

## Cheshire West & Chester Council – Local Plan Part Two

### Statement Prepared on behalf of Thor Specialities (UK) Limited (Representor ID: 243374)

#### Introduction

This Statement has been prepared by Euan Kellie Property Solutions on behalf of our client, Thor Specialities (UK) Limited (referred to hereafter as “Thor UK”).

The purpose of the Statement is to provide supplementary information to support the Planning Inspectorate following on from the ‘Matter 5’ questions set out in the ‘Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions for Examination’ dated 20 July 2018.

It has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Inspector’s Guidance Notes, in particular paragraph 5.2 which states:

*“Other participants may, if they wish, submit statements addressing the issues and questions set out for the session they are attending. There is no need to repeat points already made in representations however and participants may wish to rely on these earlier representations. Others who have made representations but are not participating in the hearing sessions may also submit statements addressing the issues and questions. Although again, there is no need to repeat points already made.”*

This paragraph is relevant as our client is not participating in the LPP2 Hearing Sessions; notwithstanding they wish to:

- Make the Inspector aware of changes that have taken place since their last set of LPP2 representations which were submitted to CWACC on 23 January 2018; and,
- Set out how the proposed employment allocation in Wincham, Northwich, will wholly accord with the policies set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework which was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 July 2018.

By way of background, previous LPP2 submissions were previously made to CWACC on behalf of our client on:

- 23 September 2016 (as part of the Preferred Approach consultation);
- 21 April 2017 (a supplementary representation to the aforementioned consultation); and,
- 23 January 2018 (as part of the Submission Draft consultation).

This Statement should therefore be read alongside these previous submissions.

#### LPP2 ‘Matter 5’

Matter 5 focuses on the approach to the employment site allocations within Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford and the rural area. Three ‘General Questions’ are subsequently set out:

*“Q1. How was the spatial distribution of employment allocations determined? How does this relate to STRAT3-8 of the Local Plan Part One?”*

*Q2. Will the allocations ensure that the submitted plan provides an appropriate mix of employment sites in accordance with the objectives set out in Local Plan Part One Policy STRAT3-8?”*

*Q3. Was the site selection process robust? Was an appropriate selection of potential sites assessed? Were appropriate criteria taken into account in deciding which sites to select and was the assessment against these criteria robust?”*

*Detailed assessment of each site will be done by area.”*

Question 3 is pertinent to our client and forms the basis of this Statement:

- Firstly, because their existing operation is based at Wincham Industrial Estate (also included within the LPP2 proposed employment land allocation); and,
- Secondly, because LPP2 Policy N4, Employment land provision in Northwich, states that Site A, as identified on the policies map (see **Figure 1**) has been allocated to meet the strategic requirement for new employment development. Site A is defined as 'land at Chapel Street, Wincham (16 hectares, use classes B1, B2, B8) in line with Local Plan (Part Two) policy N 2'.

**Figure 1** below shows the proposed LPP2 employment allocation.

**Map change: 149**



Local Plan: Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies

Policy number: N 4.A, N 4.C and N 4.D

Description: Employment land provision in Northwich (Land at Chapel Street, Wincham; Land at Lostock Works House; and Land on Denton Drive Industrial Estate)

Amendment: Add to Policies Map

 N 4 Employment land provision in Northwich



^ Figure 1

## Introducing Thor UK

Thor UK was established in 1959 in the UK and is a global name in the development and manufacture of environmentally acceptable biocides, flame retardants and personal care products – all of which tend to be unseen but can be found within household goods used by millions of people on a daily basis.

Thor's group headquarters are located in Canterbury, Kent, with the main manufacturing plant and technical facility in Germany. Other production units and operating companies are strategically located in 16 countries world-wide. This extensive global network ensures not only rapid delivery, but also places Thor's unrivalled technical support within easy reach of all markets and enables them to provide bespoke products for their customers.

Thor acquired their existing site at Wincham Industrial Estate in the late 1990s and, following construction, began trading at their new location in June 2002.

The company has continued to expand since this time. Importantly, since 2012, Thor has invested £25million in the following major works have been delivered at Wincham Industrial Estate. These are set out overleaf.

- 1 no. new warehouse constructed on the former Victoria Stadium site (with permission granted for a second warehouse – construction not yet commenced);
- New gatehouse constructed along with new lorry park;
- 'Production Hall 3' completed;
- 'Production Hall 4' completed;
- Raw Materials Store completed; and,
- New attenuation tanks installed along with new hydrant system.

By the end of 2018 Thor UK expect to have 110 employees at Wincham Industrial Estate and expect to start 2019 moving from 24/5 to 24/7 operations which will see a further increase in employment.

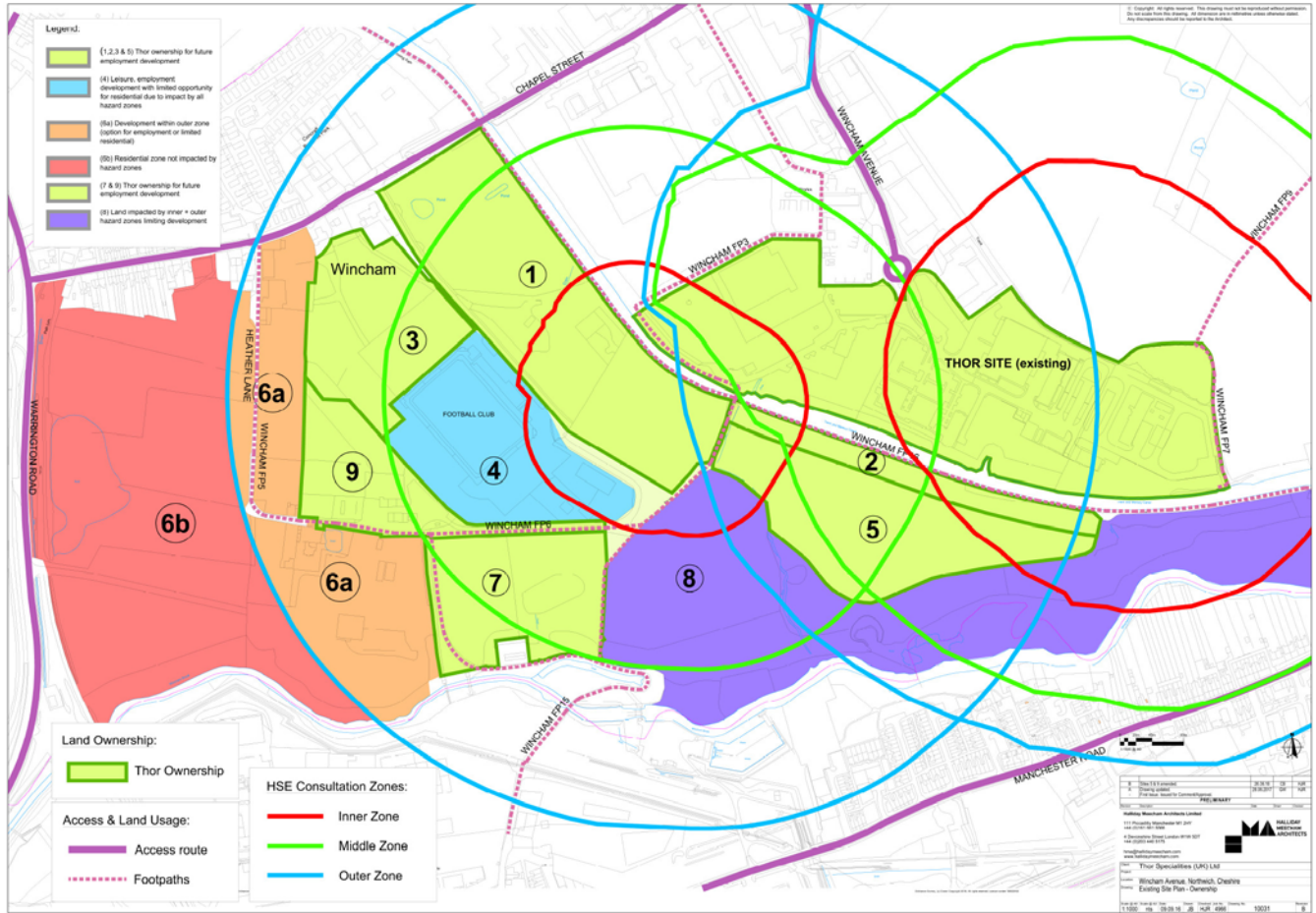
## Thor UK's Significant Plans for Growth in Wincham During the Plan Period

As set out in our three previous submissions as part of the LPP2 consultation process, our client has significant plans for continued growth in Wincham, Northwich – a direct response to the continued success of their business.

Allied with this Thor UK has, over the past three years, successfully acquired 6 no. parcels of land (coloured green) which previously formed part of the Wincham Urban Village. This ownership is shown in **Figure 2**.

**It should be noted that Sites 5 and 9 have been acquired since the last set of LPP2 representations were submitted to CWACC on 23 January 2018 (letter reference EKPS/160207/NEWREP).**

This land acquisition means that, over the course of the next decade, our client will be in a position to deliver a major extension to their existing operation at Wincham Industrial Estate which will lead to the creation of a significant number of local jobs and, in turn, make a significant positive contribution to the economy of the local, regional and national economy.



^ Figure 2

This future investment forms part of Thor’s global supply chain strategy. In due course it will remove dependence on sourcing from China and make Thor UK the centre of excellence within the Thor Group for this speciality molecule. Once this technology platform is established it will create opportunities in other areas of speciality chemicals.

On 4 July 2018 Thor UK submitted to CWACC revised Hazardous Substances Consent (“HSC”) application which will incorporate the increase in hazardous materials that Thor UK will need to hold on site as part of the next expansion phase.

The ultimate layout in terms of future manufacturing/ distribution/ technical services/ administration is still being considered by Thor UK as the impending “Brexit” deal may have an implication on products being transferred to the UK that Thor currently source from their European sister companies. Notwithstanding it is anticipated Thor UK’s proposals for the site will require a delivery programme of at least a decade, and certainly during the Plan Period up to 2030.

Alongside the sites that are now in the ownership of Thor UK, it is important to 'frame' the remaining 5 no. parcels of land that are not in their control, and how they relate to the presence of the Health & Safety Executive ("HSE") Consultation Zones. Ultimately these factors have a fundamental bearing on what can reasonably be delivered in the future:

- Witton Albion Football Club own Site 4. They were not a party to the Wincham Urban Village Section 106 legal agreement and we understand they have no plans to relocate. In any event a small part of the site is within the HSE Inner Zone and the remainder is in the Middle Zone. In line with HSE Guidance, residential development is not allowed within the Inner Zone and only a small amount of housing is allowed in the Middle Zone.
- Site 6A is located within the HSE Outer Zone whilst the southern part of Site 6B is not within the HSE Consultation Zone.
- It is understood that the northern half of Site 6B is undevelopable – hence no residential units were previously promoted as part of the Wincham Urban Village application.
- The majority of Site 8 falls within the Health & Safety Executive ("HSE") Inner and Middle Zones. As set out above, residential development is not allowed within the Inner Zone and only a small amount of housing is allowed in the Middle Zone.

### **Conclusion**

Allocating land at Chapel Street, Wincham for employment land use will play a critical role in allowing Thor UK to expand in the future and, thereby, make a significant contribution to delivering Sustainable Development as advocated by paragraphs 11(a) and (b) of the NPPF. It will also accord wholly with the objectives presented in Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy – in particular the provisions of paragraph 80 to 82.

In summary it will:

- Provide Thor UK with the planning policy framework that will enable them to invest, expand, and adapt.
- Support Thor UK's economic growth and productivity and allow them to maximise the opportunities for much needed future employment development in Wincham.
- It will play a critical role in providing Thor UK with the opportunity to make the Wincham operation a centre of excellence and create opportunities in other areas of speciality chemicals; thereby providing further employment opportunities.
- Provide sufficient flexibility to allow Thor UK to respond to their future, not currently anticipated needs, and enable them to rapidly response to changes in economic circumstances.

**EKPS/ 23 August 2018**