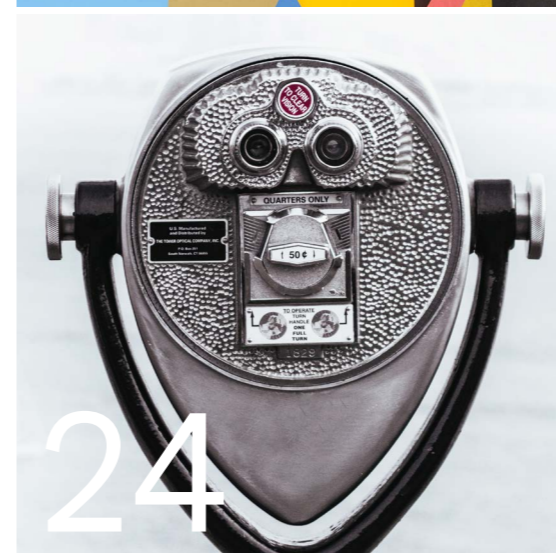




POSITIVE IMPACT REPORT

2022/23
ANNUAL REVIEW

Walker Morris provides highly tailored, long term, strategic legal advice to multinational and public and privately listed companies around the world. Our diverse collection of lawyers and professionals carry an entrepreneurial spirit and work incredibly hard to elevate clients to greater success.



INTRODUCTION	04
WHAT DRIVES US	06
ENVIRONMENTAL	08
SOCIAL	12
GOVERNANCE	24
ESG STEERING COMMITTEE	28



If you have any questions about this report, please contact the ESG Steering Committee. Their details are on page 28-29.

Introduction

Environmental.
Social.
Governance.

It's difficult to ignore how important ESG now is to all of us. As a law firm, and as a large employer, it's not unreasonable that our clients and people expect us to uphold certain regulatory standards. But it's more than that. They should – and do – expect us to care about doing the right thing.

We must keep challenging ourselves to do better. We must expect others to hold us accountable.

This report sets out two things. Our story so far – what we're already doing to have a positive impact. And our ambitions – what we're going to do in the coming year.

Read it. Question us. We want our actions to be meaningful and our impact to be real.

“

We must keep challenging ourselves to do better. We must expect others to hold us accountable.

MALCOLM SIMPSON
MANAGING PARTNER

What drives us?

Purpose

This is why we're here. It's how we have a positive impact on our people, our clients and our community.

We're all unique. We all have our own goals and visions for what we want our lives to look like.

Our firm encourages you to pursue those goals and fights alongside you to help you achieve them. We want you to...

FORGE YOUR OWN PATH.

Values

Our values are non-negotiable guiding beliefs. They help us fulfil our purpose and make it clear what we expect of our people.

Embrace the fact everyone is different and unique.

You can be serious without wearing a suit.

Never lose sight of the bigger picture.

Two heads are better than one.

Take the bull by the horns.

We win & lose together.

Be positive and enterprising.

Be curious and ambitious.

Be inclusive and kind.

Be loyal.

Be honest.

Behaviours

Our values in action. Our behaviours define how our people interact with one another and with clients.

Environment

Our vision

We'll achieve Net Zero in line with global targets, and be a recognised influencer for positive change in our community.

“

“Because of our modern offices and working practices, it’s easy for firms like ours to be complacent about our impact on the environment. But there’s still lots we can do. As well as continuously challenging ourselves, we’re in a strong position to influence others.”

**BEN SHEPPARD
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENERGY PARTNER, YORKSHIRE CLIMATE ACTION COALITION LEAD**



Story so far

The first step on our journey was to understand our starting point.

We commissioned an Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) Report. The message was positive – because of our office move and our working practices, we're already in a good place. Energy intensity for y/e 30 April 2021 was 230 (kWh/m²) per year. That's better than the 'good practice' benchmark for 'prestige air-conditioned offices'.

But we still do have a 'moderate negative impact'. Our contribution to Climate Change is indirect – we don't generate fuel, or own vehicles directly. That means most of our 'negative impact' comes from our purchase of energy (mainly electricity), and travel. So, in the last year:

- We've transferred to certified green electricity.
- We've taken another look at how we power our office. For instance, we're overhauling our overnight heating, monitoring our overnight and weekend consumption, reduced our server room temperature. Lots of small actions will add up to a big result.
- We've been alive to the environmental impact of our legal work. We've signed up to The Green Pledge: The Campaign for Greener Arbitrations, for example, committing to minimise travel, reduce printing and use suppliers who also commit to reducing their environmental footprint.

This year's ambitions

We'll keep exploring where we can really have a positive impact, prioritising energy consumption and travel. We are in a strong position to influence others, and we'll keep looking for opportunities to do so. Specifically:

- We'll set a clear, timed Net Zero target and publish our plan to achieve it.
- We'll introduce a sustainable travel strategy to reduce carbon emissions from commuting and business travel. Our first step will be to collect benchmarking data.
- We'll travel for business 30% less than we did in 2019. We'll reinvest the money we save in achieving our plan to achieve Net Zero.
- We'll introduce an EV salary sacrifice scheme for all employees, making it cheaper to lease an electric car. We'll also change our partner car policy to encourage more responsible choices.

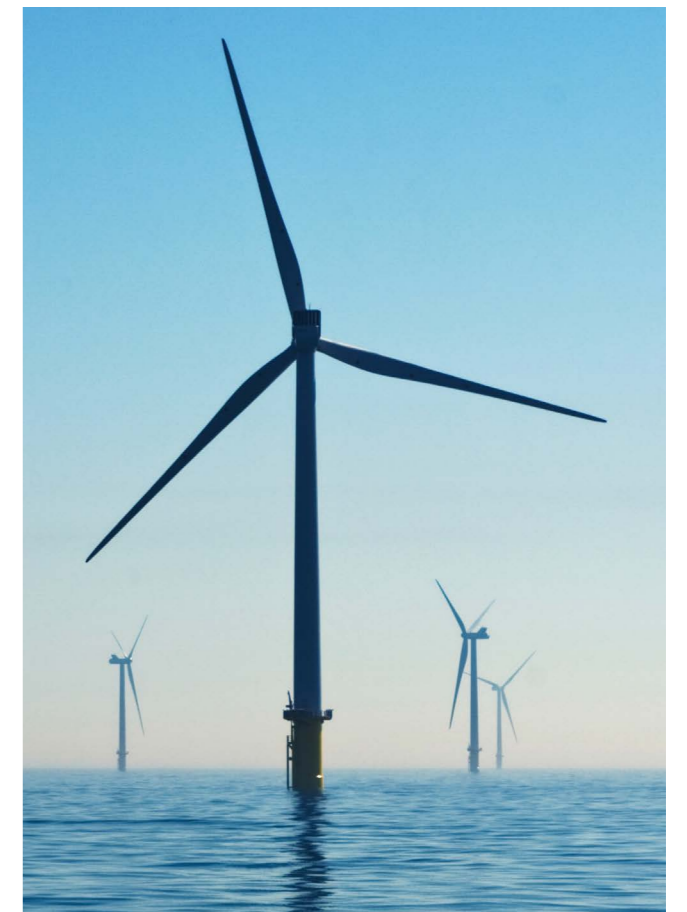


Yorkshire Climate Action Coalition

One of the biggest impacts we can have is to influence others. To achieve that, we've set up the Yorkshire Climate Action Coalition with Deloitte.

The coalition is a group of businesses with a common goal – to tackle climate change and deliver sustainable prosperity for our communities and businesses.

The Coalition is inclusive and open to all businesses, regardless of size or stage of climate journey. We host forums, events, workshops and working groups to hold ourselves, as a local business community, accountable.



Social: Inclusion & diversity

Our vision

We'll increase the diversity of our workforce, provide opportunity for all, and make everyone feel they can be their whole selves at work.

“

“Being exclusively based in the Leeds City Region means we’ve a richly diverse pool of talent on our doorstep, in which we’re proud to invest. Individuality is the lifeblood of our business. Without it, we’re limited as people and as an organisation.”

JEANETTE BURGESS
REGULATORY PARTNER, D&I LEAD

Story so far

Opportunity for all

We wanted to increase our reach into local universities, and so, last year, we held speed dating sessions with the University of Huddersfield and ran mock vacation schemes and Career Booster Weeks for the Universities of Leeds and Bradford. We also organised an Insight into Law day for students from Bradford.

We've also launched a new graduate recruitment website this year, and a new suite of recruitment literature. We've introduced blind CV recruitment. Blind CVs remove identifying factors, such as name, gender or age, and help to eliminate unconscious bias.

We encourage different routes into law as a career. We've increased the number of trainees coming through the paralegal hub. This year, we accepted 100% of applicants for training contracts from the hub.

Bringing your whole self

It's important our people feel we're living our values every day. That we embrace the fact everyone is different and unique. That we aren't interested in clichés, we're interested in you.

We've introduced lots this year to help people learn about and embrace difference, and to encourage openness. We've introduced Diversity Champions, to encourage good practice, confront ignorance and give a voice to all. We've held our first reverse mentoring programme, with our mentees being Board members and senior partners – a second round will follow. We've also introduced a Colleague, Respect & Dignity Policy.



This year's ambitions

We'll keep exploring ways to eliminate obstacles and give a voice and opportunity to all. Specifically:

- We'll start using contextual recruitment software to focus on skills over educational achievement.
- We'll introduce a policy of "Culture Build, not Culture Fit", starting with equality training for all hiring managers and assessors.
- We'll sign up to the Women in Law Pledge, Disability Confident scheme and Mindful Business Charter.
- We'll appoint someone to lead our I&D strategy. We've been searching this year and hope to find the right person soon.
- We'll introduce a 10 week paid shared parental leave policy for new fathers and secondary adopters and set out a plan to increase that to 20 weeks in the future.

Working with others

Stronger Together

Stronger Together is a collaboration of Leeds' Big 6 law firms, the Big 4 accountancy firm and Leeds City Council. We're working together to improve racial diversity & inclusion in the Leeds professional services industry.

We've committed to a cross-firm mentoring scheme as the first initiative. Get involved if you're interested.

NOTICED

We hosted the first NOTICED event in the North. Four of our people shared their personal and corporate journeys with the audience. It was so well-received that we've run the same event internally.



Our communities

- Racial Equality Group: to encourage understanding internally and reach out to externally.
- Women in Leadership: to increase the percentage of women in our partnership.
- Horizon: to give a voice to our LGBTQ+ colleagues and support the local community – we're a premium sponsor of Leeds Pride in August.

Current stats

26% of our partnership are female.

71% of our senior operations team are female.

8% of our employees are from an ethnic minority background.

Gender Pay Gap is down across the 2018-2021 period from 17% - 11.1%.

52.7% of our upper quartile pay band is women.

Ethnicity Pay Gap is 18.3%.

Future focus

- We'll aim for a partner intake that's at least 40% female each year.
- We'll aim to have at least 15% of our workforce from an ethnic minority background by 2025.

Social: Our people

Our vision

We'll make employees feel cared for by providing the tools to develop a sustainable career, and ensuring those tools are used.

“

“Our people are central to our success. It’s a challenging industry we work in. We really listen to our people about what support they need to thrive in both their professional and personal lives.”

TRACY FOLEY
HEAD OF HR

Story so far

We already give lots of ways to access emotional, financial, physical and social support. This includes a 24/7 confidential helpline, remote GP and physiotherapy appointments, and a range of life, money and wellbeing resources. But our people are unique, and so we work with them all to make sure they get a package of support they need.

This year we've also:

- Introduced a market-leading sabbatical scheme.
- Trained a significant number of Mental Health First Aiders.
- Introduced Coffee Roulette, pairing people from across the business to meet and simply chat over coffee. After the trials of lockdown, we wanted to support our people in getting to know their colleagues again.

This year's ambitions

We'll keep exploring ways to make sure our people get the professional and personal support they need. Specifically:

- We'll crystallise our Sustainable Careers proposition for all our people, giving everyone a package of support that's individual to them.
- We'll review our colleague benefit package and other family-friendly policies.
- We'll introduce an annual wellbeing plan for everyone.

Ways to make a difference

- Charity Committee: to manage our relationship with, and maximise fundraising for, our Charity of the Year.
- ESG Forum: to be a conduit between our people and the Board on ESG issues.
- Social Committee: to bring people together, organising a diverse & inclusive range of social events.



Mental health awareness week

Many of us have struggled with the isolation imposed on us by COVID. This year's Mental Health Awareness Week theme – Loneliness – felt particularly timely.

We started the week by launching a new Mental Health Resource Pack. It aims to help colleagues identify lows early, and gives advice on how to proactively manage mental health. It also gives lots of information on where to go and what to do if you're struggling.

We ran events throughout the week to publicise the support available. This included a 'Carry the Burden' day. 26 of our people carried an item of their choice, for 24 hours, representing the invisible burden of poor mental health carried by many of us.



"I chose to carry a disco ball for our Carry the Burden event. Disco balls are often associated with parties, fun and celebrations. What people don't necessarily appreciate is that they're also very delicate, can easily be damaged and need to be handled with care. They also immediately draw people's attention (perhaps because of their shininess!).

Given the focus of the day was to raise awareness of mental health, a disco ball was an obvious choice for me. It got a lot of attention, and highlighted that things aren't always as they appear. As a firm we should be constantly mindful of this, both in our approach to mental health challenges and in our dealings with others, whether inside or outside Walker Morris"

ADRIAN MOSS,
DIRECTOR, CORPORATE



Social: Our community

Our vision

We'll understand the obstacles people in our community may face, and work to ensure everyone has the best chance to achieve the life to which they aspire.

“

“It made me realise that I can achieve anything and you can do it, no matter your background.”

STUDENT
BISHOP YOUNG ACADEMY, FEEDBACK AFTER TAKING PART IN THE WALKER MORRIS
EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME



Story so far

As a firm where only 25% of Partners had a privileged education – much lower than most law firms – we’re particularly committed to tackling the social barriers faced by many in our community.

This year, we’ve appointed Ahead Partnership as our partner in this work. They have introduced us to Bishop Young High School in Leeds, and we’ll be working with the school to inspire students to choose a career they may not have considered. Maybe in a law firm!

So far, we’ve arranged:

- A guest speaker assembly. Two of our people attended a Year 9 assembly to speak about their role, their background and their journey to Walker Morris.

- Speed networking. 12 volunteers took part in this event, giving the students chance to ask questions about their background, career and what it’s like in a law firm.
- A school visit to our offices.

We’ve also continued to support apprenticeships. We employ 16–18 year olds with little or no qualifications into the business where we train them for a year. We’ve a great track record of employing them on a permanent basis after they’ve completed their training.

This year’s ambitions

We’ll keep exploring ways to reach, inspire, support and grow our community. Specifically:

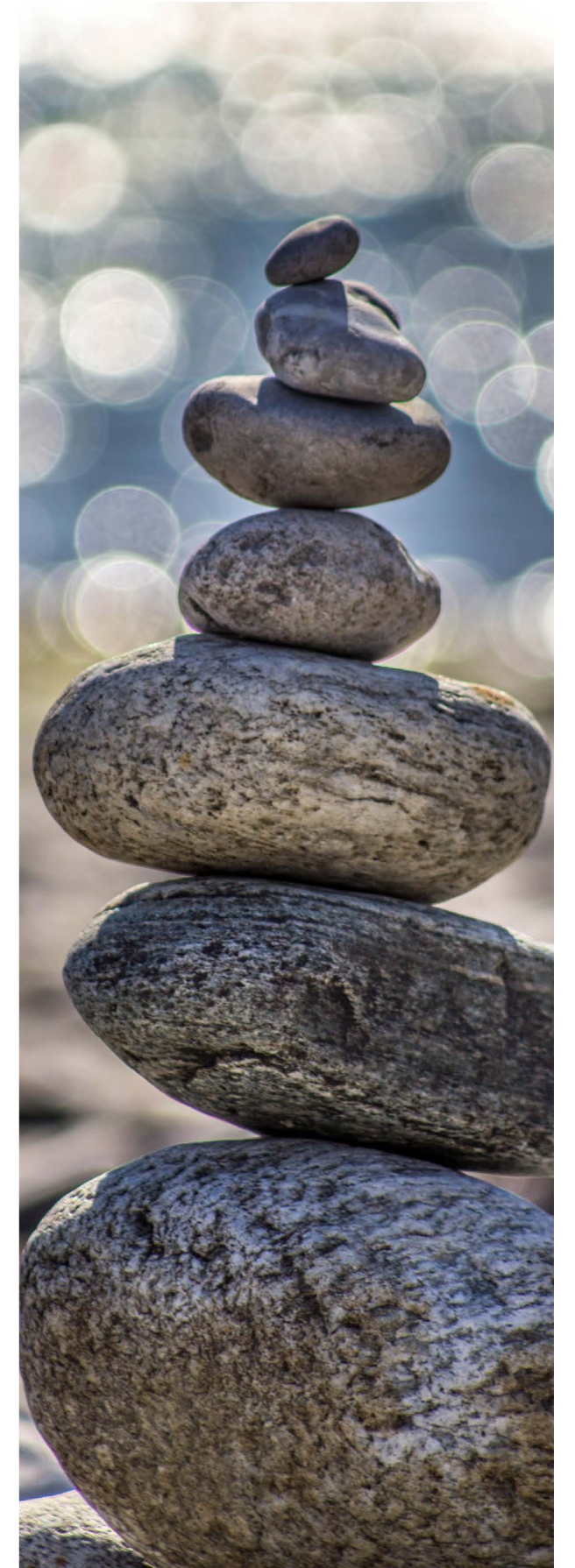
- We’ll continue our relationship with Ahead Partnership and Bishop Young High School into the new school year. We will run a series of events with the school between September 2022 and July 2023. We’ll be looking for volunteers to take part very soon!
- We’re acting on what we heard at our own NOTICED event – that many of us were told by careers advisers that particular academic or career paths weren’t ‘for us’. We’re launching a survey of 14–18 year olds to explore what they aspire to be and do, what they perceive their chances to be, and why. We hope it will be thought provoking for schools and careers advisers.

Leeds Mind is our Charity of the Year

Every year, everyone in the firm can nominate a Charity of the Year – and, every year, we ask everyone in the firm to vote on the nominations. This year, our elected charity is Leeds Mind.

Leeds Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health difficulty.

So far, we’ve raised **£7,483**



Governance

Our vision

We'll govern Walker Morris in a way that builds complete trust from our stakeholders, mitigates and manages risk, and unites all our people behind one vision of success.

“

“We’ve got ambitious plans for the business, so it’s important that we’re all working toward the same goal and that our talent can do what they do best – while being confident that the governance of the business is robust and supports our goals.”

SIMON CLARK
GENERAL COUNSEL



Story so far

It's easy to assume that a law firm will be managed well. As a regulated business, there are certain standards we must comply with – and we have many policies & procedures, guidelines & rules, to make sure that happens.

We must not be complacent though. Regulation changes, as do the expectations of our clients and our own people. Those who may seek to do the firm harm get more sophisticated. And so, in the last year, we:

- Expanded our Anti-Money Laundering (AML) response, recruiting a new full-time Officer and two administrators.

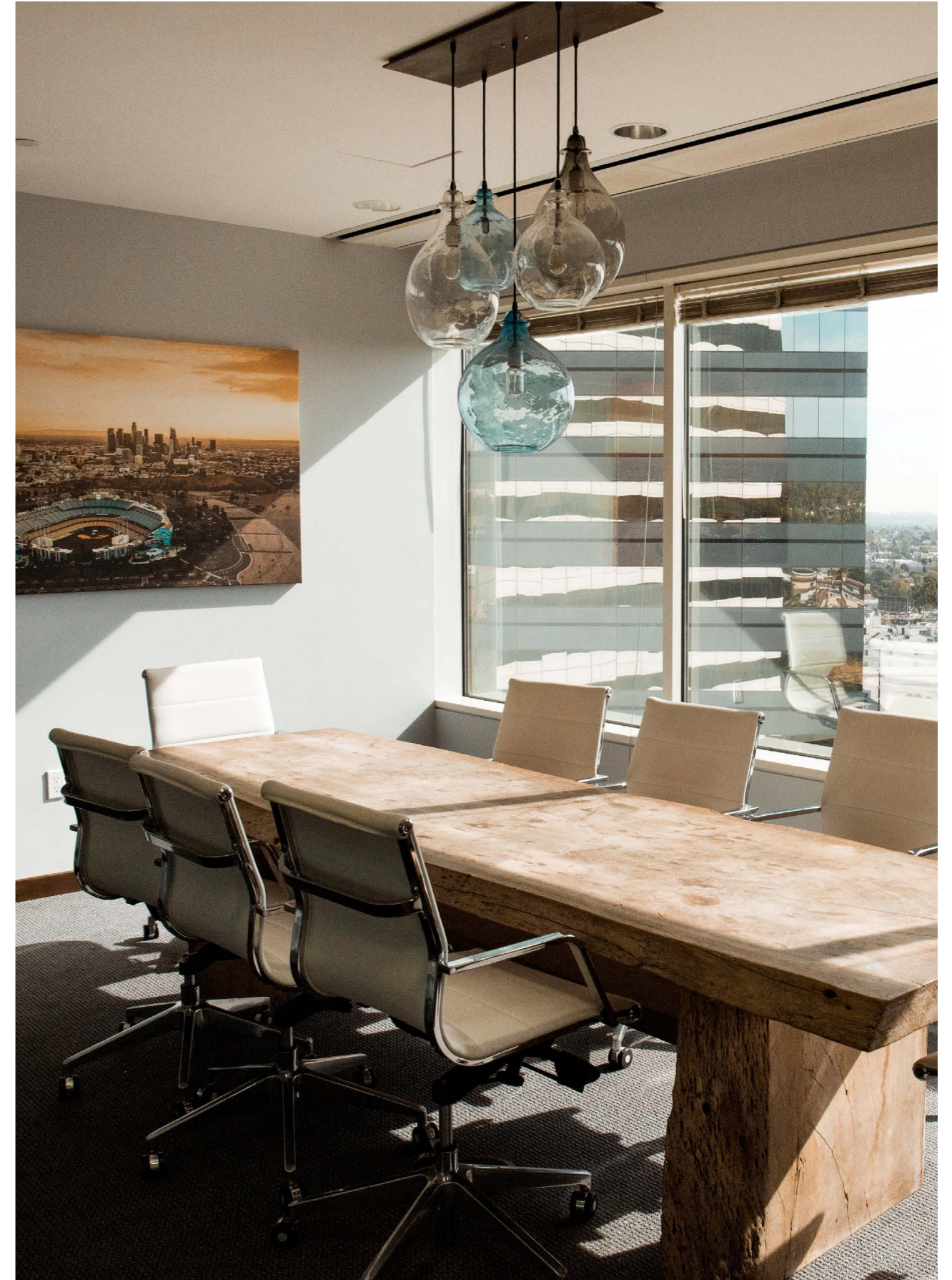
- Communicated our 3-year firmwide growth strategy, Ambition 24.
- Worked with a specialist Business Continuity consultancy to make sure our response to any crisis will be robust.
- Have continuously reviewed all contracts to identify the threat of Modern Slavery.
- Held Board and Remuneration Committee elections, maintaining our democratic approach to partnership.
- Relunched our brand, with a new purpose and values to unite us.
- Appointed Simon Clark, our General Counsel to the Board, with Risk & Compliance and ESG now standing Board agenda items.
- Increased our response to the ever-growing cyber security threat.



This year's ambitions

Not only do we need to keep up with regulation and stay one step ahead of financial criminals and hackers, we're also in the middle of delivering an ambitious growth strategy. Excellent governance, therefore, is crucial. We'll keep exploring how we achieve our goals as a business. Specifically:

- We'll finish compiling our new risk register, which will provide the Board, the SOT and key stakeholders with significant information on the main risks we face.
- We'll implement our new AML policy & procedures, which is a much more rigorous process.
- We'll work with everyone in the business to make sure they know what they're contributing to Ambition 24.



ESG Steering Committee



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For more information

Please contact our ESG Steering Committee. We look forward to updating you in 2023.

