The directors are fully aware of their duty under Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 to act in good faith to promote the success of the Company for the benefit of its shareholders but having regard amongst other matters to the following:

- the likely consequences of any decision(s) in the long term;
- the interests of the Company's employees;
- the need to foster the Company's business relationships with clients, investors, regulators and others;
- the impact of the Company's operations on the community and the environment;
- the desirability of the Company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct; and
- the need to act fairly as between members of the Company.

Stakeholder engagement

Fitch Group is a global leader in financial information services with operations in more than 30 countries. Fitch Group is comprised of: Fitch Ratings, a global leader in credit ratings and research, and Fitch Solutions, a leading provider of insights, data and analytics with dual headquarters in London and New York. Fitch Group is owned by Hearst.

Fitch Ratings' vision is to be the partner of choice to global capital markets, putting our clients and partners at the centre of our business to provide an unparalleled service based on a best-in-class reputation for analytics, research, service transparency and integrity. Fitch Ratings is committed to high standards of business conduct and integrity. Hence the directors have identified its key stakeholders as being clients and investors, employees, shareholders and the credit rating industry regulators.

(a) Clients and investors

Fitch Ratings' credit ratings relating to issuers are an opinion on the relative ability of an entity to meet its financial commitments, such as interest, preferred dividends, repayments of principal, insurance claims or counterparty obligations. Credit ratings relating to securities and obligations of an issuer can include a recovery expectation. Credit ratings are used by investors as indications of the likelihood of receiving the money owed to them in accordance with the terms on which they invested. The ratings cover the global spectrum of corporate, sovereign, financial, bank, insurance, and public finance entities (including supranational and sub-national entities) and the securities or other obligations they issue, as well as structured finance securities backed by receivables or other financial assets.

Fitch Ratings adds value by being able to provide timely, insightful and transparent commentary on the creditworthiness of an issuer or issuance which combines robust analysis with a proven track record built up over many years of rating thousands of issuers from all over the world. Fitch Ratings prides itself on analytical excellence and has been growing its senior analytical resource pool globally to ensure high standards of excellence and experience are maintained.

Fitch engages in coordinated outreach to issuers, investors and research subscribers through a combination of our own hosted events and analyst participation at external industry forums, targeted campaigns led by our marketing and investor development teams, as well as "thought leadership" media commentary. The outcomes from this outreach are discussed on a regular basis by senior management, forming a key component of Fitch's annual budget and strategy review.

(b) Employees

The Board believes that Fitch Ratings' employees are its most important asset. Ongoing training programmes, including through the Fitch Credit Academy, seek to ensure that staff build on their skills and capabilities. Internal communications are designed to ensure that all employees are informed about the business and development of the Group. These include regular briefing meetings and the use of e-mail and the Group's intranet site.

Applications for employment by disabled persons have always been and continue to be fully considered, bearing in mind the respective aptitudes and abilities of the applicant concerned. In the event of members of staff becoming disabled, every effort is made to ensure that their employment with the Group continues and the appropriate training is arranged. It is the policy of the Group that the training, career development and promotion of a disabled person should, as far as possible, be identical to that of a person who does not suffer from a disability.

Increasing diversity and improving inclusiveness is critical to our company's success. By leveraging the unique backgrounds and experiences of our global workforce, we can succeed in our objective to become the first-choice provider of credit ratings, analysis, solutions and training to the global financial markets. Having more diverse teams makes us stronger, more collaborative and effective, and it also increases our employees' sense of fulfilment in their roles. At Fitch Ratings, we are fostering a culture in which we engage and inspire all of our employees to reach their fullest potential, and we can positively reflect on the successful implementation of a number of initiatives during the past few years.

As a result of the success of activities during the year, including the Fitch Credit Academy and the ACE award programme to promote analytical excellence, the Board will continue to invest in such activities.

(c) Shareholders

The Board is committed to openly engaging with its shareholders, with The Hearst Corporation ("Hearst") being Fitch Group's ultimate parent entity. It is important that the shareholders understand the Group's strategy and objectives, so these are clear, feedback can be received and any issues or questions raised can be properly considered. Hearst receives regular reports on the Fitch Group and meets on a regular basis with members of the Board and Fitch Group's senior management. Hence, Hearst representatives engage in discussions which include strategy, operational performance, investments and financial structure, enabling direct feedback into decisions taken by the Fitch Board.

(d) Credit rating industry regulation

Fitch Ratings Ltd (established in the United Kingdom) is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority ("FCA") pursuant to The Credit Rating Agencies (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 . Since 6 April 2021, the Company is also licensed in the United Arab Emirates by the Securities & Commodities Authority to practice the activity of credit rating in accordance with the decision of the Chairman of the Board of Directors No. (18/R) for the year 2018 on organising the regulation of licensing of credit rating agencies. The Company's non-FCA registered subsidiaries have continued to obtain and maintain all of their necessary regulatory licences and registrations in their country of operations. Facilitated through its Compliance team, Fitch Ratings engages regularly with credit rating industry regulators and reports material interactions and developments to the Board.

Developments during the period

(a) Partnership with Build-On

Fitch Group partnered with Build-On to build three primary schools for children in remote communities in Senegal, Guatemala, and Nepal, advancing Fitch Community's mission to transform lives through access to education. Staff from Fitch's various businesses participated in a week-long company-funded service 'Trek' to break ground on each of the schools and live with the communities who will benefit from them.

(b) Fitch Group All Angles Forum

Fitch Group held its second All Angles Forum in Singapore in October, combining top-down and bottom-up perspectives on key global risks from analysts at BMI, CreditSights, Fitch Learning, Fitch Ratings, Sustainable Fitch, as well as an external panel of investors.

(c) Appointments

Several key appointments were made within Fitch Ratings' analytical leadership including James Longsdon assuming the role of Global Group Head for Sovereign and Supranational Ratings at Fitch as replacement for James McCormack upon his retirement. Cynthia Chan, became the new Global Head of Bank Ratings. Additionally, Harish Gohil was appointed the Global Group Head of Insurance, succeeding Cynthia Chan, and Sabine Bauer took over the role of EMEA Head of Insurance Ratings. These leadership changes underscore Fitch's commitment to excellence and innovation in the financial landscape.

Corporate Social Responsibility("CSR") at Fitch

(a) Fitch Community: driving social impact through the skills of our people

At Fitch, we recognise that education is the cornerstone of success, possessing the transformative power to uplift lives, strengthen communities, and drive thriving economies. Despite strides towards equal educational access globally, significant barriers still hinder the empowerment of those who need it most. This reality fuels our commitment to focusing on education and employability, particularly by amplifying access to learning opportunities for underprivileged communities. Our mission is clear: to foster learning environments that equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive and contribute to empowering communities.

We actively encourage and enable our employees to invest their time, expertise, and financial resources in initiatives that generate meaningful community impact. Our diverse range of community engagement opportunities includes Global Volunteer Week, the New Joiner Reward for charities, and the Matched Giving Program. Additionally, every full-time employee is entitled to two paid days off annually to volunteer for causes they are passionate about, reinforcing our collective commitment to positive change.

These initiatives not only enhance our impact in the communities where we operate but also contribute to employee satisfaction and retention, aligning with our aim of making a meaningful difference within Fitch and beyond.

To enact positive change, we proudly champion organisations dedicated to ensuring equitable access to education. By partnering with charities, we are committed to fostering social mobility and unlocking the potential of talent from low-income backgrounds. Since its inception, Fitch Community has forged impactful partnership with several organisations, including Inspiring Girls International, Social Shifters, School in a Bag, IntoUniversity, The East London Business Alliance (ELBA), and My Big Career.

Our key CSR programmes include:

- Fitch Young Leaders Path Program: supports social mobility in London by approving the employability and financial education of students aged 14-17 in underserved areas.
- The Global Education Innovation Challenge: launched in collaboration with Social Shifters, empowers entrepreneurs to revolutionise access to free, high-quality education. By championing groundbreaking ideas and providing grant funding opportunities, we aim to create engaging and transformative learning experiences for all.
- Fitch School Build. To support access to education in the communities that need it the most, in 2024, we partnered with Build-On to build three schools in Senegal, Guatemala and Nepal. These schools will open doors to education for children who face limited opportunities for formal learning, representing a significant investment in their futures and their broader communities.
- Empowering 2,000 girls by 2025: Fitch and Inspiring Girls International partnered to inspire and empower young girls to achieve their career aspirations. Through this partnership, Fitch volunteers serve as role models and sources of inspiration. In 2023, we reached over 1,000 girls in Mexico, Spain, Singapore and the U.S., and expanded our efforts to Brazil and the United Kingdom. We are on track to achieve the target by 2025.
- School Bags to support access to education: We are committed to delivering 10,000 school bags by 2025 to support the education of children around the world. As of 2023, we have delivered 5,235 school bags to children with limited access to school supplies and we are on track to deliver our target by 2025.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion(“DEI”)

At Fitch we live our values by supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce. Our global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy, includes five pillars: workforce of the future, equitable and inclusive culture, industry leadership, supporting our communities and diverse and responsible supply chain.

Since the creation of our DEI Strategy, Fitch has continued to build on our legacy of advocating for workplace diversity and inclusion by implementing initiatives designed to address the barriers people face. We are steadfast in our commitment to increasing diversity in ethnicity and gender at all levels of the organization. By rigorously monitoring employee diversity data and addressing pay gaps within Fitch, we are making significant strides towards ensuring equal opportunity for all.

Strengthening our inclusive culture remains a key focus. Our seven Employee Resource Groups play a crucial role in fostering understanding of diverse lived experiences, celebrating culture, bringing colleagues together and promoting allyship among all employees

Fitch promotes career and professional growth by providing employees with diverse development opportunities, including extensive courses in technical, management, and business professional skills. We also ensure that our employees and managers engage in training programmes aimed at removing bias and leading inclusively.

Our goal is to create a workplace where every member of the Fitch community can thrive. Through mentorship opportunities and a broad range of talent programs and learning opportunities we are dedicated to nurturing a culture of continuous learning and supporting our employees in reaching their career goals at Fitch.

Our DEI initiatives include:

- Talent pipeline programmes: CreditPath (transition/return to work training program), ForwardPath (women’s leadership development programme) and TalentPath (leadership development programme for under-represented diverse talent).
- Our Us.U.All campaign raises awareness about inclusivity, inspires us to confront our bias and behaviours, helps us understand the impact we have on others and enables us to commit to making a change.
- Partnerships with organizations such as Black Young Professionals Network (BYP), MyGwork and the Black MBA Association (NBMBAA) signifying our commitment to increasing our visibility to, and connection with, diverse talent.
- A demographical data collection campaign for our staff in all countries where data collection is legally permissible. It encourages voluntary self-disclosure of gender/gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, military service, caregiving responsibilities, and social mobility.

- Enhanced parental leave: a global minimum standard of 16 weeks' paid leave for all birthing parents, and 10 weeks' paid leave for all parents (additional for birthing parents). Providing a common framework for all employees, our global minimum standard for parental support enhances existing maternity and paternity leave guidelines globally.
- Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) across regions are in place for colleagues to feel connected and supported.
- Social Value Collaborations partnerships, with industry stakeholders to support under-represented groups to increase their skills and employability. Our partners include organizations such as the CFA Institute, The Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT) and Luminary.

Furthermore, we report on our Gender Pay Gap in the UK and the US and publish a DEI and CSR Transparency Report every year that includes further details about our progress so far.

Awards

Fitch Ratings won multiple awards over the course of the year, including:

- Fitch has been recognized by Stonewall as Top LGBTQ+ top employer in the UK and has received an Equality 100 Award by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation ;
- European Ratings Provider of the Year at the Private Equity Wire Credit Awards;
- Global Capital's Best Rating Agency for Latin America Bonds;
- Five Rating Agency of the Year categories at The Asset's Triple A Awards for ESG, Public Finance, Sovereigns, Investment Grade and Asset Backed Securities;
- Best International Rating Agency at FinanceAsia's China Awards;
- Best Islamic Finance Rating Agency at the Global Islamic Finance Awards (GIFA);
- Best Rating Agency for Islamic Finance at the Global Takaful Awards and Best Rating Agency and Industry Leadership Award for Islamic Finance by The Asset