

Statement of directors' responsibilities in respect of the annual report and the financial statements

The directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the group and parent company financial statements, in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare group and parent company financial statements for each financial year: Under that law they are required to prepare the group financial statements in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the EU and applicable law and have elected to prepare the parent company financial statements in accordance with UK Accounting Standards and applicable law (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The group financial statements are required by law and IFRSs as adopted by the EU to present fairly the financial position and the performance of the group; the Companies Act 1985 provides in relation to such financial statements that references in the relevant part of that Act to financial statements giving a true and fair view are references to their achieving a fair presentation.

The parent company financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the parent company.

In preparing each of the group and parent company financial statements, the directors are required to:

- > select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- > make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- > for the group financial statements, state whether they have been prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the EU;
- > for the parent company financial statements, state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the parent company financial statements; and
- > prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the group and the parent company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the parent company and enable them to ensure that its financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the group and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Under applicable law and regulations, the directors are also responsible for preparing a Report of the Directors, Directors' Remuneration Report and Corporate Governance Statement which comply with that law and those regulations.