

**Issued on behalf of Developing Better Services
Sperrin Lakeland Trust**

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01HRS ON WEDNESDAY 28 JUNE 2006

**PLANNING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR £229M ACUTE HOSPITAL for the
South West.**

The new £229m Acute Hospital for the South West to be built to the north of Enniskillen has received notice of opinion to approve outline planning permission. It is the first hospital project to come out of Northern Ireland's new Health and Social Services infrastructure investment programme of £2.9bn.

The announcement was made today at a market information seminar in Belfast which attracted over 150 representatives of Europe's leading building and engineering specialists, all potential bidders for what will be one of the biggest public works contracts in Northern Ireland in recent years.

Speaking at the event, Sperrin Lakeland Trust Chief Executive John Compton said; "This is a very significant day for the people of Fermanagh and Tyrone and is the next stage on the path of developing fit for purpose, sustainable acute services which represent the future of our health care provision into the 21st century.

"The Sperrin Lakeland Trust area stands to benefit from a total investment of around £380m when planning permission for the new Omagh hospital is granted, which is expected this Autumn. However procurement for the Acute hospital must go forward immediately."

The new build will require over 3000 construction jobs, which will create an enormous boost to the local economy.

According to Dr Jim Livingstone, Director of Infrastructure Investment in the DHSSPS, and in overall charge of the capital investment programme, this is a first major step forward in the modernisation and reform of acute and local hospitals as well as primary and community care services and regeneration of health estates generally in Northern Ireland.

"The South West hospital is the first major build programme in our co-ordinated Developing Better Services programme which we are taking forward in partnership with the Strategic Investment Board. We are aiming for a timetable of four years to see the completion of both the Acute hospital north of Enniskillen and the new hospital in Omagh and we will provide substantial support to the team in Sperrin Lakeland Trust to achieve this objective."

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