

Market overview

Although UK deal values were down 43% in 2019, this was perhaps inevitable given the unsettled UK political environment and the global geopolitical landscape which caused greater caution amongst deal makers. The financial sector, responsible for 25% of all 2019 deals, continued to flourish, closely followed by the infocomms sector. In the Midlands, 2019 deal volume declined less sharply (by 8%) than the national reduction of 13% – to just below 1,000 deals. Overall, the region accounted for 14.3% of all UK deals, making it the busiest region for deal making outside of London and the South East.



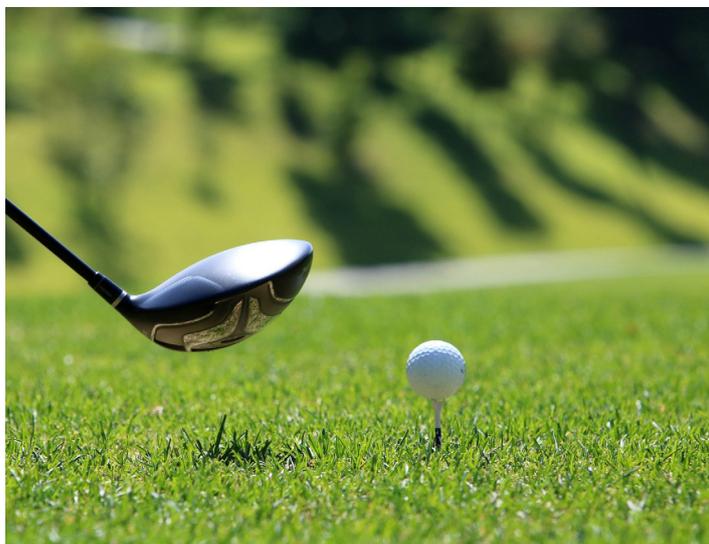
Whilst some caution and uncertainty remain, now exacerbated by the coronavirus' economic impact, a stronger government with a clear strategy on Brexit (whether one supports that or not) is strengthening confidence and paving the way to a clearer future for UK businesses. Here at Smith Cooper Corporate Finance (SCCF), we expect to complete more deals in 2020 compared to 2019, which hopefully marked the low tidemark in UK M&A.

Leading Golf & Country Club sold by family after 25-year legacy

The family behind Staffordshire-based Branston Golf and Country Club have sold their award-winning leisure business after 25 years in the driving seat, advised by SCCF.

The Management Buyout (MBO) deal will see ownership transfer from the current owners, the Kerry family, to the Club's current Managing Director, Ben Laing, and four members of a local family.

Recognised as one of the leading golf clubs in the Midlands, nestled on the River Trent, the Club has cultivated an enviable reputation and established a large and loyal client base. Roger Kerry, the visionary who has been driving the business for the last 25 years, initially set out with a dream to establish a premium championship golf club on the outskirts of Burton.



Today, Branston is much more than just a golf club; having expanded its facilities and services steadily over time, the Club now offers a variety of memberships and health and wellbeing opportunities, clubhouse, wedding and conference facilities, as well as a salon and spa.

David Nelson, Senior Partner at Smith Cooper advised the vendors throughout the transaction, guiding Roger and his family through the MBO process. He commented "Branston Golf and Country Club has built an outstanding reputation across the region, not only because of its exceptional golfing facilities, but because of the multitude of inclusive facilities it offers, underpinned by first class service."

"It was a pleasure to advise the vendors on the successful Buyout, and I am pleased we were able to secure a great outcome for the Kerry family. I wish the team at Branston every success, and I look forward to watching the business flourish even further under its new owners, who are passionate about retaining the Club's core values."

Prime Principle, developers of leading pupil progress tool, acquired by Juniper Education

Nottingham-based educational software firm, Prime Principle, has been sold to Juniper Education, the sellers being advised by SCCF.

Prime Principle is the developer behind Classroom Monitor, the pupil-tracking software trusted by 53,000 educators in over 2,000 schools. For 15 years Prime Principle has guided users through crucial changes to education policy and best practice, providing technology that's innovative, flexible and based wholly around what schools need.



Acquirer, Juniper Education, a comprehensive education support service, was established to help schools and academies go from strength-to-strength. Boasting an impressive range of education support services, it is now the leading provider of pupil-tracking software, training and professional services to the education sector.

Juniper Education solutions are already implemented by over 4,500 schools but this is set to increase to 7,000 by consolidating client bases, enhancing learning opportunities and providing schools with better access to the tools they need to unlock their pupils' potential.

Gavin Freed, chairman of Juniper Education, commented: "The team at Prime Principle have a wealth of experience in the sector and the acquisition will support us in our aim to continue developing software and services that save time for teachers, giving them the information they need to ensure their pupils achieve all they are truly capable of."

Swedish polymer engineering company adds vibration control specialist to its portfolio

Crosslink Technology Holdings has recently completed two disposals- Silentbloc UK Ltd to Dellner Bubenzer Group of Sweden, and Icon Aerospace Technology Ltd to US based Integrated Polymer Solutions (IPS).

SCCF's award-winning Corporate Finance team advised Crosslink Technology in the Silentbloc sale.

Dellner Bubenzer Group's subsidiary, Dellner Woodville, international leaders and global suppliers of braking products and polymer solutions acquired Burton upon Trent-based Silentbloc, which specialises in vibration control and energy management.

Dellner plans to propel the pioneering Silentbloc business to new levels within the energy management sector and has set up the Dellner Polymer Solutions division (incorporating Dellner Woodville and Silentbloc) to form part of the group's wider strategic initiative to drive growth and new opportunities whilst staying at the forefront of polymer technology.

Dan Bowtell, Corporate Finance Partner at SCCF commented "Dellner Woodville and Silentbloc share a strong focus on technological innovation, and the partnership will undoubtedly help in the development of highly innovative polymer engineered solutions and increase the competence and capabilities within both companies."



MBO of Branston Golf and Country Club

SCCF advised the vendors



Sale of Prime Principle to Juniper Education

SCCF advised the vendor



Sale of Silentbloc UK to Dellner Bubenzer Group

SCCF advised the vendor

Get in touch

John Farnsworth
Corporate Finance Partner
e john.farnsworth@smithcooper.co.uk



David Nelson
Senior Partner
e david.nelson@smithcooper.co.uk



David Crump
Corporate Finance Senior Manager
e david.crump@smithcooper.co.uk



Cameron Robertson
Corporate Finance Executive
e cameron.robertson@smithcooper.co.uk



Dan Bowtell
Corporate Finance Partner
e dan.bowtell@smithcooper.co.uk



James Bagley
Managing Partner
e james.bagley@smithcooper.co.uk



James Ward
Corporate Finance Senior Manager
e james.ward@smithcooper.co.uk



Alex Thompson
Corporate Finance Assistant Manager
e alex.thompson@smithcooper.co.uk



Darren Hodson
Corporate Finance Partner
e darren.hodson@smithcooper.co.uk



Tom Joy
Corporate Finance Assistant Manager
e tom.joy@smithcooper.co.uk



Derby: 01332 332021

Nottingham: 0115 945 4300

Birmingham: 0121 236 6789

