



**GROUP TAX STRATEGY**

**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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## **1. GROUP OVERVIEW**

Bibby Line Group is a diverse, international business, operating in multiple countries, employing around 1,300 colleagues, and managing over £1billion of funds. Our sectors include financial services, marine and infrastructure.

One of the UK's oldest family-owned businesses, we have over 215 years' experience of providing personal, responsive and flexible customer solutions.

Our Group's head office is in Liverpool, UK and is responsible for directing the overall Group strategy as well as providing support to our subsidiaries.

Project Compass focuses our efforts on four areas to foster the long term sustainability of the Group: Environment, Community, People and Customer. Working across the group, we have set ourselves ambitious sustainability goals, along with a set of 12 trailblazer projects to kickstart activity to help us meet our new group vision of being "A family business known for creating a better future together". We will periodically report our progress against each of these goals.

As part of those goals, we make positive contributions to the local communities we operate in. Since 2007, Bibby Line Group and its employees have donated over £10.4million and thousands of volunteering hours to over 1,000 charitable causes.

The Group is currently under 6<sup>th</sup> generation family direction and is committed to delivering the business safely into the hands of the 7<sup>th</sup> generation and beyond.

## **2. TAX STRATEGY INTRODUCTION**

This document sets out the tax strategy of Bibby Line Group Limited as ultimate parent company and its subsidiary undertakings, (hereinafter collectively referred to as 'the Group'). This strategy is prepared for the following purposes:

- To define the Group's tax objectives
- To define an approved approach to tax management across the Group, including the Group's approach to tax planning, tax risk management and relationships with local tax authorities
- As a reference for the BLG subsidiaries, to assist in their understanding of the Group's tax strategy
- To aid understanding of external parties, including local tax authorities, of the Group's tax strategy

The Group intends this tax strategy document to satisfy any statutory responsibilities it may have in certain territories to publish a tax strategy, including its duty under the paragraph 16(2), Schedule 19 of the Finance Act 2016. The statements in this strategy apply equally to all territories in which the Group operates.

The Group tax strategy applies to all forms of taxes payable by the Group, including direct taxes, indirect taxes, payroll based taxes, customs duties etc.

The Group's tax strategy and tax objectives are together approved annually by the Bibby Line Group Limited Board of Directors.

### **3. GROUP TAX PRINCIPLES**

At a high level, the Tax Objectives of the Group can be defined as:

- Managing our tax affairs in a responsible and transparent manner, ensuring compliance with relevant tax legislation and reporting, wherever we operate, and having due regard for the Group's wider reputation and corporate social responsibility;
- Having a duty to shareholders to minimise the Group's tax burden, including using incentives and reliefs to minimise the tax cost of conducting our business while ensuring that these reliefs are not used for purposes which are knowingly contradictory to the intent of the legislation;
- Not tolerating criminal tax evasion nor deliberate or dishonest facilitation of another party's tax evasion carried out by anyone acting on behalf of the Group, and the Group would not transact with parties who we consider may be engaging in tax evasion.
- Contributing value to achieve the Group's Corporate Strategic objectives, which are:
  - To maximise the long term value of shareholders' funds;
  - To keep a business portfolio capable of generating recurring earnings and a dividend flow to the holding company to provide security against cyclical downturns in any particular market;
  - To attract, motivate and retain high quality personnel;
  - To maintain our excellent reputation for high quality, integrity and safety of operations;
  - To be aware of the impact on society of our operations and to continually improve the environment for all;
  - To continually strive for excellence in our service to customers through our flexible, personal and responsive approach; and
  - To ensure BLG values (Work Together, Be Better, Be Innovative, Trust Each Other, Do the Right Thing) flow through the company and its individual businesses in order to protect and nurture the Group's reputation as a diverse and forward looking family business.

### **4. TAX GOVERNANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Board has ultimate responsibility for tax governance and reviews at least annually tax risks for the group as well as any ongoing enquiries and any legislative changes that may impact the Group. Executive responsibility rests with the Group's CEO who has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Tax Strategy in their role as Senior Accounting Officer for the Group.

Day-to-day responsibility for tax management is delegated to the Director of Group Finance & Tax. The Director of Group Finance & Tax is part of the Group Finance function, reporting directly to the Group CEO.

The Director of Group Finance & Tax is responsible for the overall management of Group Tax requirements including tax audits, maintenance of tax documentation, compliance with tax legislation/key tax deadlines and providing suitable training and support to both Group and Subsidiary finance functions. Certain tax responsibilities (e.g. VAT and Payroll taxes) are devolved to the subsidiary businesses, however certification on the internal tax controls is provided to and reviewed annually by the Director of Group Finance & Tax.

The Director of Group Finance & Tax also works closely with the internal audit function to review the key internal controls in respect of tax.

Tax risk arises from two main areas:

- 1) Tax compliance and reporting;
- 2) Transactional risk including entering into transactions that have an uncertain tax outcome.

In general, the Group seeks to reduce these tax risks through the following mechanisms:

- Avoidance of aggressive or abusive tax planning;
- Undertaking transactions that fairly reflect the economic substance of the Group's core businesses, within the territories that those businesses operate;
- Ensuring our taxable presence is reviewed against our commercial presence when entering new territories and setting up branches or entities as required to meet our tax obligations;
- Setting transfer prices for internal transactions on an arms-length basis (subject to local regulations), in compliance with OECD guidelines and the requirements of BEPS Action 13, reflecting the relative risks undertaken and economic value added by each of the internal parties to the transaction;
- Utilisation of external advisors to support accurate and timely submission of corporate tax returns and to ensure potential tax consequences of transactions are appropriately considered; and
- Simplifying, where possible, the legal entity hierarchies.

The Group's internal governance is not prescriptive on a particular level of tax risk that the Group is prepared to accept when considering a transaction. But, by engaging in transactions that have genuine economic substance, the Group aims to manage its future tax risks to minimize the chances of a future unexpected tax charges relating to historical transactions.

Tax risk also arises from errors in day-to-day tax processes. In general, the Group seeks to reduce these tax risks by ensuring clear policies and procedures are set either Group wide or at a subsidiary level. However, where errors do arise the Group acts to identify the error, voluntarily disclose to the relevant tax authority and fix the process to minimise the possibility of future errors.

On 1 September 2017, the new corporate criminal offence of failure to prevent facilitation of tax evasion came into force. We do not tolerate tax evasion, nor do we tolerate the facilitation of tax evasion by any person(s) acting on our behalf. Each subsidiary business must review its controls and attest on an annual basis to the Group CEO as part of the Senior Accounting Officer compliance process that it has in place reasonable procedures to prevent facilitation of tax evasion.

## **5. TAX PLANNING**

The Group has obligations to shareholders and therefore the tax strategy does not rule out legitimate tax planning. Planning opportunities that are regarded as consistent with commercial objectives may be considered as long as they do not represent a serious threat to the Group's reputation or its relationship with regulatory authorities. The Group therefore does not engage in aggressive or abusive tax avoidance but does consider the tax consequences of transactions as a factor in the planning process.

External tax advisors are utilised, where required, for both tax compliance and tax risk management purposes. Where the relevant issue is specific to a particular business, the selection and performance of such advisors is the responsibility of the relevant FD/CFO, in collaboration with the Director of Group Finance & Tax. Where the relevant issue is specific to the Group as a whole, the selection and performance of advisors is the responsibility of the Director of Group Finance & Tax.

The Group operates in a variety of territories across the world. In each of those territories, the Group works with external advisors to ensure adherence to local tax legislation and ensure all relevant compliance deadlines.

## **6. RELATIONSHIP WITH HMRC**

The Group is committed to an open, transparent and professional relationship with HMRC, as outlined in HMRC's Framework for Co-operative Compliance. This is achieved through:

- Providing reasonable access to the Group CEO and Director of Group Finance & Tax, as well as other relevant Finance personnel where required;
- Responding to questions in a timely manner;
- Review and maintenance of good internal tax controls;
- Review and maintenance of appropriate taxation documentation, including, but not limited to, transfer pricing documentation; and
- Where relevant, agreeing positions on significant tax matters or unusual transactions in advance of returns being filed.

By working in a transparent and collaborative way with tax authorities the Group aims to be considered as a low-risk tax payer by the tax authorities in the Group's main business regions.

## **7. APPROVAL**

This strategy was approved by the BLG Board on 3 October 2023 and will be reviewed annually.