

Statement of directors' responsibility

for preparing the financial statements

The directors are required by law to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and the group as at the end of the financial year and of the profit or loss and cash flows of the group for that period.

The directors consider that, in preparing the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2002 on pages 72 to 135 the company has used appropriate accounting policies, consistently applied and supported by reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates. The directors also consider that all applicable accounting standards have been followed and confirm that the financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985.

The directors are also responsible for taking such steps that are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the group and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The auditors' responsibilities are stated in their report to the shareholders.