased demand from the supermarkets and the need to introduce greater economies of scale. They have been actively seeking a site which meets their operational requirements. These are it is available; the land must be relatively flat; the site must be near to mains gas; the site must have good mains water supply; and finally it should be able to have 3 phase electricity.

The search for a suitable site has led the applicants to the site shown at Image 1.1. The site is located to the west of Throckmorton off Long Lane connecting the B4082 Upton Snodsbury Road as shown on the accompanying plan extracts. The site covers an area of approximately 19 hectares and is located to the east of the internal access road. The proposed access route joins Long Lane with an unmarked priority junction.

The site comprises a single agricultural field, currently in arable production. The site is beyond the existing earth bund that was recently completed associated with the anaerobic digestion plant C/12/00819/CM and is situated between the solar farm; anaerobic digestion plant and its reservoirs and the neighbouring commercial poultry sheds. It is therefore a far less isolated and visually prominent location in comparison to the old siting. The site has planning permission at present for a solar farm which would not be developed if planning permission for the glasshouse is permitted.

### The Development

The proposal is for the erection of an 140,500m<sup>2</sup> glasshouse including: offices; toilets; holding area; staff canteen; formation of an attenuation reservoir; provision of up to 5 (3 bed) mobile homes for horticultural workers; and, associated infrastructure such as Buffer Tanks for irrigation.

Access to the site will utilise the existing access onto Long Lane. This is a well-established agricultural access that has been designed to accommodate large vehicles for the farm, anaerobic digestion facility and solar farm and is more than capable of safely accommodating any additional construction and operational traffic associated with the proposed glasshouse. The applicants have engaged in formal pre-application discussions with the local highway authorities and have undertaken appropriate surveys of the local road network to understand the existing operation of the local and wider highway network.

Emerging results of the survey data indicate that the local network has adequate capacity to accommodate the proposed development's traffic generation without detriment to the network. Parking will all be on site and the applicants will make ample provision for staff, visitors and deliveries as shown on the master plan. The applicants will utilise a private bus service to transport staff living in Evesham and Pershore to the site as well as providing some on-site accommodation which works well at their existing sites the detail of which will be outlined in the accompanying Transport Statement. During the construction phase a compound will be employed on site to prevent any conflict with other vehicle movements both on and off site. It is anticipated that in transportation terms the proposals will not result in any severe transportation impacts in accordance with Paragraph 32 of the NPPF".

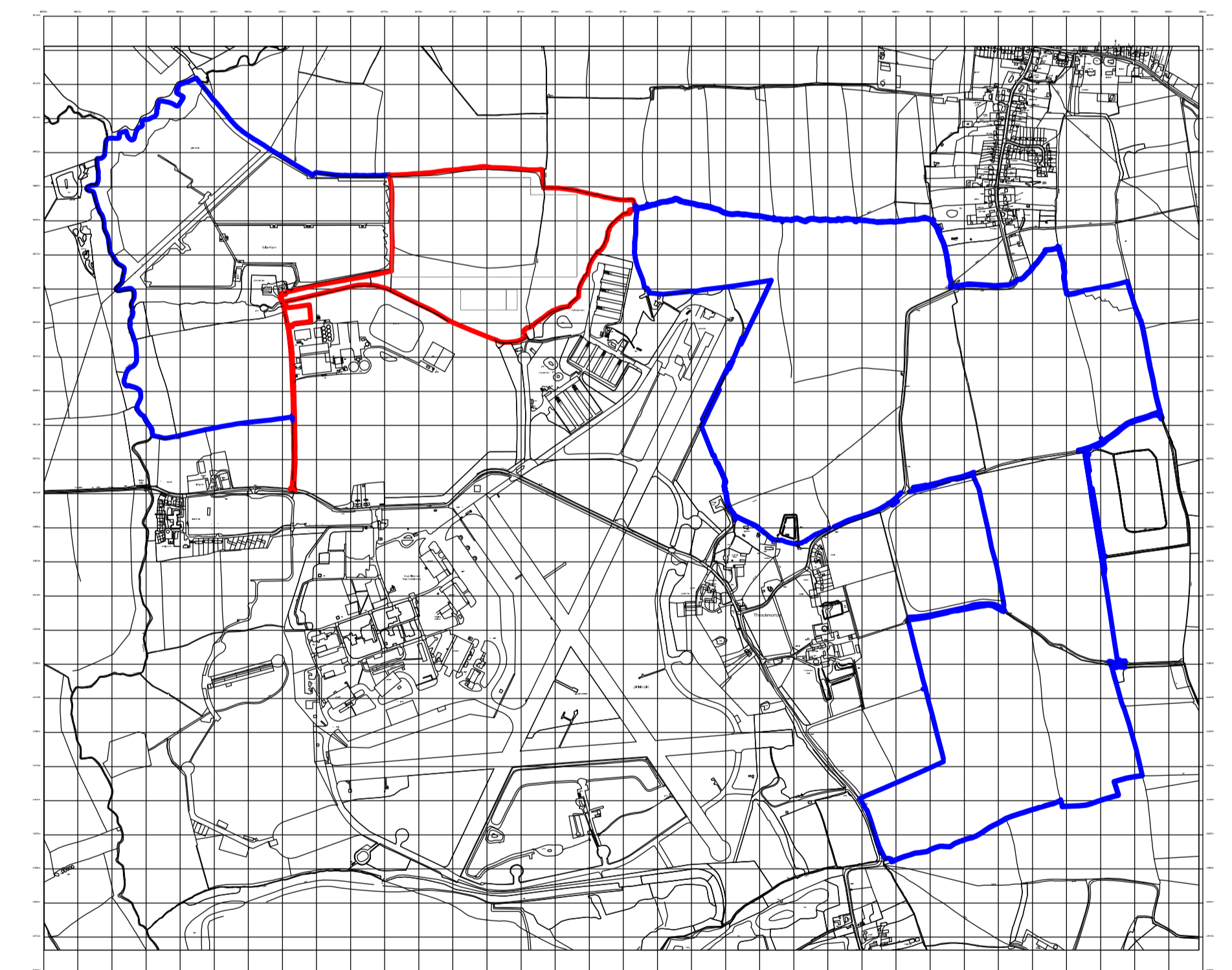


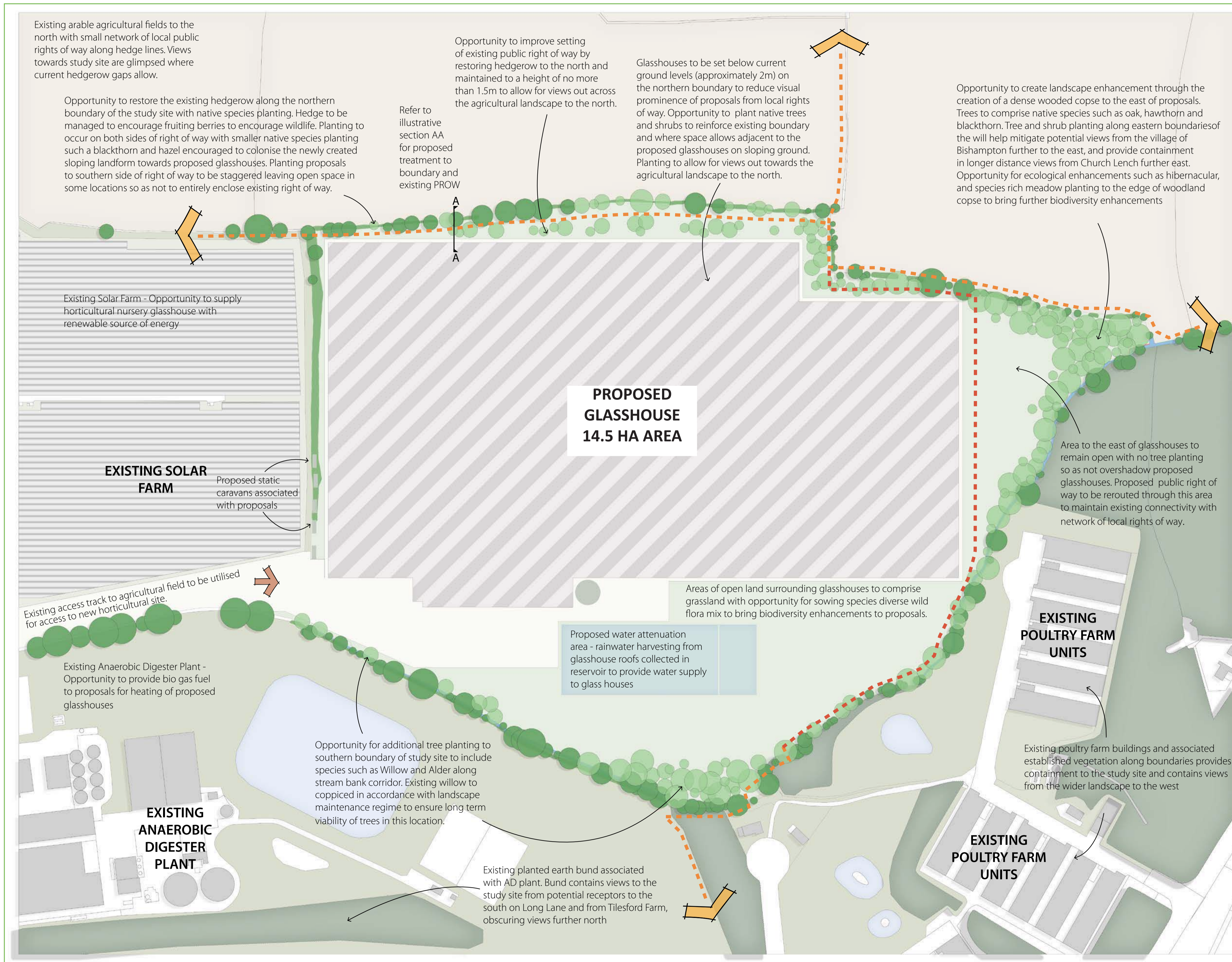
Image 1.1

## THE GLASSHOUSE DESIGN AND SITE MASTER PLAN

This board shows the design of the proposed glasshouse and how it will be developed within the site. The building is essentially a rectangular commercial glasshouse.

It will cover an area of 14.5ha as shown on the image displayed on this board

The glasshouse will be 6.5 metres high to the eaves and 7.5 metres to the ridge to enable the crop to be grown and harvested from waist high upwards. The glasshouse will have a depth of approximately 285 metres and a width of approximately 537 metres. The ancillary elements, which will be detailed on board 4, are largely to the southern end which is the lowest part of the site. The site slopes north to south and therefore an element of cut and fill will be necessary to make the site completely flat.



- KEY**
- Existing Public Right of Way - retained and enhanced
  - Proposed rerouting of existing public rights of way
  - Refer to illustrative section
  - Existing trees and vegetation
  - Proposed native trees (indicative)



## HOW THE GLASSHOUSE WILL BE USED

### Tomato Growing Technique

The glasshouse which will be used to cultivate tomatoes on a commercial scale. The reason the exhibition has been held at Spring Hill Nursery near Fladbury is because the growing techniques presently used will be replicated at the new glasshouse.

All crops are grown hydroponically using a Nutrient Film Technique. All of the crops are grown on hanging gutters which is a better climate for the plants and easier working height for staff. The applicants have developed this system further in recent years to maximise the growing potential of the crops.

Energy is something that the applicants constantly review to be more efficient and sustainable currently the applicants use Combined Heat and Power and Biogas from an Anaerobic Digester facility. All sites have thermal screens both on top and side

which saves energy. For our Winter production the applicants are using LED Inter-lighting which is more efficient on energy and also gives the crop the optimum light spectrum. Additionally the applicants dose CO2 into the crop which helps the crop to grow rather than letting it escape into the atmosphere. Light spill will be controlled via blinds which not only mitigate light pollution but act as additional thermal insulation to the crop.

It is proposed that the existing anaerobic digestion plant and solar farms, which are already operating on the Rotherdale Farm site, will provide the renewable energy for of the glasshouse. The reservoir and buffer tank will be designed so that water will be reused in the glasshouse. Both these factors make this a highly sustainable development and will reduce traffic movements. In this sense this is truly sustainable development.



### Business Strategy

Both applicants are very environmentally aware from making best use of scarce resources to using natural pest control methods.

- **Water** – The applicants are very water efficient. Their method of growing NFT (Nutrient Film Technique) is a closed system and uses only the water the plant takes up while the water is continually pumped around the glasshouse.
- **Pollination** - The applicants use only GB bumble bees from BCP Certis to pollinate our plants.
- **Biological Control** - Natural predators are used to combat pests and diseases.
- **Waste material** - All leaves and waste from the plants is to be used in the Anaerobic Digester.
- **Heat** - All sites endeavour to be as efficient with heat sources as possible

All sites have thermal screens to keep heat in on dull days and to shade the plants when light levels are very high. These blinds will prevent light spillage from the proposed LED Inter-lighting.

## Ancillary developments:

As can be seen from Board 2 the proposals include a number of ancillary developments such as car parking, service yard, offices; reception, toilets; holding and packaging areas; staff canteen; formation of an attenuation reservoir; provision of up to 5 (3 bed) mobile homes for horticultural workers; and, associated infrastructure such as Buffer Tanks for irrigation.

The accompanying images show how some of these elements could look in greater detail than possible on the main master plan due to the scale.

Image 4.1 shows the office elements. These will provide reception, staff canteen, meeting rooms, toilets, packaging areas and other necessary storage areas. The office areas will take on a modern appearance and be constructed of sustainable materials. Image 4.2 shows a photo of how the office element may look.

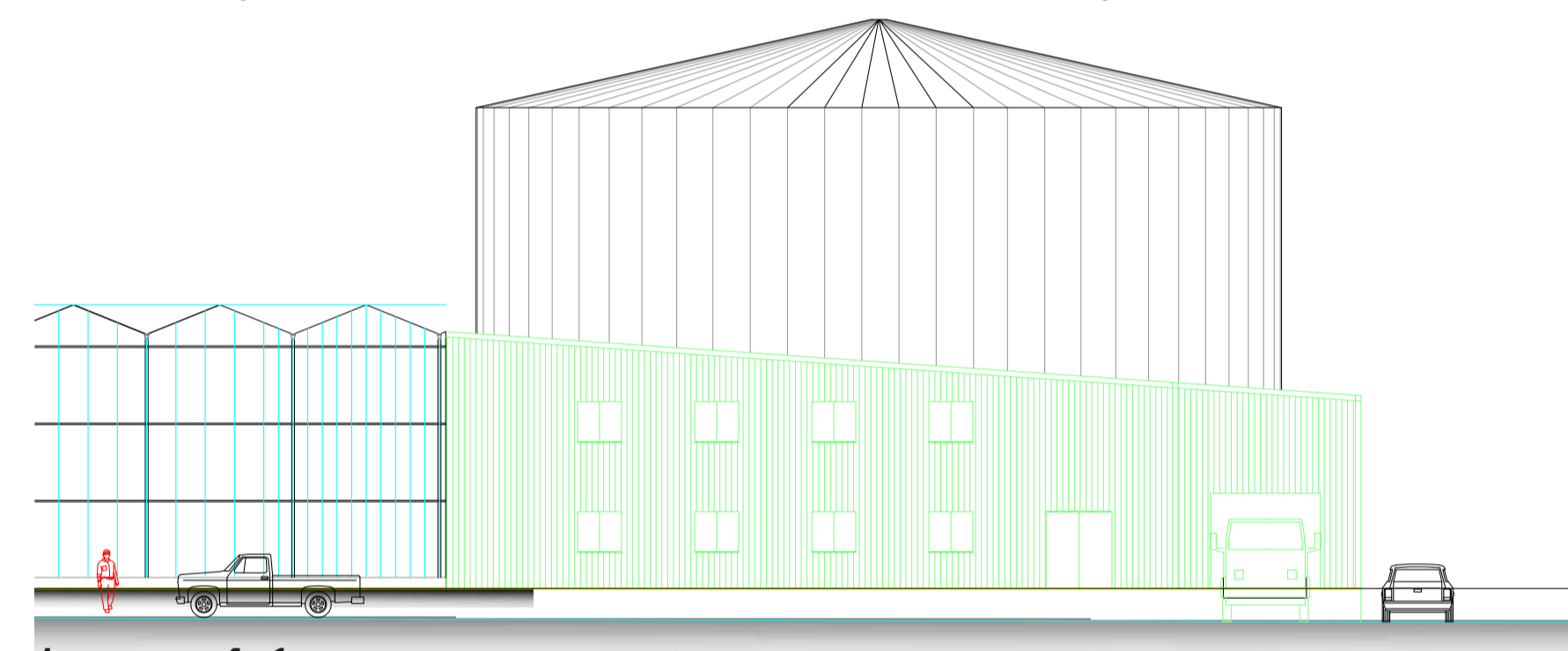


Image 4.1



Image 4.2

The car park will provide dedicated visitors and disabled parking; adequate staff parking taking into account many staff will live on site or utilise the applicant organised bus system. An element of overflow parking will be provided to ensure more than ample parking is provided. Car parking is seen on board 2.

The reservoir (image 4.3 shows the drainage provision) will collect and attenuate rainwater that falls on the non-permeable areas of the site which is mainly the actual glasshouse. Collected rainfall will be either used for irrigation on the crop or discharged into the watercourse at controlled rates. The proposals will not exacerbate risk of flooding and the application will be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and site wide Water Management Strategy. The irrigation needs will require a buffer tank of up to 15 metre high to deliver adequate irrigation pressure. This is shown on image 4.4 and will be sited at the lowest point on the site to reduce its visual impact.

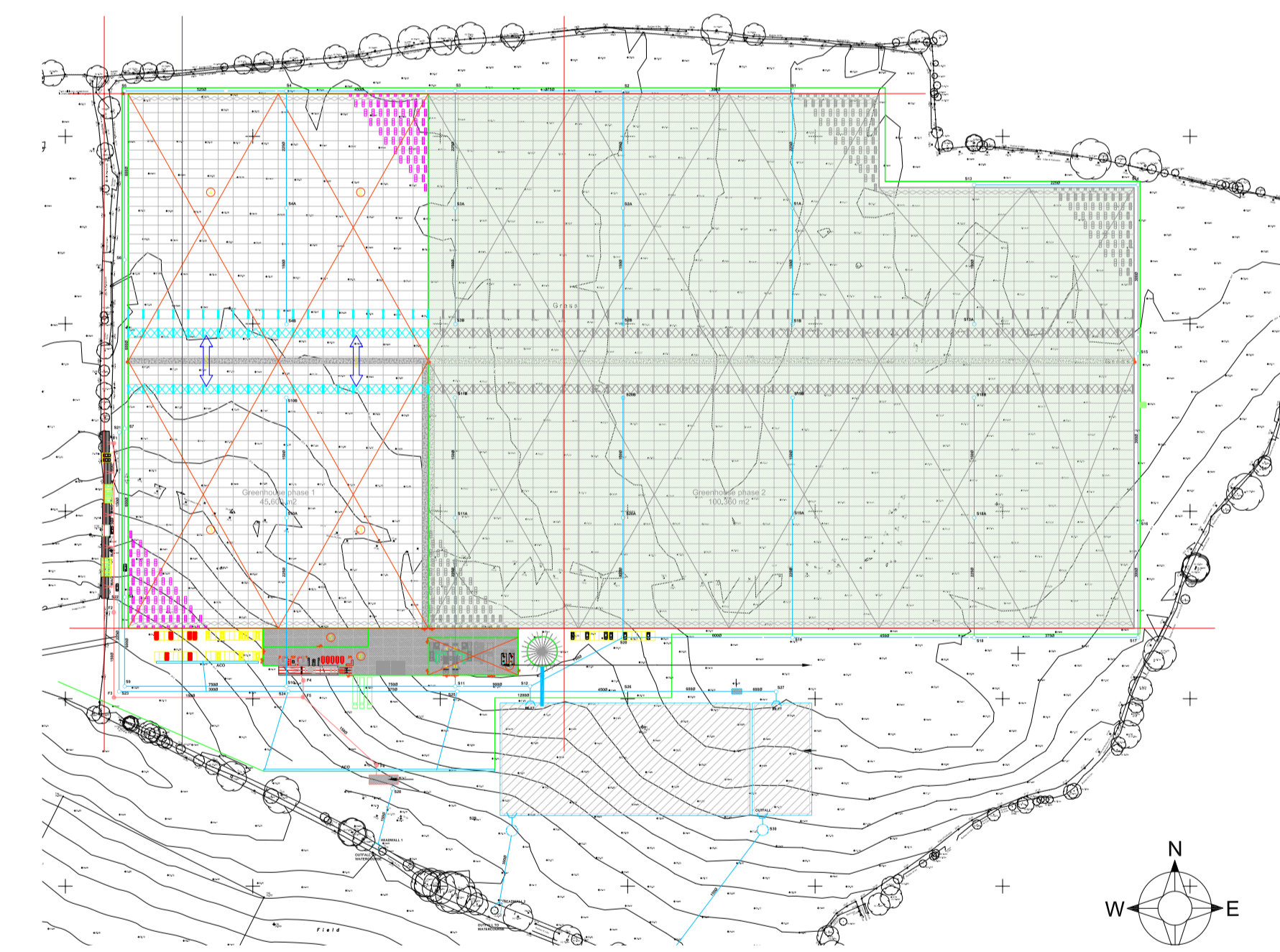


Image 4.3

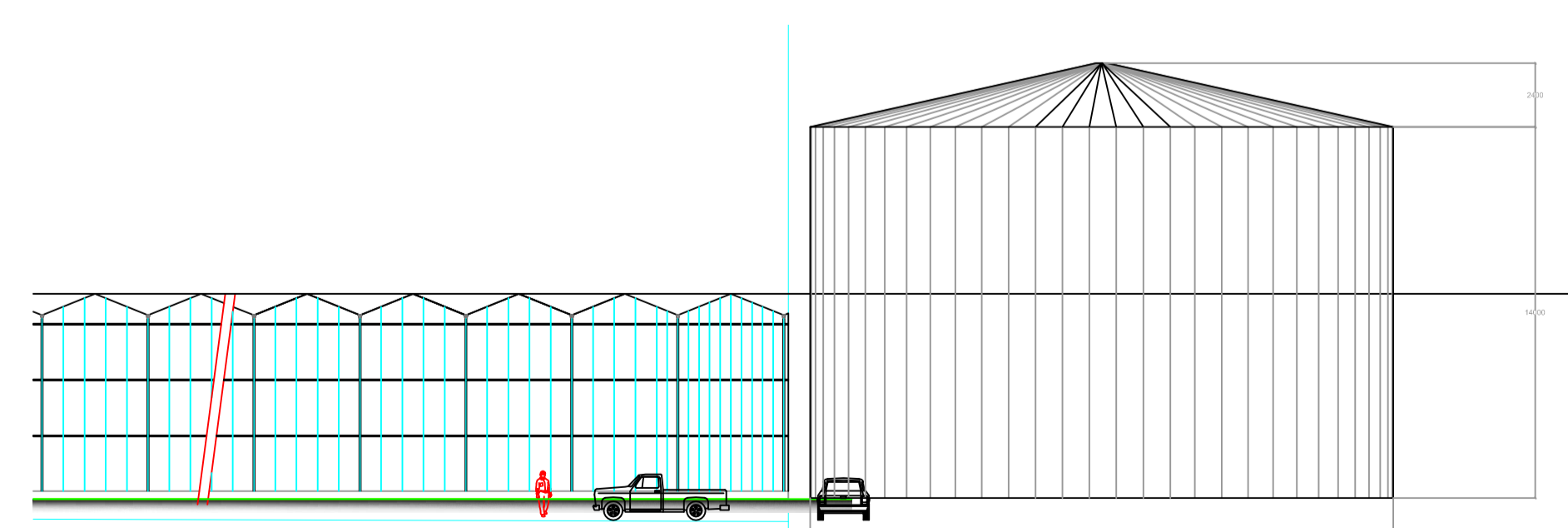


Image 4.4

The staff accommodation will be sited at western end of the glasshouse between the structure and the existing solar farm. The accommodation is shown as caravans on the master plan and at image 4.5. The accommodation is necessary to ensure staff are on site for health and safety; crop management which can be 24 hours a day and security as the facility and its technology is very expensive requiring high levels of surveillance.

Footpath enhancements – At present there a public rights of way on the site. The master plan shows a minimal diversion of one right of way and image 4.6 shows how the footpath will be developed to make it a more usable and attractive environment than presently possible. The paths at present are not defined, not well used, not easily navigable and are generally suffering from a lack of management. The proposals will alter this and deliver attractive, well landscaped, legible and desirable routes.

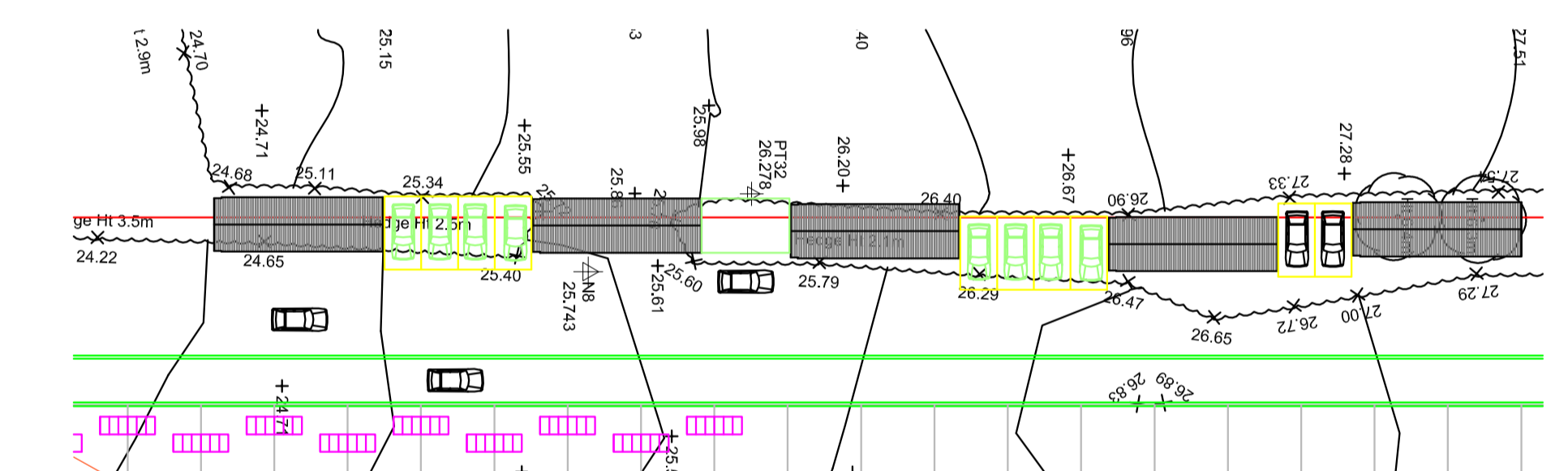


Image 4.5

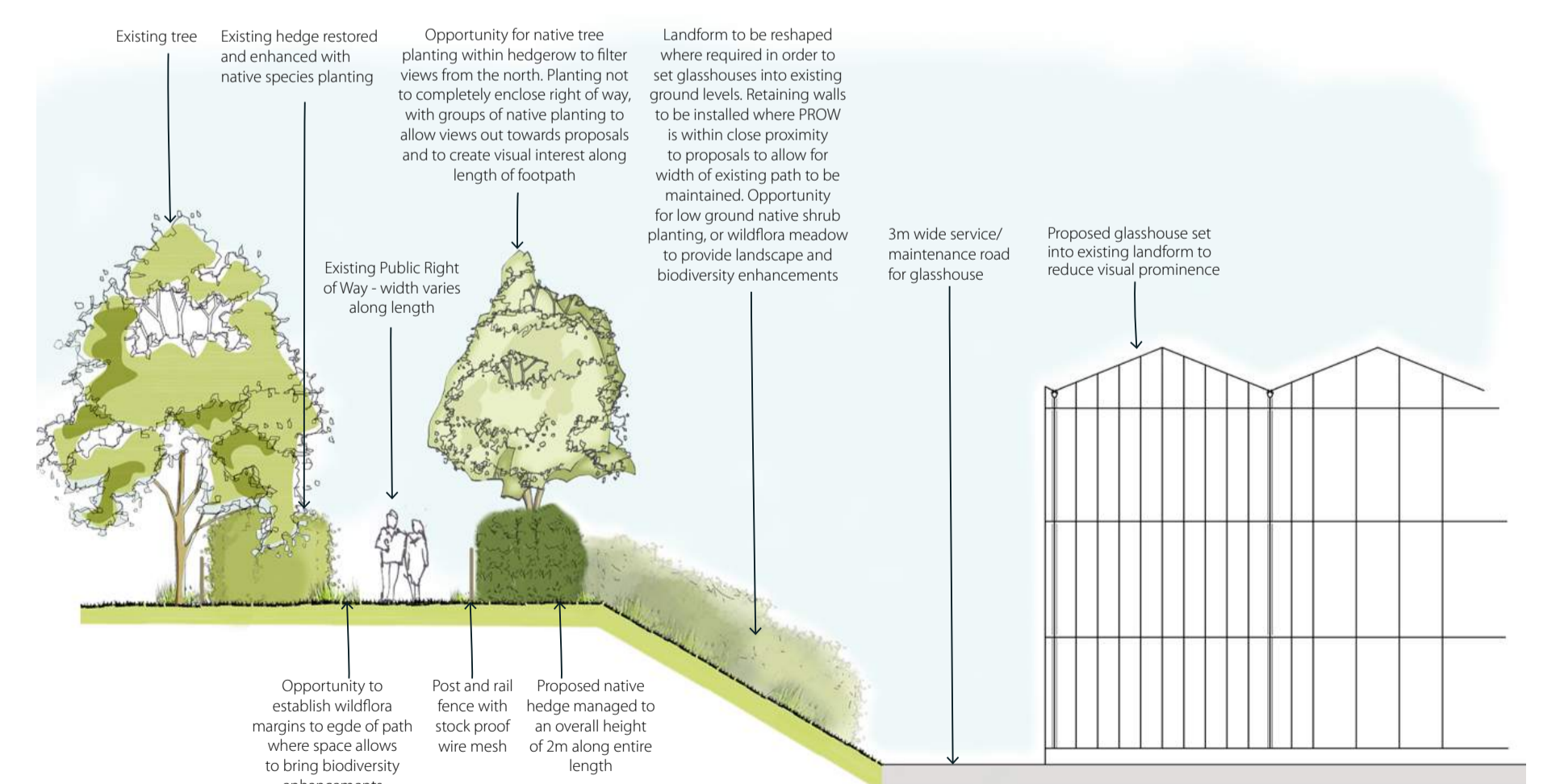


Image 4.6



## SUMMARY OF BENEFITS OF THE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE PLANNING PROCESS MOVING FORWARD

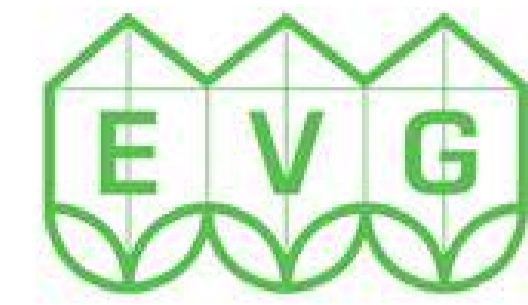
The proposals taken as a whole provide a number of benefits which can be summarised as follows:

- Direct job creation of up to 100 jobs
- Indirect job creation for the local economy for businesses serving the business
- Construction jobs during the build period
- Assisting 2 major local employers grow their business and safeguard the existing 650 staff employed in the vicinity
- Assisting 2 major local business remain competitive in a highly competitive sector by introducing greater economies of scale to production
- Delivery of a truly sustainable development that reduces overall vehicle movements; recycles rainwater; green waste and derives power from the adjacent solar and anaerobic digestions processes.
- Assisting Britain produce additional crop for the supermarkets in Britain thus reducing importation of tomato crops from around the world.
- Direct improvements to footpaths around the site
- New planting to add to the biodiversity gain which is presently weak due to the intensive arable farming.

The applicants are seeking to complete their pre-application enquires with Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council Highways and refine the details for a summer 2017 submission. Once a submission is made it will be a 13 week application period and the Local Planning Authority will advertise the application to the local community.

The applicants welcome feedback from local residents and interested parties which will be taken into consideration and addressed in a statement of community involvement that will be submitted to Wychavon DC at the point of the application being submitted. Therefore please complete a questionnaire before leaving or email any comments to [enquiries@framptons-planning.com](mailto:enquiries@framptons-planning.com)

On behalf of Evesham Vale Growers and R & L Holt thank you for your time reading these summary boards and attending this exhibition. Members of the project team will be on hand to answer any additional questions you may have.



R & L Holt

