

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 page 146 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 in the United Kingdom and are in addition to the matters referred to in the Chairman's Statement, the Group Chief Executive'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, the cost of raw materials or finished products. 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. While the Group's regional diversification does help to mitigate some risks, a significant portion of the Group revenues and profits continue to be derived from our operations in Hong Kong.

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 areas that are highly competitive, and failure to compete effectively, whether in terms of price, product specification, technology, property site or levels of service or to adapt to changing consumer behaviours, including new shopping channels and formats, can have an adverse effect on earnings. 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.

While social media presents significant opportunities for the Group's businesses to connect with customers and the public, it also creates a whole new set of potential risks for companies to monitor, including damage to brand equity or reputation, which could affect the Group's profitability.

The steps taken by the Group to manage its exposure to financial risk are set out in the Financial Review on page 49 and note 38 to the financial statements on pages 112 to 119.

Concessions, Franchises and Key Contracts

A number of the Group's businesses and projects are reliant on concessions, franchises, management or other key contracts. Cancellation, expiry or termination, or the renegotiation of any such concessions, franchises, management 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, licensing, imports, 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's 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, volcanoes and typhoons.

Technology Risk

The Group has invested significantly in and is heavily reliant on its IT infrastructure and systems for the daily operation of its business. Any major disruption to the Group's IT systems could have a significant impact on operations. The ability to anticipate and adapt to technology advancements or threats is an additional risk that may also have an impact on the business.

Cybersecurity Risk

The Group faces 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.