

EMBARGOED UNTIL 22.00 HRS ON WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2008

HEALTH MINISTER ANNOUNCES SUCCESSFUL TENDERER FOR NEW ACUTE HOSPITAL

Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, today announced that Northern Ireland Health Group has been appointed successful tenderer for the new £267m acute hospital in Enniskillen.

The Western Health & Social Care Trust will now work with the Northern Ireland Health Group, a private sector consortium, to take the project forward through contract conclusion and construction in accordance with EU procurement rules.

Making the announcement the Minister said "The new acute hospital will provide the people of the South West with a modern, state of the art healthcare facility that will be fit for the 21st Century. I am delighted to see the project progress to this key stage. The appointment of the Northern Ireland Health Group means that the new hospital is very much on schedule for 2012.

"I recognise the considerable efforts that are necessary to bring a complex project of this scale through the tendering process. I wish to thank staff throughout the Western Trust and my own Department for their commitment in driving this project forward."

Chairman of the Western Trust, Gerard Guckian, thanked the Minister and the DHSSPS for their continued commitment and welcomed the announcement. He commented: "This is tremendous news. It marks a very important milestone on the journey of improving health and social care for the 290,000 people living in the Western Trust area. When completed, this new state-of-the-art hospital will be one of the most modern facilities, not only in Northern Ireland, but across the UK. It is a flagship project and I am delighted to see the delivery of such a facility in the Western Trust area. Our expectations are high and I have no doubt that Northern Ireland Health Group will deliver a 21st Century hospital that is in keeping with our expectations. I would also like to pay tribute to the two unsuccessful bidders who have participated positively in the process."

Construction of the new £267m hospital is expected to begin on site next year, with planned completion in 2012. The hospital will have 315 beds and will provide a wide range of inpatient, outpatient and day case services including, accident & emergency, diagnostic services, observation and assessment unit, elective/planned surgery and acute medical/surgical services.

Notes to Editors

1. A photograph is available by contacting the DHSSPS Press Office on 028 90520575.
2. The South West Acute Hospital is being procured through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). An advertisement seeking potential contractors for the New Acute Hospital was placed in the Official Journal of the European Journal in early July 2006. Following pre-qualification, four consortia were short-listed to participate in the competition and enter into Competitive Dialogue. The Competitive Dialogue procurement method was introduced into England, Wales and Northern Ireland by the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and has been mandatory from 31 January 2006 for procurements where discussion of the requirement is needed to develop final specifications. Bidders were short-listed to three in November 2006. Following three further stages of intensive competitive dialogue, final tenders were received from 3 Bidders in February 2008. Following a detailed evaluation process, the Western Trust provided the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety with a recommendation on the Successful Tenderer. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety approved this recommendation on 21 August 2008.
3. The private sector consortium, Northern Ireland Health Group, came together to build, finance and operate new modern hospital facilities in Northern Ireland.
4. The NIHG consortium has 4 stakeholders: FCC Construction SA, Allied Irish Bank, Interserve Investments & P Elliott & Co.
5. The Strategic Investment Board has acted in an advisory capacity to the Department during the procurement process for this hospital.
6. Press enquiries to the DHSSPS Press Office on 028 90520575. Out of office hours please contact the Duty Press Officer via pager number 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.