

Findlay Park Partners LLP (Findlay Park) is an independent investment partnership based in London. We invest primarily in US equities on behalf of investors in the Findlay Park American Fund. Our purpose is to generate compelling compound returns for our investors, measured over decades.

We have a clear Investment Philosophy that is aligned to our purpose. This Investment Philosophy helps us identify businesses that should generate sustainable returns. We believe we can achieve this by taking *less* risk.

This Policy outlines why responsible investment matters to us. It details how meaningful consideration of environmental, social and corporate governance (“ESG”) issues and regular engagement are embedded in our investment process, and why we believe that responsible investment practices play an important role in delivering our purpose. It also outlines the structure and culture which underpins our approach.

### **Why responsible investment matters to us**

Our starting point when looking at any company is not ‘how much can we make if we get it right?’ but ‘how much could we lose if we’re wrong?’ ESG issues, from cyber threats to climate change, present increasingly fundamental risks. It is hard to imagine how to conduct serious research into businesses without considering such issues.

We aim to invest in great businesses, and believe that responsibly managed companies are best placed to provide superior long-term investment opportunities. We invest in businesses that generate strong free cash flow and management teams that are effective allocators of capital. We back companies that deliver value for their customers through great products and services, and look to support corporate cultures that create an environment for employees to thrive and grow.

Engagement is essential to our investment strategy. We typically invest in only fifty companies, and get to know them extremely well. We hold hundreds of meetings with them each year, and vote at every shareholders’ meeting. We challenge companies where we see scope for improvement that delivers long-term value.<sup>1</sup>

### **Our approach to responsible investment**

Our approach to responsible investment is differentiated, grounded in our Investment Philosophy which addresses ESG issues. We do not believe responsible investment can be effectively outsourced to ESG rating, engagement or voting providers. Some of the most important qualities of a business, such as culture, are the hardest to quantify.

By focusing on one Fund, we are able to delve into detail and spend time engaging with management. This helps us better understand our companies. We look at material ESG factors, and engage on areas most relevant to each company.

We do not invest in businesses where we have concerns with the financial stability of the business. Controversial businesses tend not to fit with our Investment Philosophy, although we do not have mandatory exclusions. Our philosophy questions guide us away from such firms by addressing matters around heightened regulatory risk, questions over their long-term outlook, and susceptibility to changing consumer preferences.<sup>2</sup>

Our commitment to ESG integration, and to voting and engagement, are reflected in our signatory status to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investing (“UNPRI”), and to the UK Stewardship Code. We will report annually in accordance with these Principles.

---

<sup>1</sup> See the Financial Reporting Council’s (FRC) definition of stewardship as “the responsible allocation and management of capital... to create sustainable value for beneficiaries, the economy and society. *Building a regulatory framework for effective stewardship*, FRC, January 2019, pp.11.

<sup>2</sup> It would therefore be highly unusual for us to invest in tobacco, coal, weapons, gambling, and pharmaceuticals, for example. Indeed we have never invested in many of these areas.

## Our Investment Process

Our Investment Philosophy has guided our research intensive process throughout our history. This philosophy is the cornerstone of every investment decision we make. We have a comprehensive list of questions that we ask ourselves about every company that we invest in. It includes several questions which explicitly address ESG issues:

- Does the business / industry face regulatory headwinds?
- Will it be a stronger business in 3-5 years' time?
- Is the business susceptible to shifting consumer preferences?
- Does it have strong and trusted brands?
- Is management compensation aligned with shareholders?
- Do we like the corporate culture?

The integration of ESG in our Investment Philosophy means this forms part of each Investment Team member's thinking, and is included in regular discussion and debate. Our Responsible Investment Lead is a member of the Investment Team. This helps us address these issues, rigorously and consistently, within a culture of teamwork.

We have developed our own portfolio-wide responsible investment view. This combines external data with our voting, engagement and ESG research notes, and is included in weekly Investment Committee meetings and team discussions. It provides detailed information on five areas, relevant to all our companies. These reflect the realities of the changing world – whether via the impact of technology or climate change – and include issues which we have long considered central to a company's culture and performance.

Human Capital	Climate	Corporate Governance	Cyber Security & Data Privacy	Business Ethics & Reputation
<b>Rationale</b>				
All businesses are people-driven	Climate change risks are increasing and potentially systemic	Robust oversight is key to financial sustainability	Rapid digitalisation poses new challenges	Business conduct is under scrutiny in an age of transparency

When analysing individual companies, we also assess specific issues that are financially material to the sector or company in question.<sup>3</sup> Additional issues we assess for industrials, for instance, are shown below.

	Environmental Issues		Social Issues		Business Opportunities
<b>Industrials</b>	Water use and risk	Raw materials, waste and pollution	supply chain standards	Product safety and quality	Innovation and sustainable opportunities

<sup>3</sup> This is our in-house view, although the framework has been informed by academic evidence, research and external frameworks – such as that of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board.

We make use of a wide range of sources to aid our research. These include ESG ratings, such as MSCI ESG, but also specialist sources such as Glassdoor for employee reviews to assess human capital management, CDP for environmental data, SecurityScorecard for cyber risk, and ISS-Ethix for business integrity research. We draw on human networks and expertise. We will often speak not only with management teams, but former employees of companies, its customers, or suppliers. This helps us assess corporate culture, and integrity, among other issues.

### **Our approach to engagement and monitoring**

Our experienced Investment Team consists of twelve people focused on one Fund. We typically hold around fifty companies in the portfolio. This means we're able to get to know our companies and their management teams extremely well and hold hundreds of meetings each year with them.

We pay careful attention to corporate strategy, financial risk, and capital structure; considering dividend and share buyback policies, employee stock plans and the use of debt finance. We also focus on a range of specific ESG risks and impacts.<sup>4</sup> In 2019 we held over 250 meetings with companies, including over a hundred meetings in which we discussed ESG issues with companies in which we invest. This included extended engagement specifically on culture, as we continue our investigation into culture as a source of competitive advantage for each company.

We monitor a number of ESG related data points which can inform us of changes, such as altered employee satisfaction or new controversies. Changes are captured in our portfolio-wide responsible investment view, which is included in Investment Committee and Investment Team discussions. Where appropriate, issues may also be raised in our Risk & Compliance Committee, of which our Responsible Investment Lead is a member.

### **How we prioritise engagement and seek to influence behaviour**

Engagement is prioritised to best protect and enhance the value of our investments. Relevant factors include the size of our position in a company, the extent of the holding in our Fund, and the importance of an issue to the investment thesis. We also respond to short-term events such as upcoming voting decisions, company requests, management changes, and escalation of ESG risks.

Our preferred outcome is typically to positively influence a company's behaviour. Where necessary we engage many times on the same issue to help drive this change. Our objectives and actions may differ dependent on the context. These could include enhanced corporate disclosure, improved voting decisions, changes to our investment thesis or portfolio construction. We give examples of engagement, and related outcomes, in our reporting.

### **How we escalate issues**

We engage on issues of concern with a positive mindset, hoping to clarify management's intentions or change behaviour. Should this not be possible, we will:

- Raise the issue further up the management/governance hierarchy (if there is further to go).
- Determine whether the failure to resolve the issue compromises our investment thesis.
- If we conclude that it does, exit the position.
- If not, make any appropriate adjustments to current and/or maximum position sizes, and note the issue for high-priority monitoring.

Material issues are reviewed by the Investment Committee, which meets weekly and consists of the CIO, the CEO, and two portfolio managers.

---

<sup>4</sup> See also the discussion of particular ESG issues in 'Our investment process'.

## **Our approach to cooperation**

We are open to collaboration and collective action on responsible investment issues. We are participants in the UNPRI's shareholder collaboration programme, through which we may join thematic working groups and sign letters on topics of concern.<sup>5</sup>

Our status as signatory to CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project) signals our support for better corporate disclosure on material climate and environmental issues. We recognise this issue poses potential systemic risk, and welcome better information to enhance understanding of the financial implications.

In addition, where we see issues or room for improvement with service providers; we have actively engaged with them to improve common understanding of responsible investment issues.

## **Our approach to voting**

We see voting as an opportunity to either signal support for companies, or to challenge them, acting in the long-term interest of our investors. We do not participate in stock lending arrangements and retain voting rights across all holdings. We aim to achieve a 100% voting record, abstaining only in exceptional cases, which we always explain in our reporting.

Importantly, we consider the specific circumstances of each company in which we invest and the detail of the individual resolutions. Although we subscribe to the services of a third-party proxy voting provider, Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS), we make independent decisions based on our own research and engagement with management teams. We also seek to engage with management when we intend to vote against them.

Our voting approach draws on our Investment Philosophy, forming principles which inform our voting decisions. These are outlined below:

- **Remuneration should align management with shareholder interests**

We expect management teams to think like owners, and remuneration is a powerful means to encourage this. It can also help companies focus on long-term value creation which aligns with our focus on whether the business will be a better one in five years' time. We assess issues including level of CEO equity holding, long-term structures, and links between quantum and performance. We are mindful of how we rationalise our decisions to investors, and consider the long-term value a firm has created for society.

- **Our philosophy is focused on less risk for reward: we want companies with strong risk oversight**

We look for companies to demonstrate effective oversight and risk management. Whilst we're not prescriptive about structures, we want Boards to understand potential limitations to their approach, and to put appropriate mitigants in place. We are interested in issues including Board composition, the quality of a Lead Director, audit and accounting robustness, and management of ESG issues.

- **Culture is a key to long-term success**

We look for companies which embody cultures of integrity and excellence. This can underpin long-term performance, and mitigate downside risk. Our view of a firm's culture may influence our voting on a number of issues, including ESG related shareholder proposals. In voting on these we carefully assess the issues at hand, alongside the culture and conduct of the company. We support any motions designed to increase transparency in a company's political contributions, as well as reasonable proposals to enhance shareholder rights by lowering the threshold required to call special meetings.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> As targets are often businesses in higher risk sectors, which typically fit poorly with our Investment Philosophy, we have as yet had little occasion for such collaboration.

<sup>6</sup> An exception to this where the proposed threshold would empower one large shareholder to call a meeting unilaterally.

## **How we conduct voting**

Coordination by the Responsible Investment Lead and oversight by the Investment Committee ensures consistency of voting and reporting.

Our process begins with the Responsible Investment Lead compiling and coordinating voting analysis. Recommendations aligned with our voting principles are then provided to the Portfolio Manager(s) responsible for the company concerned. All items are assessed, typically including: executive pay, Board members, auditors, and any shareholder resolutions. Supported by this advice, the Portfolio Manager(s) make an initial voting decision.

The Investment Committee, chaired by our Chief Investment Officer (CIO), receives an overview of our analysis and reviews voting decisions. When we identify issues as meriting engagement; we undertake this before finalising a decision. This includes all cases where we are strongly considering a vote against management. Other examples might be where a shareholder resolution raises questions around corporate behaviour, or which our proxy advisor has flagged as contentious.

Following Investment Committee review, internal dialogue and engagement where merited, we finalise our voting decisions and record our rationale. For contentious motions, the countersignature of the CIO is required.

## **How our structures support responsible investment**

The Findlay Park Board reviews and approves our approach to responsible investment, including engagement and voting. The CEO, who is a Board member, has responsible investment and engagement included in his statement of responsibilities.

The Responsible Investment Lead reports directly to the CEO, and is also a member of the Investment Team. This reflects our commitment to integrate ESG within the investment process and embed responsible investment throughout our firm.

As outlined above, decisions on contentious votes and escalated issues, are overseen by the Investment Committee. They also monitor portfolio-level ESG issues, and discuss our internal responsible investment report. This helps ensure that responsible investment issues are fully integrated within our investment process.

The Responsible Investment Lead is a member of our Risk and Compliance Committee, chaired by the Head of Compliance. This enables detailed discussion of responsible investment regulation, and risks. Our General Counsel and Compliance department review our policies, including our Responsible Investment and Engagement Policy.

## **How our approach to conflicts and incentives support responsible investment**

We aim to remove barriers to, and create incentives for, investment decisions in the best interest of investors.

Our Personal Account Dealing Policy prohibits all Findlay Park employees, and connected persons, from investing in listed equities. We manage one investment strategy, available via one fund, and do not manage separate accounts. As such, our business structure presents limited scope for conflicts of interest. In the unlikely event that a conflict arises with regard to a voting decision, our policy is to vote in line with the recommendation from our proxy advisor, ISS. Our Conflicts of Interest Policy and Register, which includes consideration of engagement and voting, is available on request.

All Investment Team members are incentivised according to three pillars: quality of work, performance, and collaboration. One of the questions under quality of work is: 'Have you considered ESG factors in your research?'

## **How we report on responsible investment and interact with investors**

We report our activities on a semi-annual basis, including voting decisions and examples of engagement. We maintain a record of every vote cast recording detailed rationale for all decisions made relating to contentious proposals.

We are a signatory of the UNPRI, and are committed to reporting annually in accordance with these Principles. Our first report explaining how we have complied with UNPRI will be published March 2020 during the voluntary reporting period. We will also be reporting with reference to the new UK Stewardship Code in 2021.

We carefully consider investor needs, requests, and questions on responsible investment issues. We monitor investor priorities, and policies, and integrate awareness of these into our strategic planning. We are happy to conduct meetings with a focus on responsible investment.

## **How our culture and purpose aligns with responsible investment**

As we have emphasised throughout this Policy, we believe that responsible investment practices play an important role in delivering our purpose: to generate compelling compound returns for our investors, measured over decades.

Our culture is key to the achievement of our purpose, and supports our approach to responsible investment. Culture means a number of things to us, including: openness and honesty, pursuit of continuous improvement, collaboration, and teamwork. Underpinning this is a commitment never to risk our reputation.

We also believe the financial benefit inherent in this purpose can create further benefits. Firstly this enables our investors to secure their futures and those of the next generation, and may enhance their charitable giving. Secondly, it gives our team rewarding work. Finally we see this as having wider implications. We believe investing capital in great companies, which deliver value to their stakeholders, can benefit both our investors and society.

Approved by the Findlay Park Board of Directors

5<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Important Information

This document has been prepared by Findlay Park Partners LLP (“**FPP**”), the investment manager of Findlay Park American Fund, a sub-fund of Findlay Park Funds Plc (“**Fund**”).

Nothing contained in this document constitutes investment, accounting, tax or legal advice or an offer to sell, or a solicitation of any offer to buy, any interests or shares in any investment, including the Fund. Any subscription in the Fund will be subject to the terms, including a list of risk factors and conflicts of interest, set out in the Fund’s Prospectus, Key Investor Information Document and Supplementary Information Document.

The material included herein is confidential and is intended solely for the use of the recipient and should not be redistributed in any way without FPP’s prior written consent.

The information contained in this document is believed to be accurate at the date of publication. No representation or warranty is made as to its continued accuracy after such date and the information is subject to change without notification. The document may include information derived from third parties. All rights for third party data is reserved. Whilst FPP believes such sources to be reliable and accurate, no assurance is given in this regard. FPP does not warrant the accuracy, adequacy or completeness of the information and data contained herein and expressly disclaims liability for errors or omissions in the information or data. No warranty of any kind, implied, expressed or statutory, is given in connection with the information and data.

Copyright © Findlay Park Partners LLP 2020. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system of any nature, or transmitted, in any form or by any means including photocopying and recording, without the prior written permission of Findlay Park Partners LLP.