



**18 February 2021**

### **GRP enters into agreement to acquire Marsh's UK Networks business**

- Plans to build membership, deliver growth and offer M&A opportunities to network members
- David Hopwood and Networks team to remain with the business
- Deal takes GRP's GWP to circa £1.6bn
- 256 members and 400 wholesale trading partners to benefit from synergies and scale
- New single proposition to be branded Hedron after completion

*"Marsh's UK Networks business is a superb strategic fit for GRP and will give us unprecedented growth and investment opportunities." Mike Bruce, Group CEO, GRP*

Global Risk Partners [GRP] has entered into an agreement to acquire Marsh's UK Networks business, part of Marsh, the leading global insurance broker and risk advisor. Terms of the transaction, which is subject to regulatory approval, were not disclosed. Completion is expected by the second quarter of 2021.

The Networks business comprises Marsh ProBroker, Bluefin Network and Purple Partnership. The acquisition also includes Marsh Connections, Marsh Labyrinth and Broker2Broker (B2B), part of Marsh's wider UK networks business, which provide brokers with access to a range of market-leading products and facilities.

Mike Bruce, GRP's Group CEO, hailed the transaction as "a great leap forward for GRP, with the Group now placing or influencing well over £1.6bn of GWP, and cementing our position as one of the UK's leading retail commercial broking providers."

Mr Bruce said that, on completion, Marsh's UK Networks team will move across to GRP. David Hopwood, head of the UK Networks business, will join the GRP executive and continue to head up the business under new ownership.

He noted: "This is a growth story. There won't be any redundancies. Instead, we want to increase penetration of the Marsh Networks panel, build out the membership base, engage with our strategic insurer partners for the benefit of members and bring new products and services to the network - including through our MGA and healthcare businesses."

He explained that an important part of the GRP proposition will be to offer M&A facilities to network members wishing to sell up. "GRP has a highly experienced acquisitions team and we are keen to provide that service to brokers looking to create value from their life's work."

With some brokers looking for an exit in light of potential tax changes, the impact of Brexit and further compliance challenges, we are here to help.”

Mr Bruce explained that he had previously worked with David Hopwood while both were at Bluefin. “David and I go back many years and I’m a big admirer of what he has achieved to date at Marsh and previously at Bluefin. He and his team will be a key asset for GRP and we intend to continue the work he has started, building a single brand and proposition for the Network.”

He said that the new single brand will be Hedron and will be launched officially following completion.

He added: “We look forward to warmly welcoming Marsh’s UK Networks colleagues to GRP where we believe we will be able to provide them with new and interesting career opportunities under GRP’s ownership.”

David Hopwood, head of Marsh’s UK Networks business, said: “We are very excited to be taking our members on this next step, where we believe we can capitalise on our firm foundations to generate accelerated growth and success for our 256 members and around 400 trading partners.”

Following completion, the new GRP networks division will continue with previously announced plans to transform the network into a single proposition under the new Hedron brand, providing members with true choice and to facilitate the introduction of new insurer partners to the panel.

As part of the transaction, some colleagues in Marsh Commercial’s London Markets Business (LMB) team, led by Bob Peterson, will also transfer to GRP. Mr Peterson will continue to lead the team which will become part of Lonmar, GRP’s Lloyd’s and London markets division. The LMB’s Placement team, which supports Marsh Commercial’s branches, will remain with Marsh.

Commenting on the transaction, Chris Lay, CEO of Marsh, UK & Ireland, said: “I am pleased that GRP is to become the new custodian for our UK Networks business. Mike Bruce and his team understand the broking business and market environment our members operate in and will ensure that our Networks colleagues and the Network members can continue to thrive. We have a very strong position in the SME segment, and we are excited about the organic growth opportunities in our Marsh Commercial business. This transaction will enable us to increase our investment and focus on the core Marsh Commercial offering to the UK SME market.”

Andrew Frey, partner at Searchlight Capital Partners, which acquired GRP in 2020, said: “This is just the kind of bold move we expected when we invested in GRP. The addition of Marsh’s UK Networks business to GRP’s business portfolio will enable their members to derive the considerable benefits that come with being part of our Group. I am confident that all parties will achieve significant value from this acquisition.”

## **About Global Risk Partners**

GRP was founded in 2013 and has grown rapidly to become one of the UK's largest independent insurance intermediaries with Gross Written Premium approaching £900m and around 2,000 employees.

GRP operates retail broking, specialist MGA and Lloyd's businesses, enabling the Group to serve the growing insurance and risk management needs of its clients.

The group acquires businesses, teams and portfolios that have niche, non-commoditised, specialty propositions and strong profitability.

In June 2020, Searchlight Capital Partners, a global private investment firm, acquired a majority stake in GRP.

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