

Talking sustainability

Chairman John Strachan, chief executive Matthew Roberts and corporate affairs and sustainability director Amanda Campbell discuss what sustainability means at intu



John Strachan



Matthew Roberts



Amanda Campbell



As you plan for the future, what are you most proud of having achieved in sustainability over the last decade?

AC: When we created the intu brand in 2013, we looked at the important role our centres play in their communities and decided that being at the heart of local communities is one of the things that we want to be known for. Over the past seven years, we have delivered on that promise through our community and volunteering programmes.

JS: Playing a role in our communities is absolutely central to our purpose and each year I award an annual prize to recognise and reward the partnerships

our centre teams create locally. When I visit our centres I enjoy finding out about the issues that our people and our communities really care about.

AC: We are also focused on reducing our impact on the environment, and reached our target to reduce our carbon intensity by 50 per cent three years early in 2017. This year that reduction has reached 69 per cent since 2010.

What were intu's biggest sustainability highlights in 2019?

MR: Since I took over as chief executive in 2019 I have been very vocal about the importance of looking after the mental health of our staff. As a business, it was an area where we could do more.

We signed the Time to Change pledge in November and through this pledge we are committing to a range of actions that remove the stigma around mental health. I am delighted that all our centres and our London office are now working with local mental health charities to achieve this.

AC: One environmental highlight is that we signed the Better Building Partnership's (BBP) Climate Commitment which commits us to achieve net zero carbon buildings in recognition of the role that we have in helping to tackle climate change.

How do you expect that the sustainability agenda will shape your business strategy over the next few years?

MR: As owners of some of the country's most popular shopping centres, ensuring our business remains sustainable is always at the top of our agenda. From an environmental perspective, we are setting ourselves a stretching new commitment, to be net zero carbon by 2030. Our environmental operations working group brings together the relevant teams in the business to make sure we can deliver on that target. We are helping our customers make more efficient use of their space, and for our visitors, we are focusing on making our centres the most accessible shopping destinations, and ensuring that they continue to be the beating heart of their communities.

How do you plan to engage employees, customers and visitors on your 2030 sustainability journey?

JS: Working in partnership has always been a key element of our corporate responsibility and, as our new sustainability strategy covers a wider range of areas from employee experience to working with our brand customers, we will be looking to build partnerships with these stakeholders to achieve our goals.

MR: I want to see us working smarter with our brand customers by aligning our shared values and goals to drive forward the wider sustainability agenda. We are also going to do more to share our journey and achievements – consumers are keen to know that they are dealing with a responsible company.

How is your new sustainability strategy governed?

JS: I chair the Board committee which is responsible for overseeing the Group's sustainability activities with strategy direction and delivery of objectives delegated to the sustainability steering group which Amanda chairs.



Above: Matthew Roberts leads the intu memory walk during Dementia Action Week to raise awareness and money to support those living with dementia



Recognising community success

Chairman's Prize

Each year, the Chairman's Prize highlights the best examples of community partnerships in our centres and rewards those which display significant intu staff involvement, evidence of strong relationships and specific benefits for charities and their clients. Since 2010 over £74,000 has been awarded to charity partners through the prize.

2019 has been another great year for the Chairman's Prize with over 230 intu employees involved in partnerships benefiting more than 5,800 individuals and families. The winner of the Chairman's Prize in 2019 was intu Lakeside's partnership with Little Havens Hospice.

Little Havens Hospice provides care for children who are life-threatening, life-limited or have palliative care needs. intu Lakeside developed a range of events to raise funds and awareness of this much-needed support. Over the year, staff at the centre have been involved in fundraising and volunteering activities which have raised £10,000. These activities and the publicity they generated locally led to three of intu Lakeside's customers, Hollywood Bowl, Chicktopia and Primark, also choosing to support Little Havens Hospice.

"We are so lucky, proud and thankful that intu Lakeside chose to support us. They really are making a difference to children across Essex living with incurable conditions and to their families," said Zoe Jay, a community fundraiser at Little Havens Hospice.

AC: We have also taken the opportunity to review our working groups to make them work more strategically.

MR: Our new strategy for 2030 is the most challenging we have set. We have three bold ambitions and are developing short and mid-term targets to allow us to monitor our progress and to enable our stakeholders to hold us accountable.