



ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REVIEW

2022-23



IT’S ALL ABOUT GOOD

Being blinkered to the major issues and pressures facing the world today is not an option for companies that want to sustain a strong competitive edge. Consumers are demanding far more from brands and service providers when it comes to their environmental and social responsibility (sometimes known as ESG) and they are also increasingly wary of green or social claims, which smack more of marketing than morals. Ethical performance is critical and transparency is paramount.

Ethics on the high street isn’t a new story. Anita Roddick famously said that “the end result of kindness is that it draws people to you” and from that starting point built a global brand in the Body Shop that now boasts 30 million customers worldwide. Critically, however, while brands like Lush, The Body Shop and the Co-operative Bank have

There’s even been what appears to have been a ‘reset’ moment courtesy of Covid, as research from Deloitte, now in its third year, shows a sharp increase in the number of people who have adopted a more sustainable lifestyle in the last twelve months. The 2022 tracker shows that, compared with 2021, consumers have significantly increased their focus on buying just what they need, on reducing their meat consumption and on low carbon transport.

The pressure is on to meet consumer expectations but in the C-suite as it’s known, there’s clear pressure from investors too, where ESG has become an almost universal concern. PwC’s latest poll of global investors showed that 79% of investors consider ESG risks and opportunities an important factor in their decision making and almost half – 49% – would sell their investments in a company if it isn’t tackling key ESG issues like the climate crisis, diversity and inclusion, or workers rights.

This report for the Manchester BID and CityCo is groundbreaking in that it seeks to scan across the hundreds of companies that make city centre Manchester a magnet for visitors and residents alike, and examine common

partnerships, LGBTQ+ rights, fair trade and action on poverty.

Being able to showcase all that is being done by progressive firms across the city offers us more than just an opportunity to embed ESG ever more firmly in Manchester; it’s also good for our brand. If consumers across all demographics but in particular ‘Gen Z’ are folding these issues into their daily purchasing decisions then ensuring that the city centre as a whole stands for social and environmental responsibility will be good for business, as well as the planet.

Many of the businesses in our report have a national or international footprint and so inevitably many of their commitments, for example around deforestation or ethical sourcing, are global in scale; we have been able to highlight a good number of examples of great local partnerships, too. Mappin & Webb is supporting the Manchester Food Bank,

Hill Dickinson has a foundation giving small grants to community organisations in Manchester and Merseyside, Bruntwood has a raft of biodiversity and climate change projects that it supports and Patagonia has partnered up with our Community Forest, City of Trees. One future action now that this ESG baseline has been set for the city is to do more to leverage global corporate commitments on ESG into local partnerships and programmes.

Business Improvement Districts are now a proven way for businesses to help direct the future of the area they’re invested in, have a voice on key issues like security, work together to increase footfall and retail spend and to get involved in place making and promotion. As this report for the Manchester BID clearly shows, there is also now a clear opportunity for BIDs across the UK to also support, celebrate and catalyse greater high street action on the issues that matter.

RESEARCH FROM DELOITTE, NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR, SHOWS A SHARP INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE ADOPTED A MORE SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS.

long traded on their ethics, the evidence is that the move towards greater levels of social responsibility is accelerating and that consumers, too, have shifted, even in the last few turbulent years.

Research recently published by Accenture for example showed that consumer attitudes towards sustainability continue to shift towards greater levels of concern. The headline findings were that more consumers (64%) are concerned about the environment than they are about their own financial situation (54%), or even their health (40%). In terms of the overall trend, the survey of 2000 consumers revealed that compared to two years ago, almost a third were more likely to shop in line with their personal values and ethics.

themes and approaches to major environmental and social issues, to give what could be called an ‘ESG healthcheck’ for the heart of the city. It provides myriad reasons to celebrate corporate action on the high street, from reducing carbon emissions, to reducing waste, embracing diversity and nurturing charity partnerships; it also will act as a starting point for work across the city to see this good practice of the best become a standard for the rest.

Our research for this report has shown a genuine breadth of action across sectors from fashion, to hospitality, to banking. There are some strong sustainability themes emerging: single use plastics, zero waste to landfill, climate action, biodiversity and the circular economy. Social action is highlighted too: diversity and inclusion, educational





MANCHESTER’S FOOD AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR MAKES UP A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF OUR CITY CENTRE. WITH FOOD WASTE, SINGLE USE PLASTICS, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND RESPONSIBLE SOURCING HIGH ON THE AGENDA FOR MANY, FROM GOVERNMENT TO INDIVIDUALS, IT’S A SECTOR THAT CAN REALLY SPEARHEAD SUSTAINABILITY. AND HERE IN MANCHESTER, IT IS.

PACKAGING WASTE

By its very nature, the food and hospitality sector is a high waste sector. But it’s being addressed head on across the city centre. Some businesses have already achieved their targets of zero waste to landfill, including **Doner Shack**, **Five Guys** and **TGI Fridays**, while others, such as **Browns**, are working towards it. Many stores are achieving significant reductions in material use, with ambitious targets being set across the sector, such as Aldi’s goal to use 50% less plastic.

FOOD WASTE

When it comes to food waste, there are schemes to both reduce and redistribute underway across the BID area. **Pizza Hut** is already reducing food waste by 80% and **All Bar One’s** Cool Food Pledge has seen the bar reduce its menu to cut the amount of food waste. A tight operational ship is being run at **Subway**, where the aim is to reduce food waste to an average of less than 1% per store by only replenishing ingredients when required.

For unavoidable food waste, a whole range of charity partnerships have been set up to make sure no good food goes to waste. **Browns**, **Spar** and **McDonald’s** all partner with FareShare. **All Bar One** has partnerships in place with FareShare, Shelter and Ask for Clive. And **Franco Manca** uses any excess dough to make bread for soup kitchens, homeless shelters and food charities – they even have a page on their website where you can suggest places they could help.

REUSING, RECYCLING

When it comes to recycling and reusing materials, it’s becoming much more mainstream, if not the norm for many. **Costa** has its cup recycling scheme, **Burger King** is trialling reusable packaging (although not in Manchester yet) and **Starbucks** will have scheme in place by 2025.

ENERGY

Food and hospitality is a high energy use sector, but many are looking at ways to reduce the impact of this. Many already use 100% renewables throughout their stores and outlets, including **Black Sheep Coffee**, **Aldi**, **McDonald’s**, **Pizza Hut** and **Tesco**. In fact, **McDonald’s** was the first global restaurant company with targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet net zero by 2050. **Nando’s** has also turned its attention to its supply chain, developing ways to support them to reduce energy use too. And in a particularly innovative project, **Caffè Nero** is trialling a scheme to coffee grounds to feed biomass boilers.

QUALITY, FAIRNESS AND COMMUNITY

Many food and hospitality businesses are leading the way when it comes to paying living wage levels or higher and closing the gender pay gap. **Doner Shack** has no pay gap and is a living wage employer; **Costa** aims to have 50% of senior roles filled by women by 2025; and at **Sainsbury’s**, 50% of senior leadership positions are held by female, ethnically diverse and black colleagues.

There are also youth training and support schemes in place to help the next generation into work. For example, **McDonald’s** has £43 million worth of training to help young people get on through apprenticeships and offers dedicated careers advice in partnership with Youth Employment UK.

Charity partnerships are key in this sector, providing opportunities for businesses and their staff to support others with training, skills, mentoring and opportunities they may not otherwise have. A few examples here include **Pizza Express** working with Places2Be; **Subway** and Sports for Schools; **Tesco** aiming to help 45,000 young people with employment skills through The Prince’s Trust; and **Yo** supporting Too Good To Go.

RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

As more and more consumers want to know exactly what they’re buying and how ethically it has been sourced, many businesses are taking responsibility for their sourcing and supply chains. Palm oil is a major consideration for the food and drink sector, with places such as **Greggs** sourcing 100% RSPO certified sustainable palm oil. It also has a target to have a full Responsible Sourcing Strategy in place by 2025.

Soy is another focus, with **Sainsbury’s** becoming a UK Soy Manifesto signatory, **Burger King** committing to source responsible soy by 2030, and **McDonald’s** aiming to ensure soy used in their ingredients and animal feed will be deforestation free by 2025.

Accreditation – such as Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade – continue to be an important feature for many. **Caffè Nero** and **Costa** both use Rainforest Alliance products, while at **Greggs** all coffee beans and fruit have been Fairtrade for the last 17 years. In 2021, **Greggs** also committed to sourcing their chocolate from Fairtrade accredited suppliers. And away from ingredients, **Spar’s** tractor fleets are being equipped with Ecodrive refrigerator systems to reduce emissions and increase efficiency.

CASE STUDIES

BLACK SHEEP COFFEE

The use of non-recyclable coffee cups has been an issue for years, but with 100% compostable takeaway cups and PLA plastic alternatives, Black Sheep Coffee is leading the way in reducing waste. In terms of powering their cafes, the coffee chain uses energy from 100% green sources. And the spent coffee grounds don't go to waste either, as they are repurposed into natural, sustainable, vegan and cruelty free cosmetic products. Black Sheep Coffee is also proud to support local UK producers for the majority of their core products and purchase coffee beans directly from the plantations, which means the picking, drying, and washing process meets the strictest of guidelines and the coffee beans are fully traceable back to the producer.



DONER SHACK

Nothing is wasted at Doner Shack. Its zero landfill policy means that all waste goes to either compost or biofuel, and the heat energy generated by their own equipment is used to heat hot water in the restaurants. It has also installed flow controllers in the plumbing and LED lighting with motion sensors to make sure no lights are on unnecessarily. When it comes to their products, Doner Shack bakes pita breads in store to reduce their carbon footprint, uses lean meat with no artificial fillers or excessive oils, and only uses free-range chicken. It's also working with suppliers to introduce organic fed chicken in 2022. And for employees, no gender pay gap exists at Doner Shack and all staff are paid above the national Living Wage.

ALL BAR ONE (COOL FOOD PLEDGE)

All Bar One's partnership with Cool Food Pledge on its food menu has meant some changes to what they offer, with more plant-based options and sustainable drinks available. Reducing the overall menu has also helped the bar to reduce food waste, with any surplus food donated to FareShare. The bar has also worked with Shelter since 2017 to offer employment opportunities to people who have experienced homelessness and to help families struggling with bad housing or homelessness.

PIZZA EXPRESS

Pizza Express has been forging the way in sustainability for many years and is a founding member of the Zero Carbon Forum. All food waste sent to local anaerobic digestors, all lightbulbs have been LED since 2007, and flow controls have been installed in sinks to save water. Looking towards the future, the pizza chain is committed to net zero by 2040 and will maintain at least half the menu as vegan or vegetarian. Pizza Express is also committed to the wellbeing of its employees, with mental health first aiders, an employee assistance programme, online mental health awareness training, a dedicated wellbeing officer, and a wellbeing hub with information and resources.



THE HEALTH AND BEAUTY SECTOR IN MANCHESTER'S CITY CENTRE FEATURES MANY OF THE BIG NAME BRANDS FOUND ACROSS THE UK AND GLOBALLY. IT'S A SECTOR WHERE ISSUES SUCH AS PRODUCTS AND PACKAGING MATTER, AND WHERE CONSUMERS CAN SWITCH LOYALTY DEPENDING ON HOW THE BRAND IS PERCEIVED. FROM MICROPLASTICS AND BIODEGRADABLE PACKAGING TO CRUELTY FREE, VEGAN AND ETHICAL PRODUCTS, THERE'S A LOT FOR THE HEALTH AND BEAUTY SECTOR TO ACT UPON.

PLASTICS AND PACKAGING

Microplastics have been high on the media’s – and in turn the public’s – agenda for some time. **The Body Shop** and **Neal’s Yard** are both zero microplastics, with Neal’s Yard also being the first signatory of the Look for the Zero guide to products that don’t carry any harmful plastics. All of Rituals’ rinse-off products are also biodegradable and **Boots** has banned plastic wet wipes and has a plastic task force in place.

Packaging is a key priority, and there are many initiatives and commitments in play across the sector. **Superdrug** signed the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment in 2020, which means that by 2025, 100% of its plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable or compostable and 100% of its paper/pulp packaging will be certified as sustainable. Alongside this, no PVC will be in Superdrug’s products by 2025. **Lush** uses 90% recycled packaging and also boasts the first ever Carbon Positive packaging, and **Kiko Milano** uses FSC certified boxes with 40% recycled content. **Rituals** conducts lifecycle assessments for its packaging using its bespoke Clean & Conscious Tool that analyses ingredients and packaging on a whole range of measures including biodegradability, eco-toxicity, natural origin, responsible sourcing and recyclability.

In terms of becoming waste conscious, **Holland & Barrett** has a zero landfill policy and **Specsavers** has a re-wear range that focuses on recycled materials.

RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

Sourcing ethical and responsible ingredients has become an increasing priority and many health and beauty brands are leading the way in Manchester. Both **L’Occitane** and **Boots** are members of the Global Shea Alliance and **The Body Shop** has restrictions to ensure the ethical sourcing of mica. **Molton Brown** will be a completely vegan brand by the end of 2022, and **Neal’s Yard** is 92% organic and completely GM-free.

There is a significant move in the sector to eradicate unethical palm oil. Some companies, including **Boots** and **The Body Shop** are members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and 99% of the palm oil that **Rituals** uses in its products is certified through RSPO. By 2025, Superdrug will be using 100% responsible palm oil. **Lush** is aiming to eradicate all palm oil in its products and currently publishes where palm oil derivatives are still used.

ANIMAL TESTING

The issue of animal testing has been high on consumers’ agendas for many years, and several health and beauty brands have committed to cruelty free products including **Kiko Milano** (with zero animal testing), **Boots**, **L’Occitane**, **Molton Brown** and **Lush**.

ENERGY

Many companies are already committed to renewables, with **Neal’s Yard**, **Molton Brown**, **Perfume Shop** and **Pure Gym** all powered by 100% renewable energy. Perfume Shop has also taken a look at its deliveries, streamlining them to reduce diesel use.

EQUALITY, FAIRNESS AND COMMUNITY

By 2023, **The Body Shop** will have a 50% female board, will have closed the gender pay gap and will pay a living wage to all. **L’Occitane** is a member of the LEAD (Leading Executives Diversity) network to help to address gender equality, racial diversity and injustice.

Charity partnerships are common in this sector. **L’Occitane** sells products to raise money for Shelter and support people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home. **Neal’s Yard** has partnered with the World Land Trust to protect endangered forests and also supports the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

ACCREDITATIONS

In terms of accreditations and standards, B Corp is an aspiration for some in the health and beauty industry. **The Body Shop** and **Rituals** already carry the B Corp certification, with **L’Occitane** committing to achieve it by 2023. **Lush** carries the Fair Tax mark to show their commitment to open and transparent tax reporting.

A number of companies hold the Leaping Bunny accreditation to show their commitment to cruelty free products, including **The Body Shop**, **Boots**, **L’Occitane** and **Molton Brown**.

CASE STUDIES

L'OCCITANE

In 2020, L’Occitane joined the One Planet Business for Biodiversity coalition to support biodiversity, develop regenerative agriculture and protect natural ecosystems. It launched an ecosystem restoration fund and has pledged €400,000 to help finance long-lasting projects dedicated to the regeneration of severely damaged ecosystems. Organic, Fairtrade Shea butter is used in many of L’Occitane’s products, which it sources from Burkina Faso. During the Covid pandemic, the company developed a support programme for the women who work there, stopping all activities that involved groups of people coming together, pushing some delivery dates back, and making 80% advance payments to maintain producers’ cash flow. L’Occitane has also launched a parental leave policy, giving primary caregivers a minimum of 20 weeks’ fully paid leave and secondary caregivers a minimum of 12 weeks’ fully paid leave.



LUSH

Lush has been committed to sustainability, ethical products and innovation from the start, so perhaps it’s no surprise that the company has developed carbon positive packaging. Packaging accounts for 4% of emissions, but Lush is striving towards becoming a climate positive company. It took a big step towards achieving this commitment in 2019, when the Carbon Trust officially verified that Lush’s cork pots sequester carbon dioxide, making them their first piece of carbon positive packaging. On top of this, they’re reusable, compostable and biodegradable.



SUPERDRUG

Superdrug published its first sustainability report in 2021. But the chain has been active in environmental and social issues for many years before that. Superdrug has worked hard to reduce its carbon footprint by 82% since 2010 and has reduced overall energy consumption by 43%. In 2020, Superdrug signed the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment and joined the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). To ensure the wellbeing of its employees, Superdrug’s Everyone Matters strategy has six pillars for inclusion: access all areas (social mobility); BAME; disability; gender equality; LGBTQIA+; and make work work (flexibility at work).



FROM REDUCING THE IMPACT OF ‘FAST FASHION’ AND PACKAGING TO EXAMINING WORKERS RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS, THE FASHION SECTOR HAS MANY ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER. IT’S ONE OF THE LARGEST SECTORS IN THE MANCHESTER BID AREA, MAKING IT A KEY SECTOR WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING THE LEAD IN SUSTAINABILITY.

CARBON AND NET ZERO

Many retailers are addressing the issue of carbon and are committed to net zero, with some already achieving it. **Schuh, Burberry, Jones Bootmaker** and **Charles Tyrwhitt** are among those already achieving net zero or carbon neutral status. **Charles Tyrwhitt** also offsets 150% of organisational emissions through Ecologi (a tree planting scheme that supports businesses, including **SockShop** with carbon offsetting). Tree planting is a feature for many retailers, with **Schuh** and **Footasylum** planting trees as part of their mission to achieve carbon neutrality. At **Footasylum**, money from the sale of carrier bags – which are made from 100% recyclable materials – goes to the Manchester-based charity, City of Trees.

When it comes to energy generation, several retailers are considering the source and efficiency. **Bravissimo’s** UK factories run off 100% solar energy; **Quiz** uses 100% renewable energy; 94% of **Schuh’s** estate uses energy from renewable sources; and **Zara** has standards in place for the design of all stores, including centralised systems to control lighting, heating and air conditioning.

Some companies are extending this commitment through their colleagues. For example, **JD Sports** has an IAmSustainable online training course to promote ESG awareness and education. To date, over 1,000 employees have completed the Carbon Reduction training.

And demonstrating an extremely long-term commitment, **Patagonia’s** ‘1% for the Planet’ self-imposed Earth Tax has donated \$89 million since the business opened back in 1985.

WASTE AND RECYCLING – TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

Many of Manchester’s city centre retailers fall into the ‘fast fashion’ bracket, but many are taking steps to reduce the impact of this. Several retailers accept old clothes and materials for recycling, some even if the items were not originally purchased in their stores, including **TK Maxx, Charles Tyrwhitt, Bravissimo, & Other Stories** and **Accessorize**. **French Connection** offers a 10% discount off new purchases as an incentive and at **H&M**, the Let’s Close the Loop scheme exchanges bags of clothes in store for a cash voucher. **The White Company** runs a similar scheme where customers can earn credits or vouchers, and **Harvey Nichols’** Reflaunt scheme allows customers to bring used items into stores to be resold in return for cash and a discount card. **Monki** has a scheme where customers can resell old **Monki** clothes in store and earn 40% commission.

Patagonia and **Selfridges** both offer repair schemes, with **Patagonia** also hosting Worn Wear DIY repair workshops.

Some companies in the fashion sector have already achieved zero waste to landfill including **Marks & Spencer**, where unsold clothes are donated to Oxfam or Newlife. **Marks & Spencer** is also a signatory of WRAP Courtauld Commitment and WRAP Textiles 2030.



WASTE AND RECYCLING – PACKAGING

Packaging represents another source of waste for the fashion sector, but many are switching to recycled and recyclable alternatives. **Mango** is replacing all plastic polybags with paper, all **Loake Shoemakers** products are delivered in boxes made from recycled and recyclable material, and **Office’s** mail order bags are made from 70% recycled plastic.

SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE MATERIALS

Many retailers offer ranges made from all or partly recycled materials including **Moss Menswear’s** recycled Eco-Suit; the Yours Good For collection, **Diesel’s** Upcycling For line of upcycled products; and **Russell and Bromley’s** Considered Collection, which includes soles from thermoplastic rubber, algae and EVA, and vegetable or organically dyed leather. At Superdry, 100% of fill in the padded jackets is from post-consumer plastic waste; and 38% of **Paul Smith’s** products currently carry the Sun Logo, showing the product is made from a minimum of 50% more environmentally sourced materials. **Jack Wills**, **Carvela** and **Bravissimo** all offer similar eco-schemes. **Adidas** has an ongoing collaboration with Parley for the Ocean, creating footwear and outdoor sportswear using recycled plastic waste reclaimed from beaches and oceans,

For some, the responsible sourcing of materials used throughout all their ranges is key. **Loake Shoemakers** works with tanneries in the Leather Working Group to avoid leather from endangered species. **Reiss** is also a member of the Leather Working Group to ensure the sustainability of its leather products.

Fat Face and **Reiss** are just two of the retailers committed to 100% sustainably sourced cotton. **Marks & Spencer** has a Cotton Commitment that means 100% of cotton used in clothing is sustainably sourced, it has partnered with Better Cotton, and holds a Man-Made Cellulosic Fibre Responsible Sourcing Policy to help avoid deforestation. In terms of other textiles, **Sock Shop** is one retailer embracing bamboo as a core material. Working in partnership with experts such as Cotton Connect, **Primark’s** Sustainable Cotton Programme will have trained around 275,000 small-scale farmers in more sustainable farming methods by 2023.

For some retailers, innovation is key. **H&M** supports the innovation of new materials such as Vegea™, a type of leather made from grapes; AgraLoop™ BioFibre™, a fabric from unwanted food crops; and Orange Fiber, a silk-like fabric made from orange waste.

WATER

Water is also a hugely important resource for the fashion sector, and one that requires serious attention, given the huge amounts of water required for the production of fabrics and other fashion items. **JD Sports** has a water reduction commitment and has saved 3.9 million litres of water to date. Denim is particularly water intensive. **Uniqlo’s** Blue Cycle reduces the amount of water needed in the finishing process in making jeans. **Levi’s** has saved 4.2 billion litres of water since introducing Water<Less in 2011 and reused and recycled 9.6 billion litres of water in total.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

As with the health and beauty sector, several retailers are considering animal rights issues as part of their responsibility. Mango has signed up to the PETA commitment to stop using mohair wool and all fur, feather and hides are purchased as by-products of the food industry. **Polo Ralph Lauren** uses 100% Responsible Down Standard Certified virgin or recycled down and works with the Responsible Wool Standard and Sustainable Fibre Alliance). And at **Jack & Jones** 100% of down is sourced from farmers with animal welfare best practices.

WORKERS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAINS

Fashion is a truly global industry and supply chains can be complex. But ensuring ethical, humane and fair treatment for all is a key priority for this sector. Some are working through strategic partnerships, for example **Hobbs** has partnered with Homeworker Worldwide to improve conditions for homeworkers who are predominantly women, and **Quiz** delivered training to over 900 workers in its Chinese supply chain on their rights and responsibilities, migrant parenting and wage management. **Jack & Jones’** HerProject provides education within its supply chain, covering healthy eating, menstrual hygiene, reducing gender-based violence and digitising wage payments; and Primark’s Indian Worker Empowerment Programme addresses the needs of vulnerable garment workers in South India, with a particular focus on women and migrants

The commitments also extend to UK-based employees. **Levi’s** True Blue tool allows employees to give feedback and insights on their working experience, and **Mint Velvet** has hired an expert partner on inclusion and diversity and all managers are trained in becoming inclusive leaders. **Lululemon’s** Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Action (IDEA) approach sees the company offering education, training and guided conversations for all employees and has set up a global ambassador advisory committee. It also offers a Parenthood Programme with up to six months paid leave for new parents of any gender.

RESPONSIBILITY TO CUSTOMERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

When it comes to responsibility to its customers and wider community, fashion can lead the way in terms of inclusivity, diversity, mental health, training and employment. The **Bravissimo** campaign, #BravissimoGirlsCan, is just one example of a retailer taking a more positive and inclusive approach in its marketing and advertising. Other activity includes the **Kurt Geiger** People Empowered campaign that highlights stories of local people and initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion, and the work **Cos** does to highlight community members who advocate on specific issues, such as Coco Capitan on poetry and pride, Jodie Turner-Smith on the future of equality, and Janaya Future Khan on sustainability. Monki has pioneered its Salute Sisterhood programme, with positive guidelines around sizing, retouching and casting. **Monki** also supported the launch of Feminist Internet and PLAN International’s Maru anti-harassment online chat bot.

The **Hollister** Confidence Project takes a slightly different approach, giving out grants to support young people in areas such as mental health awareness, equitable opportunities for BIPOC, safety and inclusion for LGBTQ+ youth, anti-bullying efforts, and environmental action.

Many companies are also committing time and resources to support young people with training and employment. **JD Sports’** Kickstart scheme provides training from the JD Group and the Prince’s Trust to 16-24-year-olds on Universal Credit. **Schuh** is also working with the Prince’s Trust on the Fostering Diverse Talent programme, which aims to support over 1,000 young people in the UK over the next two years. **Ted Baker** has the Ted’s Diploma scheme, giving GCSE students a chance to gain a better understanding of the fashion industry, including a sustainability challenge. And **Timberland** has its Generation T pledge, working with students and recent graduates to teach skills and change perceptions of the trades.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The fashion industry as a whole is working hard to improve representation and inclusivity. And the retailers in Manchester’s BID area provide great examples of the scale and range of activities underway. Retailers including **Monki** and **Size?** are proactively supporting the LGBTQ+ community. **Urban Outfitters** is a founding partner of the GET Phluid collective, which aims to promote LGBTQ+ leadership and collaborates to produce gender expansive products.

River Island is just one example of a retailer supporting those from BAME backgrounds, partnering with Amos Bursary to find talent from people with African and Caribbean descent to improve diversity across the organisation. **Carvela** is actively supporting gender equality. It has partnered with the Prince’s Trust on Women Supporting Women, donating £100,000 to help the lives of 100 women over four years. And for disabled people, brands such as **Marks & Spencer** and **Tommy Hilfiger** offer adaptive clothing ranges, and **All Saints** offers a highly adaptive online experience to support all users.



CASE STUDIES

PATAGONIA
Patagonia is perhaps the exemplary retailer when it comes to sustainability. Its ‘1% for the Planet’ is a self-imposed Earth Tax which, since 1985, has seen it donate \$89 million to the preservation of the planet. Patagonia Manchester directly supports The Carbon Literacy Project, Mersey Rivers Trust, Inside Scottish Salmon Feedlots, Extinction Rebellion Youth, Pesticide Action Network UK, B4 Biodiversity CIC, and Farm Urban Ltd. Beyond its own involvement, Patagonia Action Works allows anyone to find and get involved in climate action in their local areas. And as for its products, Patagonia hosts Worn Wear DIY repair workshops for clothing and its Ironclad Guarantee, through which Patagonia will repair everything it can.



FOOTLOCKER
Black Friday is a key moment for retail, and Footlocker has taken a different approach with the launch of Green Friday. For every item of footwear purchased during November, Footlocker plants a tree through the Eden Reforestation Project. It has also created a Sustainability Hub, where customers can quickly and easily find sustainably made and vegan products.



HOME AND LIFESTYLE

OUR HOME AND LIFESTYLE SECTOR IS LARGE AND WIDE RANGING, ENCOMPASSING STORES SELLING FURNITURE, TOYS, STATIONERY AND MOBILE PHONES TO TRAVEL, GAMBLING AND CONFECTIONARY. AND ALONG WITH ITS SIZE AND SCOPE, THE ESG INITIATIVES IN PLACE ARE SIMILARLY VARIED.



WASTE AND RESOURCES

In line with all other sectors, companies in the home and lifestyle sector have a focus on reducing waste and using resources wisely. Some are looking at becoming zero waste to landfill. **Homesense** currently diverts 91% of waste from landfill and **CEX**, with a business model based on resale, has prevented over 300 million products going to landfill to date. **MATE** offers trade-in deals on electric bikes, **Argos** runs an old mattress collection scheme, and **Currys** has a thriving repairs arm that fixes 800,000 items a year to reduce landfill.

Other businesses are focused on the circular economy, including **Lego**, which works with the Ellen McArthur Foundation to run circular economy workshops for children.

Hotel Chocolat places a big focus in this area. It uses no black plastic or plastic straws, all paper bags are recyclable or compostable, 90% of packaging is recyclable and all disposable cutlery and napkins provided at its Drinks & Ices locations are 100% compostable or recyclable.

Many stores in the home and lifestyle sector produce a lot of paper products, such as stationery and cards. These stores have a particular responsibility towards waste, with some coming up with innovative solutions, including **Scribbler**, where all products are kept to a matt finish to enable recycling. Stores are also considering the materials they are using to promote their products, for example the window vinyls at **Castle Fine Arts** are made from 80% recycled plastic.

ENERGY

When it comes to carbon and energy, there's some commitment in the sector with **EE** already running all its stores on 100% renewables and **Homesense** aiming to be net zero by 2030.

EQUALITY, FAIRNESS AND COMMUNITY

Currys is a founding member of Diversity in Retail. Its Pride at Currys network supports staff and people from the LGBTQ+ communities. Through its foundation, Rapha dedicates 60% of the \$1.5 million funding towards supporting BAME and female focused programmes and initiatives every year. Rapha also allocates a minimum of 50% of annual athlete sponsorship to BAME, LGBTQ+ and female teams and riders. Similarly, in 2020 Sky pledged £30 million towards promoting racial equality.

With so many technology companies in this sector, digital skills and inclusivity is a key priority. **Currys** is a member of the Digital Poverty Alliance and **EE** is a founding member of GO ON UK, which aims to make the UK the most digitally capable nation. **EE** also hosts Techy Tea Parties to teach people how to use devices.

There is also a strong focus on young people and their futures, for example **O2** is a founding member of the Go Think Big initiative, which has already helped over one million young people gain work experience. **Smiggle** is also supporting young people and tackling bullying through its partnership with the Diana Award. To date, **Smiggle** has sponsored 10 anti-bullying workshops across the UK, some locally in Bolton and Preston. **Sky** gave £1 million to Sir Lewis Hamilton's Charitable Foundation, Mission 44, which aims to keep children in school. And **Sky** also encourages its staff to give back to the local community, with each employee given an hour a week to volunteer.

RECOGNISING RESPONSIBILITY

Manchester's home and lifestyle sector includes a number of bookmakers and gambling companies. Many are already making strides to help their customers gamble responsibly and support those who need it. **BetFred** promotes the Take Time to Think Campaign and in 2021 **Ladbrokes** (as part of its parent company – Entain) donated around £200,000 to fund Leon House Health and Wellbeing, a 24-bedroom residential mental health and addiction clinic in Manchester.

RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

With new products coming to market all the time, responsible sourcing and sustainable product lines is important in this sector, along with the responsible promotion of these products.

At **EE**, its FairPhone is made from sustainably sourced materials and its stores sell sustainable accessories. The Conscious Living Collection at **Paperchase** uses coffee cups to make new notebooks and bamboo coffee cups

and stationery that is 3D printed using sugar cane. **Argos** promotes sustainable home ranges and **Søstrene Grene** has a Plan International range, where donations from each sale are made to the charity to support marginalised children and young people in Eastern Africa.

Many companies are working to ensure that supply chains are moving towards greater levels of sustainability. One of the most popular certifications in the home and lifestyle sector is the Forest Stewardship Council, with companies including **Paperchase**, **Scribbler**, **Hotel Chocolat** and **Flying Tiger** all having some, or almost all, their paper based products certified to that standard. **Scribbler** also uses vegetable inks.

And some companies are also encouraging suppliers and partners to work more sustainably, such as **Hotel Chocolat** and its Gentle Farmer Charter. **Kuoni** asks all its partners, hotels and agencies to follow its code of conduct, which includes minimising negative impact on environment, ending discrimination, and preventing child labour. It also offers gold standard customers the option to carbon offset their bookings.

CASE STUDIES

HOMESENSE

Home store, Homesense has an ambitious goal to be net zero by 2030, but alongside this, its commitment to social and environmental charities should be recognised. Homesense has donated over £1 million to the Woodland Trust to help plant, protect and restore native UK woodland. And through a partnership with the Prince's Trust, it is supporting young people to re-engage with education and work to help build better futures.





JEWELLERY

ALTHOUGH A SMALLER SECTOR IN MANCHESTER’S CITY CENTRE, OUR JEWELLERS ARE PUNCHING ABOVE THEIR WEIGHT, WITH SEVERAL INITIATIVES UNDERWAY TO REDUCE WASTE, PROMOTE ETHICAL SOURCING AND SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

INCLUSIVITY, WELLBEING AND COMMUNITY

Many businesses support smaller suppliers and champion excluded communities. One of the larger brands in this sector, **Pandora** uses 30% of its branding content budget with suppliers owned by women or underrepresented groups and 30% of brand ambassadors are from underrepresented groups. It has also created an industry leading parental leave programme.

Swarovski has collaborated with transgender models to open up conversations about individuality and to be allies of the trans community. **Mappin & Webb** uses the BHSF Connect App to support the mental health and wellbeing of employees. To date, over 900 colleagues have registered and the company held a two-day Mental Health First Aiders programme.

There has also been a lot of fundraising activity and charity partnerships in the jewellery sector. At **Beaverbrooks**, employees can choose who they would like to support with two days of volunteering leave a year. **Bremont** has a specific watch that it sells with donations from each sale going to the Ghurka Welfare Trust, and **Ernest Jones** has a specific range – the Because We Care collection – from which a share of profits going towards Young Lives vs Cancer.

WASTE

There is a clear move towards recycled materials across the sector. **Pandora** aims to use only recycled gold and silver by 2025 (using the Responsible Jewellery Council's Chain of Custody standard), while **Swarovski** will source all metals from responsibly managed or recycled sources, use recycled packaging and will be 90% landfill free by 2030.

Increasingly, the sale of pre-owned items is becoming a common way to reduce waste and give new life to old pieces, with **Arthur Kay & Bro**, **Chisholm Hunter** and **Mappin & Webb** all offering pre-owned items. Selling old jewellery for charity is another approach, for example **Beaverbrooks** sells old jewellery to raise money for Heart Research UK.

RESPONSIBLE SOURCING AND SUPPLY CHAINS

There have been significant strides made across the jewellery sector to improve supply chains. **Pandora’s** focus on the impact of its supply chain – both environmental and societal – means it has policies, processes, training and monitoring systems in place to embed human rights considerations into all relevant business decisions. Some jewellers, including **Boodles** and **Beaverbrooks** are members of the Responsible Jewellery Council, a global authority committed to creating a sustainable supply chain.

The issue of blood diamonds and diamonds from conflict zones is still an issue, but some progress is being made. **Austen & Blake** is a member of the Stop Blood Diamonds organisation, **H Samuel** seeks to avoid diamonds from conflict zones, and **Ernest Jones** sources diamonds ethically by using responsible sourcing companies and avoiding locations where profits fund war.



CASE STUDIES

MAPPIN & WEBB

During the Covid pandemic, Mappin & Webb's parent company, The Watches of Switzerland Group, supported Trussell Trust foodbanks in many of the areas where it has stores, including Manchester. While focussed on the wellbeing of its staff, the group also recognised the need to look after people in their wider communities and responded with emergency funding to help keep those essential services running.



DAVID M ROBINSON

David M Robinson has been particularly active in Manchester over the years, including as a founding patron of the OnSide Youth Zones. The jeweller also supports various cultural institutions and charitable organisations. With a keen commitment to encouraging young people to engage with creative subjects in school, David M Robinson is a sponsor of the Educate Awards that recognise teachers and educators and launched the DMR Jewellery Design Award in 2019 for schools across the north west.

BANKING – HIGH STREET AND INVESTMENT

HIGH STREET BANKS ARE COMMONPLACE IN MANCHESTER’S BID AREA, AND IT’S A SECTOR THAT HAS ALSO SHOWN REAL COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING ITS ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS. THERE ARE SEVERAL CLIMATE RELATED INITIATIVES, BUT PERHAPS THE LARGEST IMPACT IS THROUGH THE SECTOR’S WORK WITH EMPLOYEES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE

Halifax is leading the way when it comes to sustainable communications with its customers, with a Green Living Page on its website offering general advice on reducing energy bills, sustainability tips and a Green Living reward scheme.

In terms of sustainable travel to reduce carbon emissions, in 2021 **Yorkshire Bank** (now part of **Virgin Money**) provided financial support to transport company Rotala for a new fleet of low carbon emission buses in Manchester. And **TSB** aims to keep its own travel emissions to below 50% of its 2019 baseline as part of its commitment to reach net zero by 2030.

Plastic bankcards have a potentially significant impact on the environment. **Nationwide** is addressing this with its dot and notch cards that are made with 85.5% recycled plastic in a carbon neutral process. **HSBC** now issues recycled plastic (rPVC) payment cards and is phasing out PVC cards by the end of 2026.

For some, there is also a focus on nature preservation. **Santander** is a founding partner in Natural Parks' new nature restoration initiative, Net Zero with Nature, and is funding a project to restore 220 hectares of damaged peatland in Scotland. Several banks are members of the Carbon Trust. **Barclays** used the Carbon Trust to review its Insurance Framework and other initiatives; **HSBC** collaborated to produce an Environmental Infrastructure Fund; **Nationwide** carries the Carbon Trust standard and supply chain standard; and **Halifax** carries the Carbon Trust accreditation under **Lloyds Banking Group**.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

This sector has many initiatives in place to support young people into the world of work. **Barclays** LifeSkills helps young people gain the tools needed to gain better employment, and connects them to businesses offering work experience. **Lloyds Bank** Braineries, in partnership with Regeneration Brainery, provides skills for young people, specifically school leavers from socially and economically deprived areas. It started back in 2021 and has so far supported 50 school leavers in Manchester.

This sector also provides young people with the skills and understanding to manage their money. **Metro Bank's** MoneyZone teaches young people about money, finance and banking. And **NatWest** has partnered with Marcus Rashford and the National Youth Agency to deliver NatWest Thrive. Launched in Manchester, London and Sunderland, it helps to improve young people's confidence around money.

EQUALITY, FAIRNESS AND COMMUNITY

People experiencing homelessness frequently find themselves in the trap of 'no address, no bank account, no job'. **HSBC** has partnered with Shelter to address this specifically with their no fixed address scheme.

Supporting those with disabilities is also a focus, for example **HSBC** offers quiet hours in branches for those who find it helpful and **Nationwide's** pioneering dot and notch cards are the first in the UK to have RNIB Tried and Tested Certification.

Yorkshire Building Society supports older people through its partnership with Age UK. Together they have raised money to fund Age UK's Building Better Lives programme that identifies benefits older people can claim benefits but haven't been. **Yorkshire Building Society** has raised over £750,000 for the programme, supporting around 2,500 people, with a target of raising £1 million.

When customers are experiencing financial difficulty, whether due to sickness or circumstance, many in the banking sector step up to help. **Virgin Money** has teamed up with Macmillan Cancer Support services to produce guides on how to manage money. **NatWest** supports survivors of domestic and financial abuse – through its partnership with the charity SafeLives it donated £1million to the Circle Fund in 2020 to help support 1,494 survivors.

A significant number of banks are Living Wage employers, including **Barclays**, **Halifax**, **HSBC**, **Lloyds**, **Nationwide**, **NatWest**, **Santander**, **Skipton Building Society**, **TSB** and **Virgin Money**. **TSB** also has a charter to encourage its suppliers to be Living Wage employers.

And **Metro Bank** is just one example of many banks that prioritise staff volunteering. Every year, the bank holds a Day to Amaze where each colleague is given a paid day off to support a local charity or good cause. In Manchester, colleagues took a day in May 2022 to volunteer at LifeShare, the homelessness charity.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY OVER SUPPLIERS

Beyond their internal activities, several banks are also looking to improve the policies and standards of their suppliers. **TSB** has created a Responsible Suppliers' Charter, which focuses on supply chain business conduct, environmental sustainability, human rights, and diversity and inclusion. The Charter includes commitments such as asking suppliers to eradicate bribery, pay at least the Living Wage and support TSB's NetZero by 2030 goal.

INCLUSIVITY

With a large and varied workforce, LGBTQ+ support and inclusivity is key for many banks. **Rothschild** has an LGBTQ+ network, and **Lloyds** has its Rainbow LGBTQ+ colleague network, Mental Health Advocacy Programme and has reviewed experience of trans colleagues, which led to the bank implementing improvements over 2022.

NatWest is very active in this area, supporting its LGBTQ+ customers and staff with initiatives such as sponsoring Trans Festival 2022, providing the option to change gender on bank records, pronoun badges in branches, an LGBTQ+ eLearning Module for Staff, and including trans healthcare services in healthcare provision. Gender equality is also a focus for some, for example **Rothschild** has a number of programmes designed to support women seeking a career in finance.



CASE STUDIES

LLOYDS

In 2021, Lloyds Bank worked in partnership with Homes England to develop a programme to tackle the future skills gap in UK housing. The Regeneration Brainery is focussed on getting more young people into the property and regeneration industry. It encourages school leavers from socially and economically deprived areas into areas such as real estate, construction and regeneration. To date, two Braineries have been held in Manchester – supporting 50 school leavers – with plans to take the scheme out across the UK.

YORKSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

Yorkshire Building Society is pioneering a Financial Wellbeing scheme with the Manchester branch of Citizens Advice. One or two days a week, Citizens Advice advisers come along to its branches and offer private one-to-one advice on everything, including the pertinent issue of financial wellbeing. The sessions are open to all, not just Yorkshire Building Society customers and, so far, they have helped over 1,000 people.



OTHER SECTORS

FROM SUPPORTING A FAIR, INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE, MANCHESTER'S INSURANCE, PROPERTY AND LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SECTORS ARE TAKING THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY.

INSURANCE

EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY

The insurance sector places a strong focus on supporting the workforce and making it as fair, equal, diverse and accessible as possible. **Travelers** is the first insurance company to achieve The Clear Company's Clear Assured Gold Award Status, based on an evaluation of inclusive practices regarding finding, assessing and retaining talent. **AXA Insurance** places particular focus on disability, BAME and LGBTQ+ representation as well as gender equality and support for working families.

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Every year, **AXA** holds its Week for Good, a week dedicated to sustainability and volunteering. On top of this, all employees are given three days of volunteering leave a year. The AXA Head Coaches programme works with Teach First to train teachers to identify signs of mental ill health in young people and during Covid it supported the Seashell Trust in Manchester and partnered with BiTC to launch the national Business Responsibility Network. Also during Covid, **Royal Sun Alliance** donated IT equipment to schools and charities to help tackle digital poverty. In total, 1,875 laptops were donated. And in Manchester, **Royal Sun Alliance** has volunteered with Wood Street Mission, which supports struggling families by providing them with essential items.

In 2021, **Travelers** launched its Community Connections platform, designed to boost employees' fundraising and volunteering efforts. By joining forces with z, an online volunteering platform, employees can also take part in virtual volunteering opportunities, such as companionship phone calls, youth mentoring and online training sessions for charities.

INCLUSIVITY

AXA UK&I has been awarded Gold by Stonewall for its LGBTQ+ inclusivity in the workplace and also moved up 24 places in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. **AXA** also has a Transitioning at Work policy, launched a Resource Hub specifically for LGBTQ+ learning materials and runs internal events to promote inclusion.

CLIMATE AND CARBON

Travelers announced its commitment to become carbon neutral across its owned operations by 2030 and, through its UK Climate Change and Risk Education grant programme, **Royal Sun Alliance** supported 48 local charities in 2021 with a total of £200,500.



LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

Manchester-based finance company, **Zuto**, has been awarded B-Corp status, meaning it meets the highest global standards of environmental and social responsibility.

EQUALITY, INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

At **Gateley**, the Women Returners' scheme in Manchester and Leeds offers a six-month placement to solicitors who have been out of practising law for at least 12 months. In 2022, **Thompsons Solicitors** achieved Mansfield Rule accreditation demonstrating its commitment to, amongst other things, increasing female, BAME, disabled and LGBTQ+ lawyers in leadership roles. The firm also publishes staff diversity and pay gap data. And at **Zuto**, 43% of the management team identify as women, that's more than double the average at other fintech firms.

CHARITIES AND FOUNDATIONS

Hill Dickinson's Foundation awards grants of up to £5,000 to small, grassroots organisations and local projects that deliver social need such as education, health and employability; the **Korn Ferry** Charitable Foundation – Leadership U for Humanity – provides development opportunities to underrepresented groups; and **Zuto** has partnered with Forever Manchester to donate 18 laptops to two community groups.



PROPERTY

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE COMMITMENTS

A familiar developer across Manchester, **Bruntwood** has many examples of how it takes its environmental and climate responsibilities seriously. From the blue-green roof at Bloc (Manchester city centre's first wildflower roof) to the Sustainable Urban Drainage systems at Circle Square Manchester and Manchester Science Park, Bruntwood's sustainability credentials are clear.

In 2018, **Bruntwood** became the first property company in the UK to sign up to the UKGBC Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework and in 2021 it was a founder signatory to the WorldGBC's Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment and signed up to the UN-backed global campaign, Race to Zero. The firm also supports others with sustainability ambitions, with staff on the boards of the UKGBC and Manchester Climate Change Agency. Bruntwood also plays an active role in sustainability groups and initiatives such as the Better Building Partnership and the Yorkshire Climate Change Initiative.

Legal and General is investing £1.5 billion into the regeneration of central Manchester and has partnered with **Bruntwood** and **University of Manchester** to create ID Manchester, which includes net zero carbon developments.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Bruntwood donates around 10% of annual operating profits directly to local good causes. Through the **Oglesby Charitable Trust** it also supports key projects including Manchester International Festival and the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting.



AND NEXT?

This report represents the initial work by the Manchester BID to scan and review commitments and action across a huge swathe of critical issues both global and local. It has highlighted areas of strength and leadership in virtually every sector, which it believes could be the standard that all businesses could strive to achieve.

Now a dedicated task group of business leaders taken from the BID membership will take forward this work by reviewing this reports findings and drawing up a programme of activity to help celebrate its findings and work with BID levy payers to boost their levels of ESG and in so doing ensure that the city centre of Manchester really is a place that works to balance people, planet and profit.



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