

DATE

July 12, 2019

SECTORS

Business & Tech-Enabled
Services

DEAL TYPE

M&A Advisory

DEAL LOCATIONS



DEAL TEAM



James Pople
Managing Director



Ciara O'Neill
Managing Director

DC Advisory advised Epiris and Chamonix Private Equity on the sale of FirstPort to Equistone Partners Europe Limited



Background

- Headquartered in the UK, FirstPort is the UK's largest residential property management company, approximately 1.6 times bigger than its nearest competitor
- FirstPort manages 196,000 properties across more than 3,900 developments, offering residential property management (responsible for infrastructure, environment and resident experience), insurance, sales & lettings and consultancy services
- Epiris, alongside Chamonix Private Equity, acquired the group out of administration in 2012. The group was restructured into two independent businesses: FirstPort; and sister company Appello - the technology-enabled 'Smart Living Solutions' provider

Process

- DC Advisory (DC), led by James Pople, was engaged by the shareholders in 2018 to advise on the sale of FirstPort (the company)
- DC worked closely with management and shareholders to prepare the company for sale, optimising the timing and competitiveness of the sale process
- Running a tailored auction, DC distributed Information Memoranda and Vendor Due Diligence reports to a pre-qualified group of PE and trade bidders
- DC's Capital Advisory practice, led by Ciara O'Neill, was also engaged to run a refinancing process, resulting in a highly bespoke, flexible financing solution which successfully completed in April 2019 and will be ported into the new ownership structure

- Simultaneously, DC provided indicative banking terms during the initial phase of the process to help underpin the first round bids

Outcome

- As a result of a competitive process with trade and PE bidders, FirstPort announced its sale to Equistone Partners, a European private equity firm
- FirstPort will continue to be led by its existing management team and is strongly positioned to strengthen its ranking as the UK's largest residential property manager, while continuing to consolidate the fragmented UK market
- The transaction further demonstrates DC's long-standing experience in the property services market
- As a result of the transaction, Epiris and Chamonix will retain ownership of Appello, which faces an exciting future built on organic and acquisition-led growth opportunities
- The transaction signed on 10 July 2019 and is expected to close in August 2019

The DC Advisory team brought huge expertise, a deep knowledge of the sector, and potential buyer pool. They partnered well with management throughout and, with their energy, experience, and enthusiasm, delivered a good result for everyone. It was inevitably very busy during the transaction, but the DC team were a pleasure to work with even in the busiest moments.

Nigel Howell
CEO at FirstPort

We appointed DC about a year before we launched the exit process because of their experience and networks in the sector and in private equity. All of that was brought to bear in delivering this outstanding result.

Alex Cooper-Evans
Partner at Epiris