

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Board has overall responsibility for risk management and internal control. The process by which the Group identifies and manages risk is set out in more detail on pages 158 to 159 of the Corporate Governance section of this Report. The following are the principal risks and uncertainties facing the Company as required to be disclosed pursuant to the Disclosure Guidance and Transparency Rules issued by the Financial Conduct Authority of the United Kingdom and are in addition to the matters referred to in the Chairman's Statement, Managing Director's Review and other parts of the Annual Report.

Economic Risk

Most of the Group's businesses are exposed to the risk of negative developments in global and regional economies and financial markets, either directly or through the impact such developments might have on the Group's joint venture partners, associates, franchisors, bankers, suppliers or customers. These developments could include recession, inflation, deflation, currency fluctuations, restrictions in the availability of credit, business failures, or increases in financing costs, oil prices or the cost of raw materials. Such developments might increase operating costs, reduce revenues, lower asset values or result in some or all of the Group's businesses being unable to meet their strategic objectives.

Commercial Risk and Financial Risk

Risks are an integral part of normal commercial activities, and where practicable steps are taken to mitigate them. Risks can be more pronounced when businesses are operating in volatile markets.

A number of the Group's businesses make significant investment decisions in respect of developments or projects and these are subject to market risks. This is especially the case where projects are longer-term in nature and take more time to deliver returns.

The Group's businesses operate in sectors and regions which are highly competitive and evolving rapidly, and failure to compete effectively, whether in terms of price, tender terms, product specification, application of new technologies or levels of service, can have an adverse effect on earnings or market share. Significant competitive pressure may also lead to reduced margins.

It is essential for the products and services provided by the Group's businesses to meet appropriate quality and safety standards and there is an associated risk if they do not, including the risk of damage to brand equity or reputation, which might adversely impact the ability to achieve acceptable revenues and profit margins.

The potential impact on many of our businesses of disruption to IT systems or infrastructure, whether as a result of cyber-crime or other factors, could be significant. There is also an increasing risk to our businesses from adverse social media commentary, which could influence customer and other stakeholder behaviours and impact operations or profitability, or lead to reputational damage.

The steps taken by the Group to manage its exposure to financial risk are set out in the Financial Review on pages 39 to 40 and note 43 to the financial statements on pages 127 to 136.

Concessions, Franchises and Key Contracts

A number of the Group's businesses and projects are reliant on concessions, franchises, management, outsourcing or other key contracts. Cancellation, expiry or termination, or the renegotiation of any such concession, franchise, management, outsourcing or other key contracts, could have an adverse effect on the financial condition and results of operations of certain subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures of the Group.

Regulatory and Political Risk

The Group's businesses are subject to a number of regulatory regimes in the territories in which they operate. Changes in such regimes, in relation to matters such as foreign ownership of assets and businesses, exchange controls, planning controls, emission regulations, tax rules and employment legislation, could have the potential to impact the operations and profitability of the Group's businesses.

Changes in the political environment, including political or social unrest, in the territories where the Group operates could adversely affect the Group's businesses.

Terrorism, Pandemic and Natural Disasters

The Group's operations are vulnerable to the effects of terrorism, either directly through the impact of an act of terrorism or indirectly through the effect on the Group's businesses of generally reduced economic activity in response to the threat, or an actual act, of terrorism.

The Group businesses could be impacted by a global or regional pandemic which seriously affects economic activity or the ability of businesses to operate smoothly. In addition, many of the territories in which the Group operates can experience from time to time natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons.

Cybersecurity Risk

The Group's businesses are ever more reliant on technology in their operations and face increasing numbers of cyberattacks from groups targeting both individuals and businesses. The privacy and security of customer and corporate information is at risk of being compromised through a breach of our or our suppliers' IT systems or the unauthorised or inadvertent release of information, resulting in brand damage, impaired competitiveness or regulatory action. Cyberattacks may also adversely affect our ability to manage our business operations or operate information technology and business systems, resulting in business interruption, lost revenues, repair or other costs.