

**19.1.2017****HOLLAND & BARRETT OPENS NEW CENTRAL LONDON FLAGSHIP STORE AND ANNOUNCES MICROPLASTICS-FREE BEAUTY PROPOSITION**

Europe's leading health food retailer, Holland & Barrett International, is set to open its largest ever store on Manchester's Market Street on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

The store, which continues the concept As well as being the largest in the retailer's extensive portfolio, which now stretches across three continents, the 6,000sqft store will provide the capital with a wide range of new health and wellness propositions alongside an entirely microplastic-free beauty range, a move the government has called on all beauty brands to adopt by the end of 2017 when it proposes to legislate.

The new Marble Arch flagship follows consistent growth for the Nuneaton-based international retailer, which currently opens around 50 new stores a year in the UK and Ireland in addition to its rapid expansion programme for owned and franchised stores across its 11 overseas markets. There are now over 1,100 stores under the brand globally, of which more than 300 are located in markets as diverse as Kuwait and India, Singapore and China.

The new, larger store format was unveiled in 2015 with the opening of Holland & Barrett's first ever 'More' store, in Chester. The format allows the retailer to experiment with new shopping concepts, many of which have already proved very successful in Chester, including vegan nail bars, on-the-go protein shake stations and fruit and nut pick n mix stations. Continuous innovation and investment in new product development has helped the retailer post 30 consecutive quarters of growth in sales since 2009.

In addition to the more experiential aspects of the build, this store will feature a range of on-the-go products for busy London lifestyles as well as an entire floor of sports nutrition products, where consultations can be booked with the store's in-house nutritionist and body analysis service. The aim is to increase accessibility to a larger and broader audience, moving away from the reputation of sports nutrition as a niche area. As with the rest of the business, all staff employed by the store are qualified to A-level equivalent to advise customers on their health and nutrition requirements.

With its prominent London location, the store aims to attract a UK and international customer base. As Holland & Barrett continues to grow in overseas markets including China, the new store will even feature Alipay payment technology which will help to ensure Chinese consumers can use their cards for in store purchases.

Commenting on the opening, Holland & Barrett International's CEO, Peter Aldis, said: "Today's opening marks an important milestone in our ambition to be an international business and brand that generates £1 billion in sales by 2020. Holland & Barrett Marble Arch is five times larger than our average stores and being able to open in such a premium central London location shows our confidence in the growing demand for our innovative health and wellness propositions on the high street."

Commenting in the microplastics-free announcement, Peter Aldis added: “We are particularly proud to be announcing our healthy beauty range is now 100% microplastics-free. We were the first high street retailer to ban plastic bags and the first to ban parabens and sodium lauryl sulphates from all of our beauty products. Consumers have responded very positively to our broad ethical positioning in the beauty sector where we regularly outperform the market and where sales now account for in excess of 10% of turnover.”

The tiny pieces of plastic used by many successful beauty brands presents a danger to marine life and will be removed from sale in the UK by the end of 2017 after more than 357,000 people signed a petition calling for the UK to follow the example set by the US, and ban the practice. The Government have undertaken to introduce the ban through legislation by the end of 2017.

Holland & Barrett More, Marble Arch is located on 524 Oxford St, Marble Arch, London W1C 1LN. The store is open from 8am to 10pm weekdays, from 9am to 10pm on Saturday and from 12pm to 6pm on Sunday.

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**Notes to Editors:**

For further information or images of the new Holland & Barrett More store, please contact the team at Pegasus on [hollandandbarrett@thisispegasus.co.uk](mailto:hollandandbarrett@thisispegasus.co.uk) - 01273 712000, or call Duncan Mackenzie-Reid on 07776257170.