[New approach to building resilient communities announced]

The approach is focused on employment, early years and empowerment, and will involve phasing out the Communities First programme.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

> "We have listened very carefully to thousands of people who have been involved in Communities First, either as employees or participants. While it is clear that Communities First was successful in its impact on many individuals, it has not had an impact on overall poverty levels in these communities, which remain stubbornly high.
>
> "We are clear, as a Government, that we must now transition into a new phase in our fight against poverty in Wales. Our support for those who need it most will not end with this programme. Indeed, our aim is to intensify our efforts to give people the tools they need to have a more equal share of this nation's prosperity. At the centre of this must be the promise of good, secure work.
>
> "A new approach is needed which deals with the root causes of poverty.. We will take forward a cross-government, all-Wales approach focused on helping people into work, giving children the best start in life, and ensuring people's voices are heard in the design of local services."

Funding at 70% of current levels will be provided to the Communities First programme until March 2018. A legacy fund of £6m a year, to enable some of the programme's most effective projects to continue, will be introduced in April 2018.

In addition, the Community Facilities Programme will receive an extra £4m a year from 2017/18, with priority given to Communities First areas, to help protect valuable community assets such as community centres.

A new £12m a year grant to support those who are furthest from the labour market will also be launched. This will build on the success to date of the Communities for Work, Lift and PaCE programmes and will feed into the wider Welsh Government Employability Plan led by the Minister for Skills.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

> "In total, including these and other ongoing projects, we will continue to put over £25m annually directly into deprived communities. This figure cannot be viewed in isolation. Across the

> Welsh Government, there is increasing investment in a range of initiatives which are crucial to preventing and alleviating poverty. These include increasing our investment in apprenticeships to over £126m and investing over £93million through the Pupil Deprivation Grant in 2017-18 to help close the attainment gap of disadvantaged children. In addition we are establishing the Valleys taskforce and creating the North and South Wales metros.”

Investment in Flying Start and Families First, both of which provide practical support to thousands of families and their children across the country, will continue, while the development of Children’s Zones and the establishment of a new Adverse Childhood Experiences hub have already been announced. Support for the Streetgames programme which engages young people in positive activities, and for Citizen’s Advice, will continue.

The Cabinet Secretary added:

> “Investing in our children is an investment for the long term. It is the most sustainable means of building a more prosperous future.

> “I have been encouraged by the very positive response to the development of Children’s Zones and the establishment of an “ACEs Hub”, to help organisations, communities and individuals across Wales tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences, which can have such a devastating impact on children’s life chances.
>
> “These initiatives, together with our continued investment in our successful Flying Start and Families First programmes, will ensure there is comprehensive support for children as they grow up.
>
> “Building resilient communities is the work of Welsh Government as a whole. We are committed to prosperity for all, a strong economy that creates sustainable, quality employment opportunities accessible to all.
>
> “Together we can build the resilient, safe, strong communities that we all want. And we will continue to engage with communities and stakeholders as we move forward.
>
> “Change is never easy. But we cannot ignore the combination of new and deep-rooted challenges we face. We must have the courage to find fresh ways to respond. That is what I and all of my government colleagues are determined to do.”

Press release: Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme well under way

From:
First published:
14 February 2017

Hagley playing fields closed to the public during scheme construction works.

The Environment Agency's Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme that began in December is progressing well. Preparations for the construction of the embankment have now started.

To make sure that the public stay safe while the work is being carried out, the Hagley playing fields will remain closed to the public until 2018, once the scheme has been completed.

During a flood, the embankment will hold water from the Rising Brook and help to reduce the risk of flooding for over 114 homes and 159 businesses. Other benefits of the £3.8 million scheme include improving habitat, restoring heritage features and reconnecting footpaths and improving accessibility. It also forms an integral part of Cannock Chase council's plans to regenerate parts of the town centre.

Environment Agency Project Manager Matt Griffin said:

> We're working hard to get the scheme completed as soon as possible so we can minimise any disruption and inconvenience. However, keeping people and the community safe during the work remains our priority which means closing the playing fields is essential.

The works are a partnership with Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase District Council and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

News story: Chief Secretary meets Fife businesses to hear growth plans

Today (14 February 2017) the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke met with Fife-based companies to discuss opportunities and challenges, and hear their future plans to grow and boost Scotland and the UK’s economy.

Sectors driving growth in the Fife economy – including insurance, manufacturing, accounting, banking, higher education, distilling and brewing – were all represented at the roundtable, held at Handelsbanken Dunfermline.

The latest meeting of the Chief Secretary with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Finance Ministers also took place today in Edinburgh. The ministers discussed the economic outlook and the upcoming UK government Budget.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke said:

> Fife’s businesses have ambitious plans for the future. The UK government is focusing on raising productivity and creating the right environment for Scottish businesses to flourish.
>
> The UK government and devolved administrations must continue to work together to maximise opportunities to boost the UK economy and support businesses across the country. I was pleased therefore to meet my ministerial counterparts today to look ahead to Budget and discuss our economic priorities.

Fife is playing a key part in developing two city deals in Scotland: Edinburgh and South East Scotland; and the Tay Cities. The UK government, working with the Scottish Government and local partners, remains on track to agree a city deal with all 7 of Scotland’s great cities.

The Chief Secretary will later visit the Edinburgh Gin Distillery in the city’s West End. Some 70% of the gin consumed in the UK is made in Scotland, while the UK is the world’s largest gin exporter, with more than 200 million bottles being sent to overseas markets each year. He also met with the Scotch Whisky Association to discuss how the UK government can continue to support the Whisky industry in the UK and in export markets.

Business roundtable attendees:

- Peter Southcott, Director, Corgi Homeplan Ltd
- Alan Mitchell, Chief Executive, Fife Chamber of Commerce
- Jim Donnelly, Branch Manager, Handelsbanken Dunfermline
- Carol Grant, Customer Service Manager, Reel Service Ltd
- David Marriott, Finance Director, Smith Anderson Group
- Derek Watson, Quaestor and Factor, University of St Andrews
- Andrew Croxford, Partner, Thomson Cooper Accountants
- Paul Miller, Founder and Owner, Eden Mill Distillery & Brewery

[Press release: Financial adviser handed 15 year bankruptcy restriction order]

On 15 December 2016 Registrar Christine Derrett ordered that Mr Todd, a financial adviser, be subject to the bankruptcy restrictions order as a result of him acting in the management of limited company, despite having previously agreed to a disqualification undertaking for ten years, and for breaching a bankruptcy order.

In handing down the maximum period of bankruptcy restriction allowed by the court, Registrar Derrett stated that Mr Todd's affairs was one of the worst examples of someone having disregard for the insolvency and directors disqualification regime which exists to protect the public.

The misconduct was during the period 8 February 2013 to 14 April 2014 and from 21 January 2015 to 2 February 2015 whilst subject to a company directors disqualification undertaking and from 29 April 2013 whilst an undischarged bankrupt.

Previously, on 8 October 2012 Mr Todd had offered a disqualification undertaking not to act as a director, act as a receiver of a company's property or in any way, whether directly or indirectly, be concerned or take part in the promotion, formation or management of a company for a period of ten years as a consequence of his conduct as a director of an earlier company in liquidation.

A bankruptcy order was subsequently made against Mr Todd on 29 April 2013 and on 16 December 2013 his discharge from bankruptcy was suspended indefinitely.

Without leave of the court Mr Todd nevertheless acted in the management of IPR Capital Limited (IPR) which was incorporated on 8 February 2013 and which went into provisional liquidation on 2 February 2015 and liquidation on 1 April 2015 with liabilities of over £10 million.

The court also found that Mr Todd failed to disclose in the bankruptcy proceedings his income from IPR and other parties. From 29 April 2013 (the date of his bankruptcy) to 15 April 2014, Mr Todd received at least £517,100 from IPR.

Mr Todd also received payments into his bank account totaling £59,904 during the period 29 April 2013 to 6 January 2014 from other parties.

Mr Todd stated to the Official Receiver that he had assets with an approximate value of £8,800. As at 29 April 2013 his liabilities amounted to at least £454,107 of which £363,607 was due in respect of unpaid National Insurance contributions, self assessed tax and penalties.

Contact Press Office

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: Handmade film directors disqualified for misleading investors

Three directors of Handmade Limited, a film company have been disqualified for a combined 22 and a half years.

Patrick Anthony Meehan has been disqualified from acting as a director for 13 years, David Bernard Ravden has been disqualified from acting as a director for five and a half years, and Peter William Parkinson has been disqualified from acting as a director for four years, following an investigation by the Insolvency Service.

Messrs Meehan, Ravden and Parkinson were directors of Handmade Limited which entered administration on 11 July 2012 and liquidation on 24 April 2013. Handmade Limited (Handmade – formerly Handmade Plc, encompassing Handmade Films International and Handmade Film Productions) was an international rights and film production company.

Mr Meehan was the principle director and shareholder and, with Mr Ravden and Mr Parkinson, formed an inner circle that controlled information and the affairs of Handmade. A court found Mr Meehan instigated, while Mr Ravden and Mr Parkinson accepted that they failed to take sufficient steps to stop, the following:

- Handmade obtaining $5m to fund a film project that had already been cancelled and using some of the moneys to pay off relatives of one of the directors
- Handmade disclosing all its debts in an Alternative Investment Market (AIM) prospectus to raise $17 million, and then expended the moneys raised thereafter on matters undisclosed to advisers, shareholder or potential investors

Abandoned film project funding

In 2008, Mr Meehan suggested to an investor company that they make an investment in a Handmade film production. The investor company subsequently invested $5 million into a special purpose vehicle (SPV) through which investments for the film production were channeled. The funds were placed in an account in the name of Handmade plc and the SPV.

The proposed star of the film, had been injured in car accident and, on 4 September 2008, production was abandoned.

On 8 September 2008 the investment company transferred $5 million into the named Handmade/SPV account. They were not informed that the production had already been abandoned.

Subsequently the funds held in the Handmade/SPV account were transferred to Handmade and used for other purposes without the investment company’s knowledge or permission. No monetary repayment was made by Handmade to the investment company, which lost all of its $5 million.

Moneys raised through AIM

In October 2008 Handmade approached a nominated adviser and broker (NOMAD) and asked it to assist in relation to a fundraising via the AIM sub-market of the London Stock Exchange to fund the acquisitions of a New York based animation company, and enter into a joint venture with an America based television brand.

A major accountancy firm was retained by the NOMAD and Handmade to carry out an independent review of financial projections prepared by Handmade to prepare a Working Capital Report (WCR).

Copies of investor presentations and a legally required circular to shareholders and placing announcement described the purposes for which Handmade intended to use the moneys raised. The AIM funding was completed on 17 November 2009, resulting in $17 million being available to Handmade.

In December 2009, a new Chief Executive and Operating Officer (CEOO) of Handmade took office and when the CEOO saw Handmade’s financial information, it was clear that significant payments had been made that had not formed part of the Placing Announcement.

The concerns raised by the new CEOO resulted in Handmade’s shares being suspended and insolvency advice was taken in January 2010.

In February 2010 the accountants who prepared the WCR issued a report which set out multiple matters that had not been reflected in the projections provided to them by Handmade either during the preparation of the WCR or at any time prior to the AIM placing.

Commenting on the disqualifications, Joanne Covell, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

> Directors have a duty to ensure that the procedures they construct and oversee comply with the law. Directors who do not comply with this basic obligation can expect to be investigated by the Insolvency Service and enforcement action taken to remove them from the market place.

> The activity uncovered pertains to personal and corporate probity in permitting the obtaining of significant funds ($22 million) on the basis of a false prospectus (the AIM placing) and false statements (film production) and then using those moneys in ways other than described. The facts were known to the three disqualified directors and they chose to make mis-statements and/or omit relevant facts when it suited them.
>
> Taking action against the these three directors is a warning to all directors to seriously consider, and ensure they perform, their duties and obligations and not hide behind the corporate veil or claim ignorance of facts. Taking undue risks with the money of others has consequences.

Notes to editors

Handmade Ltd (CRO 03270629) was incorporated on 23 October 1996. Its registered office prior to insolvency was Old School House Leckhampton Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL53 0AX and it traded as an international rights and film production company from June 2006.

Handmade Limited went into administration on 11 July 2012 and Kevin Ashley Goldfarb of Griffins Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9LG and Mark Reynolds of Valentine & Co 3rd Floor, Shakespeare Road, London, N3 1XE were appointed Joint Administrators. On 24 April 2013 Handmade went into liquidation and Mr Goldfarb and Mr Reynolds were appointed Joint Liquidators.

The Secretary of State accepted an undertaking from Peter William Parkinson on 2 December 2014. The disqualification commenced on 23 February 2014. Mr Parkinson’s last known address was 2 Thames Walk Apartments, 2 Hester Road, London, SW11 8BG.

A Disqualification Order was made against Patrick Anthony Meehan, in his absence, on 20 May 2015. The disqualification commenced on 11 June 2015 Mr Meehan’s last known addresses were Batchelor’s Farm, Troy Lane, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6QN.

The Secretary of State accepted an undertaking from David Bernard Ravden on 19 January 2017. The disqualification commences on 9 February 2017. Mr Ravden’s last publicly known address is 57 Queens Grove, London, NW8 6EN.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company’s property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a range of other restrictions.

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the company should be made to: Joanne Covell, Outsourced Investigations, Investigations and Enforcement Services, The Insolvency Service, 3rd Floor, Abbey Orchard Street, London SW1P 2HT. Tel: 0207 596 6117. Email: Cheryl.Lambert@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk

Contact Press Office

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