Apex eyes move for stricken fund services group MJ Hudson

A financial services giant backed by an Abu Dhabi state investment fund is the latest suitor to emerge as a contender to swoop on parts of the stricken London-listed company MJ Hudson.

Sky News has learnt that Apex Group, which is based in Bermuda and has around 12,000 employees, plans to table an offer next week for the bulk of MJ Hudson's operations, excluding its legal services arm.

Apex provides services to $3trn worth of client assets. It is part-owned by Mubadala, the Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund, and the private equity firms Carlyle and TA Associates.

City sources said that Alvarez & Marsal (A&M), the adviser handling the sale, had set a deadline of next Thursday for best and final bids.

The fire sale comes amid a **deepening crisis at MJ Hudson**, which provides a range of services to asset management groups.

This week, it said an accounting review had uncovered details of loans guaranteed by its chief executive to subsidiaries of the company.

Matthew Hudson, the CEO, resigned last week, while auditor EY quit this month, saying it had lost confidence in the company's management.

MJ Hudson has also parachuted in an interim finance chief following an announcement that it had suspended Peter Connell, the former chief financial officer.

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The company, which floated on London's junior stock market on the day of the 2019 general election, is an asset management consultancy which advises on issues such as sustainability and helping clients to benchmark themselves against their competitors.

In December, it announced that its shares were being suspended after being made "aware of…issues, including in relation to the reporting of historical trading of the business in relation to [fiscal year] 2022, the full impact of which is unclear".

MJ Hudson already warned investors in October that it was in discussions with its auditors about adjustments to its full-year figures.

It added more recently that it had also appointed external accounting advisers to assist it "in achieving the necessary clarity to enable the year end FY 2022 reporting to be completed".

MJ Hudson's shares were suspended at 13.13p, leaving it with a market value of just £26.7m – down two-thirds on a year earlier.

The company has received other takeover interest in a number of its operations from the likes of With Intelligence, which is owned by the investment firm Intermediate Capital Group (ICG), and Inflexion Private Equity.

The appetite of both of those suitors is said to have cooled.

MJ Hudson confirmed in a statement last month that it had "received a number of inbound indications of interest for certain divisions of the business and has engaged advisers

Alvarez & Marsal to look at a potential sale of one or a number of its business lines”.

Apex and MJ Hudson both declined to comment.