

POLLUTION EATING PLANTS HELP TURN BRANCH GREEN

Pollution eating plants and the latest green technologies have been introduced at a new look office in the centre of Manchester, which will bring together travel, insurance and banking services under one roof.

The green makeover has been carried out No 1 Balloon Street, which from now on will house a Travelcare outlet and an office of the Co-operative Insurance Society (CIS) as well as the Manchester branch of The Co-operative Bank.

Labelled the greenest refurbishment project in the UK, the new premises incorporate a host of environmentally friendly features. The customer areas are surrounded by a range of pollution eating plants, which have been identified by NASA scientists as the best for improving indoor air quality.

The new look branch uses light reflecting ceiling tiles, designed to reduce lighting costs, organic paint, plaster boards made from recycled material and the very latest air conditioning and fire controls, which utilise natural gases and so remove the need to use ozone depleting halons. Wood and veneers are from sustainable managed forests certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

The electricity for the building is purchased from a wind farm and so come from 100 per cent renewable source. To complete the green theme Travelcare customers will be encouraged to recycle holiday brochures in a specially provided bin and Fair Trade tea and coffee will be provided while people wait to be served.

Yvonne Rankin, Chief Operating Officer, Specialist Retail, for the Co-operative Group, who has overall charge of Travelcare, commented: "Number One Balloon Street is a prime example of how the Group's family of businesses is working together to harness their strengths. Holidays and finance go hand in glove and the Travelcare operation in this development will be a flagship for our business."

The Bank's Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer Sheila Macdonald said: "No 1 Balloon Street has been associated with The Co-operative Bank since it was formed in 1872 and so it is with great anticipation that we set out on this new chapter in its history.

"In addition we are all very proud of our green credentials and I hope this outlet will be held up as an example of best practice."

Notes to Editors:

An artist's impression and photographs of the new branch are available on request.

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