

Selfridges Retail Limited

# **Corporate Governance Statements**

FY 2020/21

**SELFRIDGES**&C<sup>o</sup>

## Contents

---

**03**

The Directors and Their  
Duties under Section  
172 of the Companies  
Act 2006 (Section 172)

**04**

The Six Wates Principles  
and how Selfridges  
applies these

**12**

Stakeholder  
Engagement  
Statement

## **The Directors and Their Duties under Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 (Section 172)**

Selfridges Retail Limited (Selfridges) is incorporated in the UK and headquartered in London. Selfridges is a world-renowned retailer and it is part of the wider 'Selfridges Group' comprised of Selfridges and other international retail businesses.

Selfridges has its flagship store on London's Oxford Street along with two stores in Manchester at Exchange Square and the Trafford Centre, as well as another in Birmingham Bullring Centre and also a digital business through website and mobile application. Since 1909, Selfridges has been at the forefront of retail, offering amazing destinations and unique shopping experiences for both domestic and international customers.

In 2020, Selfridges adopted a new strategy to reinvent retail and to imagine and create a sustainable future for our customers (our "Vision and Purpose"). Three driving forces underpinned the strategic activities across the business: we create amazing destinations; we inspire people and enable success, and we deliver the unique Selfridges spirit to our customers. In August 2020, Selfridges launched Project Earth, a transformational new sustainability initiative setting out the Company's commitment to change the way we shop. Selfridges aims to help customers shop more sustainably in three ways: by addressing the materials used in products; by launching and exploring new retail models such as repair, rental, refill and resale; and by engaging with teams, partners and customers to inspire a shift in mindsets. Selfridges has set tough material requirements as part of its commitment to a science-based carbon reduction target in goods and services.

Selfridges has a Board of Directors and an Executive Committee comprised of executive directors, including some board directors. The Executive Committee has delegated responsibility for the day-to-day running of the business, setting and adhering to Selfridges strategic aims, providing the leadership to put them into effect, supervising the management of the business and reporting to Selfridges' parent company and shareholders. All of the directors and Executive Committee have had training in directors' duties, as detailed below in the corporate governance statement.

Selfridges and its Executive Committee support the principles of good governance and continue to adopt the Wates Principles for Corporate Governance for the financial year, which ended on 1 February 2021 (first adopted in 2019), as a framework for decision making to ensure the long-term success of the Company and its stakeholders, as well as having regard to the requirements of Section 172. This is further developed below.

Selfridges has an internal governance framework which aligns with good practice in governance. This includes ensuring that there is an appropriate rhythm for key meetings in Selfridges, with appropriate Terms of Reference in place, that attendees' roles and responsibilities are considered, meetings are minuted, and matters which should be addressed by the board of directors including principal decisions are addressed in this way. By way of example, the Company held board meetings in 2020 to approve financial matters, including the response to the Covid-19 pandemic; a business-wide restructure and redundancy prompted by the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic; the creation of a new Diversity Board in Selfridges; the approval of the financial statements, appointment of auditors, the appointment and removal of directors, as well as approval of corporate reports on tax strategy, gender pay gap and modern slavery. These matters were the principal decisions made during this financial year and in making these decisions the directors took into account the viewpoints of the Company's stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, customers and others as further detailed below.

Selfridges Board of Directors and Executive Committee leads the business with purpose, aligning with the Company's Vision across physical stores and digitally.

Selfridges welcomes feedback and will continue to review how the Company and its Executive Committee can improve engagement with team members and stakeholders.

**The Six Wates Principles  
and how Selfridges applies these:**

## 1. Purpose and Leadership

- Selfridges was founded in 1908 by Harry Gordon Selfridge and the first Selfridges store opened its doors in 1909; today, the Company continues to carry out business in line with the principle that Everyone is Welcome and aims to offer an extraordinary customer experience.
- Selfridges has a clear and defined Vision and Purpose, as outlined above.
- Selfridges' Board of Directors and Executive Committee lead the business with Vision and Purpose across all stores physically and digitally.
- The Vision and Purpose are embedded at every level of the business, alongside Selfridges' sustainability commitments, Project Earth, outlined above.
- The Selfridges Values of owning customer experience, showing respect, leading and inspiring, taking responsibility and delivering, and sharing our knowledge resonate across all levels of the Company and informs how business decisions are made and how team members are recognised and rewarded.
- The Selfridges Group Code of Ethics sets out the high standards we expect as we work to achieve our Vision and Purpose.
- The Executive Committee encourages all managers and senior managers to recognise team members who demonstrate their commitment to the Values and sustainability through recognition and reward schemes as well as bi-annual Extraordinary People Awards, although these activities were curtailed in 2020 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **2. Board Composition**

- The size and composition of the Board is considered to be appropriate with all members making a valuable contribution. There is a balance of skills, backgrounds, experiences and knowledge. The Board is supported by the Company Secretary.
- Board meetings are held four times a year and more often if required. The Directors ensure that decision making is in line with the Company's Vision and Purpose.
- An induction is provided upon joining and specific training on directors' duties is provided once a year.

### **3. Director Responsibilities**

- The Board recognises the importance of having an effective corporate governance framework with clear lines of accountability and responsibility to support effective decision making as part of promoting the Company's success. The Board has developed and adopted the Vision and Purpose, reviews financial performance and approves budgets, makes strategic decisions and ensures that adequate leadership is in place to implement decisions. The Board of Directors approves reports to be published by the Company each year, including statutory accounts, the gender pay gap report, modern slavery report, tax strategy and others.
- The Board delegates day-to-day responsibility for achieving the Vision and Purpose to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee typically meets informally at least once a fortnight and has a more formal, structured, minuted meeting each month. In 2020, these arrangements were altered to provide rapid review and decision making in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with meetings held at least once a day. Aside from dealing with the impact of the pandemic, regular agenda items include monitoring financial performance, reviewing budgets, five-year plan, strategic initiatives and updates, content for Selfridges Group review, talent review, key leavers and joiners, and risk matters. Executive Committee meetings are chaired by Selfridges' Managing Director. In 2020, this role was filled by Selfridges' Group Managing Director.
- The Executive Committee is supported by the senior management team from across the Company. Members of senior management will join members of the Executive Committee for executive-led, decision-making committees; for example, the Information Security Steering Committee, which oversees data protection, information security and cyber risk. This enables decision making to be delegated to individuals with appropriate specialist skills and introduces diversity of thinking to the benefit of the Company and its Directors.
- The Executive Committee and Board of Directors, as well as other members of the senior management team, are aware of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and a formal confirmation of any conflicts is requested once a year.
- A whistleblowing/complaints reporting process (managed by a third party) is in place for all team members working in Selfridges. This ensures that there is a secure, anonymous route for any concerns to be escalated to and addressed by the General Counsel and Managing Director or Selfridges Group, as appropriate.

## 4. Opportunity and Risk

- The Executive Committee and Board of Directors are committed to regularly reviewing the Company's Vision and Purpose, Strategy and Values to ensure that these meet the aim of promoting and delivering long-term value.
- Principal risks have been identified across the Company at a department, project and corporate level. Risks are assessed on a matrix of impact (financial and reputational) and likelihood, with target risks noted and a plan to address, mitigate or improve the risk position where possible. Risks are regularly reviewed and the overarching corporate risk register is discussed at the quarterly Executive Risk Management Committee meetings, as well as bi-annually at the meeting of the directors with the Audit Committee.
- The Risk Management Committee takes over the agenda of an Executive Committee meeting once a quarter. The Committee operates under Terms of Reference setting out its purpose and remit; the Committee supports the Board of Directors in identifying and managing key corporate risks, identifying actions for directors/managers to address or mitigate risks or to improve controls. The Risk Management Committee meetings are chaired by the Stores Director, or another board director.
- The key corporate risks affecting the Company include: the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; the risk of a major incident occurring, cyber security and data privacy; the UK Government's decision to withdraw the VAT Retail Export Scheme which offered tax-free shopping to international customers; the complexity of the UK's trade deal with the EU, post-Brexit; change management; and the increasing regulatory environment, including the impact of food safety laws and incidents as well as health and safety.
- Sustainability is also a key corporate risk and the sustainability risks identified by the business are: ineffective measuring and monitoring systems for managing sustainability performance, and reputational impacts in relation to poor ethical and environmental practices of suppliers. All risks have mitigation plans in place.
- The Directors regularly discuss and receive updates on key risk matters and ensure these are factored into decisions made, with appropriate controls through supplier engagement and contracts where appropriate.
- The Audit Committee is appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Shareholder and its responsibilities include reviewing the integrity of the financial statements, relationships with the external auditors and effectiveness of internal financial controls. The Audit Committee has Terms of Reference, which are reviewed each year.
- Other risks are managed by Executive-led sub-committees, such as data protection, cyber and information security via the Information Security Steering Committee; and strategic projects (stores and technology) via programme governance meetings led by members of the Executive Committee.
- Capital Expenditure is governed by a framework, including monthly meetings, which are attended by members of Selfridges Executive Committee and Selfridges Group.
- A Contracts Authorisation Policy is in place across the Company.
- There are policies and procedures in place for other key risk areas – e.g. anti-money laundering, anti-bribery and corruption, safe deposit management procedures.

## **5. Remuneration**

- Selfridges Group has a Remuneration Committee which reviews compensation for the Company's directors, Executive Committee and senior team members once a year.
- The Company has clear pay structures based on grade, seniority and responsibility, with commission schemes in place in retail areas and bonus schemes in place for retail managers and head office or back of house roles. Bonus schemes are aligned with the Company's performance and individual performance, as well as behaviours in line with the Company's Vision, Purpose and Values.
- There is a long-term incentive plan in place for the Executive Committee and a small additional group of senior management in key roles to assist with retention and to align decisions and behaviours with the long-term success of the Company.

## 6. Stakeholder Relationships and Engagement

- The Board and Executive Committee believe that engagement with stakeholders is key to the success of the business.
- Shareholder engagement – there are regular meetings between Selfridges and its parent company directors. There are cross-directorships between Selfridges and Selfridges Group; knowledge is shared on a regular basis; there are monthly business review meetings to provide oversight of strategic plans, capital expenditure and budgets.
- There is regular and structured engagement with representatives of the parent companies via Selfridges Group and directors from Canada.
- Team member engagement: ensuring team members feel informed, involved and inspired at Selfridges is vital to the continued success of the Company. Team member engagement tools and activities enable the Directors to ask for, listen to and respond to the views, questions, concerns and ideas of team members. In many cases, this will include workers employed by concession partners, suppliers, or agencies, as well as those directly employed. At the start of the year, senior leaders were briefed on the Selfridges Strategy at an ‘Open House’ event – an immersive multimedia exhibition for all team members that brings the strategy and plans to life. The Strategy was then cascaded down through the organisation to all team members through team briefings and using digital tools. Other feedback mechanisms for meeting team members include site visits and floor walks. Digital tools include Yammer - a social communications platform; and Selfridges’ team members are encouraged to join and create new communities, such as Green Warriors, Values Ambassadors, a Well Being community, and Women in STEM (to name but a few). There are Good Morning Selfridges team briefings; Selfridges Celebrates events; digital newsletters; as well as listening groups.

Team members are invited to complete an annual employee Opinion Survey which measures team member engagement, the results are fed back to the Executive Committee, and actions then follow with team member updates via line managers. Selfridges is also introducing pulse surveys throughout the year to gather further feedback and opinions.

- Customers: Selfridges puts the customer at the heart of everything we do and asks for customer feedback from point of sale in store through to digital sales, through independently conducted customer surveys and by listening to customer feedback through social channels and via the customer contact centre.
- Suppliers: regular meetings and other channels for two-way communication of strategy, ideas, initiatives, for performance and delivery discussions and contract review, including invitations to business updates and review meetings, Open House at Selfridges, other KPI or relationship meetings. Selfridges has very strong relationships with the partner brands supplying goods for sale and operating as concessions, with regular meetings, frequent collaborations and a product offer which is special, sometimes unique and often has exclusive products on sale in Selfridges.
- Community engagement: across all stores, Selfridges engages with its neighbouring businesses; local authority/councils; the landlord, customers and community to share information and gain feedback. The Company supports local charities and charitable initiatives and supports social mobility through charitable engagement.
- In London, Selfridges engages with New West End Company, neighbouring businesses, Marylebone Residents Association and individual residents.

## **6. Stakeholder Relationships and Engagement (cont.)**

- In Birmingham, Selfridges is actively involved with and chairs Retail Business Improvement District (BID) Birmingham; sits on the Birmingham city strategic board; is actively involved with the West Midlands combined authority initiative supporting inclusive leadership; and supports two local women in business leadership networks; as well as partnering with Birmingham City University to support its Fashion and Marketing course.
- In Manchester, Selfridges is actively involved with and chairs Retail BID Manchester, also attending BID CityCo Board Meetings; attends Manchester Big Stores monthly meetings; is a board member of the Millennium Quarter Trust, which meets quarterly; acts as ambassador for Manchester City Hospital; works with Marketing Manchester; and is involved as sponsor with Manchester International Festival.
- Other stakeholders that Selfridges engages with include local law enforcement and regulators: fire, Environmental Health and Safety, Trading Standards, HMRC, local authorities, FCA, pension trustees and members.
- Selfridges undertakes annual customer research to track key indicators to better understand customer perceptions and behaviour in order to drive progress, in particular in its sustainability strategy.

# **Stakeholder Engagement Statement**

## **Engagement of employees**

---

At Selfridges, employees are called team members. The Board of Directors and Executive Committee consider engaging with team members to be vital to the continued success of the Company. An extensive range of team member engagement tools and activities are already in place to enable the Directors to ask for, listen to and respond to the views, questions, concerns, and ideas of team members. In many cases, this will include workers employed by concession partners, suppliers, or agencies, as well as those directly employed.

Current engagement mechanisms include reviewing and implementing actions from the annual Employee Opinion Survey, meeting team members and listening to their ideas through formal and informal meetings, at annual events such as 'Open House', through internal social media such as 'Yammer', pulse surveys and through site visits and floor walks. Selfridges' team members are encouraged to join and create new communities, from Green Warriors, to Values Ambassadors, a Wellbeing community, and Women in STEM (to name but a few). Information is shared with team members via a weekly newsletter, emails, large and small group briefings, face-to-face training sessions or digital updates, as well as through planned communication cascades via line managers. In 2020, with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic felt throughout the year, there was a focus on digital channels of communication, supporting home-working, team member welfare and wellbeing. Selfridges recruits team members from a diverse array of businesses and backgrounds to ensure that fresh ideas and diversity of thought continues to flow into and through the Company. Selfridges celebrates long service and has an alumni group to maintain contact with those who have left the Company for new ventures. With Selfridges' Diversity Board and a new and evolving strategy for diversity, equity and inclusion, Selfridges is enabling team members, partners and customers to co-create positive change and to imagine and create a sustainable future for our customers in line with our Vision and Purpose.

## **Engagement with Customers, Suppliers and Other Stakeholders**

The Board of Directors and Executive Committee consider engaging with Selfridges' customers, suppliers and other stakeholders also to be vital to the continued success of the Company. Selfridges has been at the forefront of retail since 1909 and continues to redefine the way customers shop and socialise. In order to do this, Selfridges must listen to what its customers have to say, to think about what its customers want today and will want tomorrow, wherever in the world the customer may be. Customers are asked to provide views, comment, feedback and suggestions through a number of channels: regular customer surveys in person and digitally, NPS feedback following a sale, personal contact and dialogue with Personal Shopping, Customer Relations and others. This feedback is reviewed by senior managers and the Executive Committee and fed into decision making where appropriate. In 2020, with restrictions and store closures, there was a focus on digital and social channel engagement, as well as virtual shipping services and Christmas experiences. Selfridges and its Directors strive to consistently drive innovation, success and amazing customer experiences by listening and responding to the Customer.

Selfridges' suppliers also play a key role in guiding and enabling Selfridges to continue to deliver an amazing customer experience; in person, in stores and digitally, at every step of the supply chain. Suppliers are welcomed to visit sites and attend the annual 'Open House' event at the beginning of the year. Supplier relationship meetings take place regularly and suppliers' ideas and recommendations fed back into decision making. Selfridges has very strong relationships with the partner brands supplying goods for sale and operating as concessions, with regular meetings, frequent collaborations and a product offer which is special, sometimes unique and often has exclusive products on sale in Selfridges.

Directors and other individuals from across Selfridges regularly meet with other key stakeholders: neighbouring businesses, local authorities and councils, landlords, customers and the wider community, national and local charities, social mobility initiatives; also, NGOs particularly on the topic of sustainability, local law enforcement, Trading Standards, HM Revenue & Customs, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and other regulators, public health authorities and Environmental Health teams, with a focus on Covid-19 cases and measures in 2020. Decision making at all levels of the business can be informed by these dialogues.

**SELFRIDGES**&C<sup>o</sup>