

Ground-breaking deal to establish two new Green Freeports in Scotland

- The UK and Scottish governments have made a landmark agreement to establish 2 new Green Freeports in Scotland
- Bidders must set out how they will regenerate the area, create high quality jobs and support transition to a net-zero economy
- The UK government has committed funding up to £52 million to support the new Green Freeports
- Builds on UK government's plan to level up whole of UK and good progress continues on discussions about Welsh freeports

A landmark deal has been agreed between the UK and Scottish governments to collaborate and deliver 2 Green Freeports in Scotland.

The new hubs will support the regeneration of communities across Scotland, will bring jobs and prosperity, and support UK government work to level-up all 4 corners of the United Kingdom.

The Green Freeports will have net-zero targets at the heart as prospective bidders will have to make a pledge to reach Net Zero by 2045.

The bidding process will open in Spring, closing in Summer, after which the bids will be assessed, and successful locations announced. It's hoped that the new sites will be operational by Spring 2023.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Freeports will help to accelerate our plan to level up communities across the whole of the United Kingdom.

They have the power to be truly transformational by creating jobs and investment opportunities to enable people to reach their potential, and I am delighted that people across Scotland will reap the benefits that will come from having 2 new Green Freeports.

The agreement with the Scottish Government builds on UK government's ambitious long-term plan to spread opportunity more equally across the whole of the UK, as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper. As part of this, we are determined to ensure every corner of the UK can reap the benefits of our Freeport programme – supporting regeneration while attracting new jobs, business and investment.

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up and Secretary of State for Wales have discussed this issue with counterparts in the Welsh Government, and good progress is being made towards an agreement that would see a new Freeport delivered in Wales as part of a shared endeavour between UK and Welsh

Governments. We hope to be able to announce details shortly.

Secretary of State Michael Gove said:

This is a truly exciting moment for Scotland, and I am delighted we will be working together with the Scottish government to set up 2 new Green Freeports.

Green Freeports help inject billions into the local economy, while levelling-up by creating jobs for local people, and opportunities for people all over the UK to flourish.

By collaborating using opportunities like Green Freeports we can work to level-up the whole of the UK and bring benefits and opportunities to communities that need it most.

Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, Kate Forbes said:

I am pleased we have been able to reach an agreement on a joint approach that recognises the distinct needs of Scotland and enshrines the Scottish Government's commitment to achieving net-zero and embedding fair work practices through public investment.

Scotland has a rich history of innovative manufacturers and so as we look to grasp the many opportunities of achieving net-zero, the establishment of Green Freeports will help us create new green jobs, deliver a just transition and support our economic transformation.

Officials from the UK and Scottish governments will jointly assess the prospective bids to ensure they meet their shared goals and ministers will have an equal say on the final selection of the locations.

Any sea, air or rail port can apply as part of a consortium with other businesses, the council, and other relevant public bodies. However, any consortium wishing to bid to establish Green Freeport must guarantee that local communities will benefit from it, as well as delivering on ambitious targets for Net Zero.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

It's fantastic that there will soon be 2 new Freeports in Scotland – these sites will boost innovation and trade, create new jobs, and level up communities as we deliver lasting prosperity across the UK.

Based on the outlined business case of Freeports, we expect the existing

confirmed Freeports across the UK will add £23.9 billion in additional gross value added and bring forwards £25.3 billion in private investment. As the bids have not been received for the Green Freeports, we won't yet be able to speculate on what additional gross value added they will provide.

Freeports are special areas within the UK's borders where different economic regulations apply. Freeports are centred around one or more air, rail, or seaport, but can extend up to 45km beyond the port(s). See [more information on Freeports](#).

See the government's landmark [Levelling Up White Paper](#).

[HGV operators can now use aerodynamic features and longer cabs to reduce fuel consumption and emissions](#)

- government changes legislation to permit the use of aerodynamic features and elongated cabs on lorries
- changes made to reduce fuel consumption and carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions as we continue to build back greener from coronavirus (COVID-19)
- welfare and safety for drivers also improved through reduced blind spots and increased space

More environmentally friendly heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) are allowed on Britain's roads, thanks to new government regulations coming into effect today (14 February 2022).

The new rules will allow haulage companies to choose vehicles with elongated cabs and aerodynamic features fitted on the back, which help reduce fuel consumption.

A 2013 study estimated that these aerodynamic improvements to HGVs could result in fuel savings of 7% to 15%.

The regulations come into force as the government continues to deliver on its commitments to build back greener from the pandemic.

The design of elongated cabs also improves driver vision, boosting safety for other road users. The extra space means more comfort for the driver, such as by facilitating a larger bed in sleeper cabs.

Aerodynamic rear devices are flaps that are fitted on the back of trailers to reduce the vehicle's aerodynamic drag without using up load space. They were previously not permitted for use on Great Britain's roads under regulations

that have been in place since 1986.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

This is another brilliant step, not just in our efforts to reduce emissions across our transport network, but also to improve safety on our roads.

I hope operators will make use of these new regulations, introducing vehicles with these features into their existing fleets to reduce fuel consumption and boost safety, as we build back better from COVID-19.

Phil Lloyd, Logistics UK's Head of Engineering Policy, said:

Allowing the use of aerodynamic features and elongated cabs on HGVs is fantastic news for our transport sector, which is looking to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions.

These features are vital in helping to reduce emissions and improve air quality and Logistics UK welcomes the design of elongated cabs that improve driver vision and provide drivers with much-needed additional comfort space.

The Department for Transport has published [good practice guidance on the use of aerodynamic rear devices on HGVs](#) in urban and rural areas.

This follows separate legislation last year to allow greener, longer goods vehicles to be rolled out as the government responded to its [consultation on longer-semi trailers reducing mileage, congestion and carbon emissions](#).

[Hull luxury static caravan company wound up](#)

Regal Luxury Lodges Ltd has been wound up by the High Court and the Official Receiver has been appointed liquidator of the company.

The company was established in June 2019, but by early 2020 was no longer trading.

The company, through one of its directors, applied for a £50,000 Bounce Back Loan, although the company was not eligible for a Bounce Back Loan of any amount, having already ceased trading.

Neither director co-operated with the Insolvency Service investigation, and the directors were also found to have failed in their duties to maintain, preserve or deliver up adequate accounting records.

However it was clear from information available through other enquiries that the company bank account was being misused, with a bank account held by a third party also being used to receive payments from would-be customers.

As a result, the High Court in Manchester agreed that closing down the company was in the public interest, to prevent it being used as a vehicle for fraud.

The company is not related to Regal Holiday Homes or its successor, Regal Leisure Homes, which is now owned by Omar Group.

Dave Hope, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

Regal Luxury Lodges Limited took advantage of customers by misleading them into making payment for lodges which it was unable to deliver and compounded this by an egregious abuse of the Bounce Back Loan scheme to obtain a £50,000 loan at the taxpayer's expense, after the company had already ceased trading.

The Insolvency Service has acted swiftly to bring this company under the control of the Official Receiver to ensure that the conduct of the directors can be fully investigated.

Notes to editors

Regal Luxury Lodges Limited (Company number: 12050593) was incorporated on 14 June 2019 as a private limited company. The company's registered office was at Stockholm Road, Hull HU7 0XY.

The company was wound up by the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, in Manchester on 25 January 2022.

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the companies should be made to: The Official Receiver, Public Interest Unit, 16th Floor, 1 Westfield Avenue, Stratford, London, E20 1HZ. Telephone: 0300 678 0015 Email: piu.or@insolvency.gov.uk.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). [Further information about live company investigations is available here](#)

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available here](#)

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[G7 Finance Ministers' Statement on Ukraine](#)

News story

G7 Finance Ministers' Statement on Ukraine.



The ongoing Russian military build-up at Ukraine's borders is a cause for grave concern. We, the G7 Finance Ministers, underline our readiness to act swiftly and decisively to support the Ukrainian economy, while also supporting the ongoing efforts to urgently identify a diplomatic path towards de-escalation.

We are united in our resolve to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity as well as economic and financial stability of Ukraine. The G7, together with international financial institutions and in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through its 2020 Stand-by Arrangement, are providing significant financial support to Ukraine. Since 2014 until now, the combined bilateral and multilateral economic support has exceeded 48 billion US dollars. Building on our assistance since 2014, we will continue to coordinate closely to ensure that Ukraine receives the economic support necessary to facilitate the authorities' ongoing reform efforts under an IMF programme, also supported by other international financial institutions and development partners, and is on a sustainable fiscal and economic footing.

Our immediate priority is to support efforts to de-escalate the situation. However, we reiterate that in particular any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will be met with a swift, coordinated and forceful response. We are prepared to collectively impose economic and financial sanctions which will have massive and immediate consequences on the Russian

economy.

We will continue to monitor the situation very closely and stand ready to act in a strongly coordinated manner and at very short notice with further economic and financial support for Ukraine.

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[Sports retailers fined almost £5m for breaching CMA order](#)

- Breaches include the sharing of commercially sensitive information between JD Sports and Footasylum CEOs
- Failure to have proper safeguards in place made breaches ‘almost inevitable’
- CEOs of both firms claimed they could not remember what had been discussed during meetings

It is standard practice for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to issue an interim order during an in-depth phase 2 merger investigation. These orders prevent companies from integrating further and ensure they continue to compete against one another as they would have before the deal took place. The CMA imposed this type of [order on JD Sports and Footasylum in May 2021](#).

The order prohibited JD Sports and Footasylum from exchanging commercially sensitive information without prior consent, and required the companies to immediately alert the CMA of any chance that this information may have been shared.

Importantly, the order required that JD Sports and Footasylum put in place robust measures to prevent such breaches and ensure compliance with the order. Upon review, the CMA found that both companies had severely deficient safeguards in place – so much so that they created an environment where information exchanges were almost inevitable.

During 2 meetings, which took place on 5 July 2021 and 4 August 2021, Peter Cowgill, CEO of JD Sports, and Barry Bown, CEO of Footasylum, exchanged commercially sensitive information and then failed to alert or promptly alert the CMA. During these meetings, they discussed:

- Footasylum’s issues with stock allocations from key brands
- information about Footasylum’s financial performance

- the planned closure of 6 Footasylum stores, with the locations of at least 2 being revealed
- Footasylum's contract negotiations with its transport and delivery provider
- contract negotiations for the renewal of Footasylum's head office space

The sharing of this information had the potential to affect competition in the market and lead to anti-competitive behaviour. In addition, the companies' subsequent failure to report these breaches significantly impacted the CMA's ability to act swiftly to stop the information from being shared further, and increased the risk that it could impact future business decisions taken by the companies.

Kip Meek, Chair of the inquiry group investigating the merger, said:

There is a black hole when it comes to the meetings held between Footasylum and JD Sports. Both CEOs cannot recall crucial details about these meetings. On top of this, neither CEO or JD Sports' General Counsel can provide any documentation around the meetings – no notes, no agendas, no emails and poor phone records, some of which were deleted before they could be given to the CMA.

Had there been proper safeguards in place, we would have been alerted to these breaches in good time and would have had the necessary information to tackle them head on.

It jeopardised our ability to maintain the benefits of a competitive market for shoppers and ensure there is a level playing field for other businesses. This fine should act as a warning – if you break the rules there will be serious consequences.

Once the CMA was made aware of the meetings, it used its information gathering powers to try and develop a clearer picture of what had taken place. It requested details from both companies on the number of meetings that had occurred between the companies since July 2020; the topics discussed; any documents involved; and any steps that had been taken to prevent commercially sensitive information being exchanged.

Despite the firms being legally required to respond to these requests, both failed to provide the CMA with all the information it asked for by saying that, at one meeting in December 2020, no documents were exchanged, when this was in fact not true. This impacted the CMA's ability to conduct its investigation, for which each company have been fined £20,000.

The companies have been fined nearly £4.7 million for the collective breaches, which are split as follows: for failing to have safeguards in

place, JD Sports must pay £2.5 million and Footasylum £200,000. For sharing commercially sensitive information, and then failing to alert the CMA, JD Sports will be fined £1.8 million and Footasylum £180,000.

1. The purpose of merger control is to regulate the impact of mergers on competition in markets. While companies cannot complete mergers during an investigation in most countries, the UK has a voluntary merger regime that requires IOs for completed mergers at phase 2. Such measures prevent companies integrating whilst an investigation is taking place and preserve competition in the market. The CMA has set out further detail on this in its published guidance [Interim measures in merger investigations](#).
2. An interim order (IO) is used in a Phase 2 investigation to prevent further integration between companies and ensure competition in the market as if the merger hadn't taken place while the CMA completed its merger review. An Initial enforcement order (IEO) is commonly put in place at the start of Phase 1 investigation for a similar purpose – to prevent further integration and make sure the companies involved continue to compete with one another as they would have before the deal took place.
3. The parties breached the CMA's interim order 3 times: The parties did not have effective policies and safeguards in place to avoid instances of information sharing; During 2 meetings, the companies' CEOs shared commercially sensitive information; Following these meetings, both parties failed to alert the CMA – in one instance, the parties failed to report the meeting and in the other they informed them after 15 days and only after the CMA began to probe the meetings between them;
4. The first meeting was only brought to the attention of the CMA via a video recording disclosed to it by a third party. This showed Mr Cowgill and General Counsel of JD Sports meeting in a car with the Mr Bown. JD Sports and Footasylum only alerted the CMA to the second meeting 2 weeks after it took place in a joint email and after prompting by the CMA.
5. The CMA sent JD Sports and Footasylum 2 Section 109 Notices (information notices) – the first on 10 August 2021 and the second on 24 September 2021. The first required the firms to detail all the meetings they had with each other from July 2020 and to provide any documents that had been discussed or exchanged at those meetings. The second required detailed accounts from the attendees at the July and August meetings; email, phone and any other records connected to the meetings and between Peter Cowgill (JD Sports CEO), Siobhan Mawdlsey (JD Sports' general counsel) and Barry Bown (Footasylum CEO); as well as records from other senior employees. It also asked for all the companies' compliance policies and documents and communications around compliance since the interim order had been in force.
6. Whilst JD Sports and Footasylum had safeguards in place, these were severely deficient – so much so that they created the environment wherein the sharing of commercially sensitive information was highly likely, if not inevitable.
7. The maximum penalty the CMA can impose on a company for not complying with its information notices is £30,000.