

Former Cameron aide Silva's Second Home races to avert collapse

A former aide to David Cameron is racing to raise millions of pounds to avert the collapse of Second Home, his shared-office provider.

Sky News has learnt that Rohan Silva, who launched the business in 2014 and has raised funds from a string of well-known business figures, has notified investors that it needs £6m of new funding in the coming days to remain solvent.

Second Home is one of a multitude of ventures which have hoped to take advantage of post-pandemic shifts in labour markets, with a greater focus for many major employers on hybrid working patterns.

The company, which operates four sites in London and one each in Lisbon and Hollywood, has hired FRP Advisory, the restructuring and insolvency firm, to advise it on talks about its future.

If it collapsed into administration, millions of pounds of taxpayers' money would be put at risk following the receipt of funding from the Future Fund vehicle established by Rishi Sunak, the chancellor, during the early phase of the COVID-19 crisis.

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Mr Silva is understood to have outlined a number of potential options to Second Home shareholders in recent days, including an outright sale to the family office of Riaz Valani, a Silicon Valley billionaire who was an early investor in Juul, the e-cigarette manufacturer.

Under plans said to have been proposed by Mr Valani's vehicle, Global Asset Capital, he would provide tens of millions of dollars for Second Home to acquire future sites.

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Another option would involve Lord O'Neill, the former Goldman Sachs economist and ex-Treasury minister, providing one-third of a £6m bridge funding round that valued Second Home at about £20m.

Mr Silva is understood to have told the company's investors that falling into administration would be the worst outcome for them, insisting that its performance during the last 12 months had underlined its post-pandemic prospects.

The business is loss-making, but some of its sites are profitable on a standalone basis, he is understood to have said.

One insider said that Second Home was expected to decide on which – if either – of the funding proposals to accept by the end of this week.

Mr Silva, an adviser to Mr Cameron during the latter's tenure as prime minister, has raised tens of millions of pounds to fund Second Home since setting up the company with Sam Aldenton.

Despite denying in 2019 that Mr Aldenton, its co-founder, was stepping down after a massive cost overrun at its inaugural American site, Mr Silva subsequently told investors that his partner had indeed been removed from the business.

Mr Silva did not respond to an enquiry on Monday.