

Independent auditors' report to the members of Charter plc

We have audited the accounts which comprise the Consolidated Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheets, the Consolidated Cash Flow Statement, the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, the Reconciliation of Movements in Shareholders' Funds and the related Notes and the disclosures in the Remuneration Report relating to directors' remuneration specified for our review by the Financial Services Authority.

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

The directors' responsibilities for preparing the annual report and the accounts in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and accounting standards are set out in the statement of directors' responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the accounts in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and United Kingdom Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board and the Listing Rules of the Financial Services Authority.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the accounts give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the directors' report is not consistent with the accounts, if the company has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law or the Listing Rules regarding directors' remuneration and transactions is not disclosed.

We read the other information contained in the annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the accounts. The other information comprises the Directors' Report, the Chairman and Chief Executive's Statement, the Operating Reviews, the Financial Review, the Corporate Governance Statement and the Remuneration Report.

We review whether the Corporate Governance statement reflects the

Company's compliance with the seven provisions of the Combined Code specified for our review by the Listing Rules, and we report if it does not. We are not required to consider whether the board's statements on internal control cover all risks and controls, or to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's or group's corporate governance procedures or its risk and control procedures.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the accounts. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the accounts, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the accounts.

Opinion

In our opinion the accounts give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and the group at 31 December 2001 and of the loss and cash flows of the group for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors
London
4 March 2002