

CLIENT STATEMENT

25th March 2024

Client background and commitment to Bury

“Holchem Laboratories, founded in 1982, is a local company and after progressing through a number of site iterations in our past, we eventually settled at Gateway House on the Pilsworth Road Industrial Estate in the late summer of 2012. The company up to this point and then until 2018, was in private, family ownership. We currently hold title to a 100,000 sqft facility that we have occupied since 2012.

We are a hygiene chemical, manufacturing company supplying chemicals and services to the Food & Beverage sector and to a lesser extent, the Foodservice & Facilities sector.

In 2018 the family sold the company to Ecolab. However, after the sale, the CMA investigated the transaction as they were concerned that a combined Ecolab – Holchem organisation, could exercise too much influence and monopoly in the UK Food & Beverage market. Ecolab were instructed by the CMA to divest the company. Subsequently, Ecolab sold the company to Kersia in 2020.

The products we produce and the markets we service are critical to the national food supply chain, with Holchem being one, if not ‘the’, primary supplier to the food manufacturing industry.

There are obviously rigorous obligations and regulations incumbent on food producers to maintain very high standards of plant and product hygiene. Holchem produce chemicals that facilitate and ensure these standards can be maintained.

As we are integral to food production in the UK, we were considered a key supplier to the ‘critical national infrastructure’ during the Covid pandemic. During this period, we also diversified and adapted a proportion of our capacity onto personal hygiene, as well as food hygiene.

As Holchem Laboratories we currently employ some 232 people. 146 of this total are employed at Gateway House with the remainder working in the field and visiting from time to time.

Part of the opportunity that we have reaped since becoming part of the Kersia Group is the opportunity to grow and diversify into other complementary markets and sectors. The Agricultural market is one such area.

Kersia have a mantra to provide effective global hygiene solutions for food safety, from ‘farm to fork’. Presently, at the Bury site we are strongly biased towards the food end of this phrase, but we aspire to diversify into the farm side, with current opportunities availing themselves in the wider dairy and agricultural sectors.

Our aspirations to expand into these sectors are, at present, limited and constrained by our inability to locate sufficient plant, machinery, and storage within the current footprint at Gateway House. To overcome these limitations, we need to consider extending the current facility by a further 40,000 sqft plus. This proposed extension will be for production machinery and storage. Inevitably, this additional capacity will require significant employment from the local labour pool and lead to jobs at this ‘extended’ facility.”