

Press release: HS2 Press Statement on Steve Allen

The company's Chief Executive, Mark Thurston, said:

When I joined the organisation earlier this year we faced a number of issues that needed to be addressed, particularly around our administrative controls and mechanisms on redundancies agreed by the company, as highlighted by the recent NAO report into High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd's annual accounts.

Steve has been absolutely critical in identifying the ways to rectify those issues and make sure they do not happen again.

But, having done that, I respect Steve's decision that now is the right time for him to move on. I would like to thank him for all he has done for the company in this formative period. His honourable decision will enable me to build the executive team for the next phase of the project.

Steve Allen said:

HS2 is a hugely important project for the future of Britain and it has been a great privilege to have been part of the process of putting in place the foundation stones for its successful delivery.

The weaknesses highlighted by the NAO report resulted in both the HS2 Executive and Board being misinformed about the status of critical approvals for redundancies. Those assurances were given by teams for which I was responsible and, obviously, I regret that.

So, whilst we are now putting in place the measures to strengthen financial governance systems and to provide robust financial stewardship for the company, I believe it will be appropriate for me to move on.

Press and media enquiries

For enquiries during office working hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm 020 7944 6149

For enquiries outside of these hours and at the weekend 020 7944 0550

The press and media enquiries line is for accredited journalists only

[Press release: Education Secretary puts teachers at the heart of social mobility](#)

Education Secretary Justine Greening addressed an audience of 4,000 teachers today (Tuesday 24 October) and urged them to work with her to give every child the same opportunity to fulfil their ambition.

In a speech at the [Teach First conference](#) at Wembley Arena, Justine Greening set out plans to help pupils from all backgrounds reach their full potential and highlighted the pivotal role teachers have to play in boosting social mobility.

She also used the speech to provide further detail on two new initiatives aimed at ensuring schools can recruit and retain the very best teachers, building on the government's wider programme of support. She announced:

- the 25 areas across England, which include Bradford, Derby and Salford, selected to run a pilot programme to reimburse student loan repayments for modern foreign languages and science teachers in the early years of their careers.
- two new projects that will receive a share of the £75 million [Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund](#). These projects will help provide tailored training opportunities for teachers on both managing challenging pupil behaviour and developing leadership, so they can make the most of their talent in the classroom.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

I want to make sure that everyone has the same opportunity to achieve their ambitions, regardless of where they are growing up or their background. It's great news that there are 1.8 million more children in schools rated good or outstanding than there were in 2010 and the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is narrowing.

But we know there is more to do – particularly in parts of the country that are at risk of falling behind. Our 12 [Opportunity Areas](#) are central to this. Working together with schools, councils, local businesses and other organisations, this programme is looking at ways to give all children the best start in life.

Great teachers help unlock children's talents and Teach First is already playing a key role by recruiting top graduates with the potential to become excellent teachers in some of our most challenging schools. I look forward to continuing to work with them to broaden horizons for all young people.

These announcements follow the recent confirmation of a number of measures to recruit and retain more great teachers, including a new phased maths bursary and a £30 million investment to provide tailored support to some of the schools facing the most significant recruitment and retention challenges.

Teach First CEO, Russell Hobby, also spoke at the event and urged the teaching profession to "go further, working alongside schools, the government, businesses and communities – with a collective will to create a country where the opportunities are available for all".

The two projects that will receive a share of the £75 million Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund are Tom Bennett Training and EdisonLearning.

Jerry Baker, Managing Director EdisonLearning on behalf of EdisonLearning and NAHT said:

We are delighted that the success of the NAHT Aspire Programme has been recognised in the award of the TLIF contract. We look forward to continuing this success with the TLIF schools and building new Aspire networks across the country over the next two years.

Tom Bennett, Director of Tom Bennett Training, said:

Good behaviour is fundamental to every outcome we value in education: academic outcomes, social skills, employability, citizenship, creativity, critical thinking, and more. Teachers and leaders can make a huge difference by creating fantastic cultures in their rooms and schools where learning, civility and community are valued.

Our training offers school staff the tools to do exactly that, in ways that have been tested in some of the best schools in the UK and beyond.

The local authorities covered by the student loan reimbursement pilot are: Barnsley; Blackpool; Bracknell Forest; Bradford; Cambridgeshire; Derby; Derbyshire; Doncaster; Halton; Knowsley; Luton; Middlesbrough; Norfolk; North East Lincolnshire; North Yorkshire; Northamptonshire; Northumberland; Oldham; Peterborough; Portsmouth; Salford; Sefton; St. Helens; Stoke-on-Trent; and Suffolk.

Around 800 modern foreign language and 1,700 science teachers a year will be eligible for this pilot scheme. For a teacher on £29,000, the new student loan repayments pilot and the increased student loan repayment threshold of £25,000 will mean £720 cash in pocket. This is the equivalent of an approximate £1,000 increase in salary.

Press release: Enforcement Undertaking agreed with vegetable company

An enforcement undertaking (EU) has been agreed with a vegetable processing company after it grossly polluted Brook Drain in Wormegay, King's Lynn, Norfolk with water used to wash carrots.

The Environment Agency accepted the offer by Alfred G Pearce Ltd to put right any damage caused by the pollution and to donate to an environmental charity.

As part of the EU, the company has donated £12,000 to the Norfolk Rivers Trust to benefit the local environment and also paid the Environment Agency's costs.

Helen Blower, Environment Agency officer said:

Enforcement undertakings allow those who commit offences to restore the environment and to take steps to prevent a recurrence.

When appropriate, they allow a quicker resolution than a prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to put things right voluntarily working with their local communities.

Formal sample results taken after the incident in February 2016 revealed a gross pollution of the water course.

The company told the Environment Agency that an inspection chamber which also acted as an overflow tank had been damaged by a reversing lorry and there had been no system in place to alert them of the damage and no procedure for checking the Brook Drain on a regular basis. This had led to a delay in rectifying the problem.

Since then the damage has been repaired, bollards placed to prevent a recurrence of the damage, installing bunded areas to contain spills and installing a new treatment plant.

The EU was offered in relation to an offence of pollution under regulation 38 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

The EU was completed in July 2017.

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