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## Strategic Site: Hillhouse International

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**Location:** Thornton, adjacent A585

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**Size:** 600 ac (243 ha)

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**Key stakeholder / owner:** NPL Estates Ltd

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**Summary:** A large, fully secure serviced strategic industrial and employment site situated on the Wyre estuary, close to the Port of Fleetwood. Occupied by existing successful multi-national chemical and polymer companies. Substantial opportunities for growth and diversification.

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**Purpose:** Heavy industry, chemical, polymers, energy, housing, office and retail.

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### Profile:

Hillhouse International occupies 600 acres (243 ha) in a linear strip between the River Wyre and the A585 trunk road between Thornton and Fleetwood. The A585 connects Fleetwood with the national motorway network at Junction 3 of the M55. A rich history of development stretches back to 1890. The site was operated by ICI from the 1920's and following a long period of stability, the various operations were scaled back during the 1990's culminating in the closure of Thornton Power Station and Astra Zeneca in 1999 and 2000 respectively. The site was acquired by NPL Estates in 2003 during which the Company has supported its development in line with a 25 year plan.

Hillhouse is currently home to several key multi-national operations including Victrex, Vinnolit and Asahi Optical, companies which specialise in the manufacture of high grade polymer based products from within the 270 acre secure site. The products produced on-site are used in industries varying from aerospace through to medical orthotics with an estimated 70% of services being supplied locally.

The existing business park is fully secure and benefits from round the clock security and support provided by Thornton Facilities Management Limited. This includes the provision of power, water and effluent treatment services from on-site facilities and a dedicated on-site emergency service including fully equipped fire and ambulance vehicles.

“Wyre Power”, a Welsh Power venture are committed to construction of a £600m gas fired power station within the secure area and Northwest Biogas is to build a £1.5m anaerobic digester plant to make use of by-products of the plastic manufacturing process. The ventures are expected to generate in the region of 850mW of electricity. These exciting developments are expected to start on site during 2012.



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The wider Hillhouse area is also the subject of significant investment. Global Renewables Ltd commenced operation of their brand new waste transfer and recycling centre in 2010 in Autumn of the same year, David Wilson Homes took control and commenced site operations which will eventually see the construction of 273 homes.

Despite its industrial heritage the area is renowned for the quality of its environment. The Wyre Estuary has some of the highest levels of ecological and environmental protections possible all of which are accessible to the public via an extensive footpath system including the “Wyre Way” coastal path.

### Opportunities:

The secure site sits at the southern end of the Hillhouse site. A further 30 acres (12.1 ha) have been identified for development for employment uses to complement the existing operations and to house new development. This has potential to accommodate B1 office pavilions and B8 type uses in attractive and accessible locations overlooking the Wyre estuary and which can benefit from the systems and services already in place within the secure site but also operate in the style of a typical business park with the added advantages of the location.

An additional 45 acres (18ha) has been set aside for housing development to complement other existing permissions and developments which have taken place across the site. This has been identified as part of an expansive scheme which includes large areas of environmental improvements designed to complement the existing facilities and the creation of a new district centre. The site is able to offer a multitude of opportunities for investment and relocation, is assembled and in single ownership. Its development has the backing of the Local Authority and benefits from the support of a recently approved development plan document.

### Timeframe:

The partners are committed to expanding operations onto the new business park site in the next five years. Site investigations are being undertaken to inform the remediation and implementation strategies and detailed funding bids are expected to be made to support early commencement. Whilst, the focus of physical activity during 2011 will be on the secure site in preparation for works associated with the new power station and biomass facilities, there is a collective will to build upon the successes and increase the rate of change across the site.