

City financier Truell plots listing of Pension SuperFund vehicle

A former adviser to Boris Johnson is drawing up plans to list a new infrastructure investment company tied to his ambition to lead a consolidation drive in Britain's vast corporate pensions sector.

Sky News has learnt that Edi Truell's Pension SuperFund (PSF) is pursuing the flotation of a long-term assets vehicle that could, over time, plough billions of pounds into British infrastructure assets.

The plan is said to be at an advanced stage, with investment bankers hired to oversee the listing and a prominent City figure lined up as the company's chairman, according to insiders.

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An announcement could be made during the autumn, they added.

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Mr Truell is understood to have conceived of the listing plan as a means to provide investors with access to a diversified portfolio of infrastructure assets.

The new vehicle would also be able to invest in private company assets.

News of the proposed float comes just weeks after Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak called on UK pension funds to divert more capital to British infrastructure projects.

In a statement this month, the prime minister and chancellor challenged institutional investors “to consider investing a greater proportion of their capital in long-term UK assets – from pioneering firms to infrastructure – enabling pensions savers to access better returns and support an innovative, greener future for the UK”.

Mr Truell has been attempting to secure regulatory approval

for the launch of the Pension SuperFund for several years, with pensions watchdogs continuing to scrutinise the plans of several would-be consolidators of defined benefit schemes.

Such retirement pots are said to have £2.2trn of liabilities in the UK.

The new vehicle is designed to provide greater liquidity for pension savers by providing a twice-yearly redemption mechanism at net asset value.

Among the retirement schemes with which Mr Truell and his PSF colleagues have held discussions are Arcadia Group, the former high street empire of Sir Philip Green, and Thomas Cook, the tour operator which collapsed two years ago.

Superfunds have been established with the aim of providing higher pension payments to scheme members than would be the case with an insurer or through the Pension Protection Fund, the industry-funded lifeboat.

Mr Truell, who advised Mr Johnson on pensions when he was the London mayor, has been a long-standing advocate for defined benefit pension consolidation in the public and private sectors.

He has argued that such combined pools benefit from significant cost savings and avoid the duplication which curtails returns for thousands of individual schemes.

Mr Truell declined to comment on Friday on the potential listing of a new long-term assets vehicle linked to the PSF.