

Michael Johnston

Partner



Areas of Law: Corporate Finance, Commercial, Projects

Contact Number: +44 (0) 28 90 348 817

Email: michael.johnston@carson-mcdowell.com

Background

Michael is Managing Partner at Carson McDowell LLP after having led the firm's Corporate Finance Team for twenty-four years. Michael has wide experience in advising clients throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland and often in the United States with regard to commercial activity within the Province. He has also advised on Projects (in particular PFI) for a number of years.

Michael Johnston attained a degree in law (LLB Honours) from Queens University in 1983 before joining Carson McDowell later that year. He qualified as a solicitor in 1984 and quickly rose through the ranks, becoming a Partner in 1993.

In Chambers and Partners Michael has been praised for his *'meticulous, responsive and technically excellent service'* and described as *"so ahead of the game and really proactive."*

Experience

(i) Mergers and Acquisitions

- Advised shareholders of PFC in relation to the sale of the company to the Davy Group.
- Advised Fane Valley on the sale of the Armaghdown Creamery business to Lakeland
- Advised Fivemiletown Co-op on the sale of the milk business to Glanbia and the cheeses business to Dale Farm
- Advised shareholders of Chain Reaction in relation to the sale of the company to Wiggle.
- Advised Terex in relation to the acquisition of the JMF business.
- Advice to Foyleside Group on its disposal to Kildare.
- Advised Bannons Limited in relation to the disposal of its business to Morses.
- Advice to Management team in Abbey Bond Lovis.
- Advised shareholders of Opt2Vote Limited in relation to the sale of the company to

Idox plc.

- Acting for the Management Buy Out team in the purchase of Yelo (a local IT company) from its Canadian parent (Averna).
- Advised Opt2Vote Limited in relation to the negotiation of a contract to provide electronic vote-counting services in local government elections in Scotland in partnership with Logica.
- Advised Trench Holdings (sister company to McLaughlin & Harvey Limited) in the acquisition of the Barr Construction Group (£250m turnover) based in Scotland.
- Advised Moore Family /Ulster Stores Group on acquisition of A de Gruchy store group in Jersey.
- Northstone / Farrans Group on the acquisition of Salmor.
- Andrews Group on the sale of the Ormeau Bakery.
- Advising the Farrans CRH Group (now Northstone) in the purchase of a local business.
- Advised Charles Hurst / Lookers Group in the purchase of Taggarts Motor Group in Glasgow.
- Advising the Farrans CRH Group (now Northstone) in the sale of its plant business to an MBO team.
- Advising on sale of local chemist chain.
- Advising Johnsons on the purchase of a local business.
- Advised the Belleek Group in the acquisition of Donegal China.
- Advised the Viridian Group on its disposal of the Open & Direct Group.

(ii) **Corporate Advice**

- General legal and corporate governance advice to the senior management team at Belfast Harbour Commissioners.
- General legal and corporate governance advice to the senior management team at O'Hare & McGovern Limited.
- General legal and corporate governance advice to the senior management team at Andrews.
- General legal and corporate governance advice to the senior management team at Kilwaughter Chemicals.
- General legal and corporate governance advice to the senior management team at McLaughlin & Harvey Limited.
- Advising Almac Diagnostics (first round funding from INI and private sector in the

Biotech sector).

- Advised Coolkeeragh Group with regard to its investment in the new CCGT Power Station in a joint venture with ESBII.
- Advised the Viridian Group on its joint Venture with Energis plc and subsequent unwinding of that Joint Venture.
- Advised Coolkeeragh Group with regard to the initial investment by ESBII.

(iii) **Commercial Matters**

- Advised Evermore Renewable Energy in securing more than £80m in funding for the wood-fuelled power plant that will be built at Londonderry Port and Harbour, Lisahally.
- Advice to University of Ulster in relation to its participation in the Sports Institute for Northern Ireland in partnership with the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and in particular the funding available for the Sports Institute.
- Advised Opt2Vote Limited in relation to the negotiation of a contract to provide electronic vote-counting services in local government elections in Scotland in partnership with Logica.
- General legal advice to owners of Foyle side and Abbey Centre Shopping Centres.
- Advised in relation to bids for both Belfast International Airport and Belfast Harbour Airport.

(iv) **PFI Projects**

- Advised the Quinn Group in relation to its bid for the SWaMP2008 residual waste PPP project.
- Dumfries & Galloway Schools Project - lead adviser to Construction Joint Venture element of the Amey Ventures team.
- East Down and Lisburn Institute - lead adviser to Construction Joint Venture.
- Suffolk Fire stations - lead adviser to Farrans as the Building Contractor.
- Belfast Schools Project - lead adviser to Construction Joint Venture element of the Amey Ventures team (Farrans H&J Martin and Pattons) and had previously advised the Construction Joint Venture element of the Alpha Schools team.
- Lagan and Tor Bank - adviser to Building Contractor.
- Enniskillen and Omagh Hospital Project –advised bidding team in conjunction with Ashursts.

- Project Omega - advised finance providers in conjunction with Norton Rose.
- Advised Department for Regional Development on Roads DBFO Package 2 in conjunction with Denton Wilde Sapte.
- Lead adviser to Bank of Ireland in its role as the sole provider of finance to the consortium that was awarded the Project for Holy Cross School.
- Lead adviser to McLaughlin & Harvey in its role as Building Contractor and SPV shareholder for preferred bidder in the Bangor and Nendrum Schools project.
- Advised successful bidder in Project Alpha in conjunction with Denton Wilde Sapte.
- Lead adviser to Bank of Ireland in its role as the sole provider of finance to the consortium that was awarded the Project for the new Invest NI Headquarters.
- Advised Department for Regional Development on Roads DBFO Package 1 in conjunction with Denton Wilde Sapte.
- Lead adviser to the Bank of Ireland in its role as the sole provider of finance to the consortium that was awarded the Project for the Omagh Tyrone Schools Projects.
- Lead adviser to the Bank of Ireland in its role as the sole provider of finance to the consortium that was awarded the Project for the North West Institute, Department of Education Project.
- Lead adviser to the Bank of Ireland in its role as the sole provider of finance to the consortium that was awarded the Project for the Belfast City Hospital Renal Dialysis Unit.
- Advised the Construction Joint Venture element of the Preferred Consortium in relation to the Northern Ireland Court Service Project.
- Advised Consortia through to BAFO stage in relation to each of the Northern Ireland Court Service and MOD Waldorf 1 Projects and St Genevieve's Department of Education Project.
- Advised NITHC in relation to its statutory functions with specific reference to its ability to carry out PFI Projects.
- Advised University of Ulster in relation to Springvale Project.