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MILTON KEYNES ANNOUNCES PREFERRED BIDDER FOR ITS ACADEMY

Milton Keynes Council, in partnership with the Edge education foundation, has announced its preferred contractor to build the city's new academy.

Kier Construction has been chosen as the Preferred Bidder to build the Milton Keynes Academy to replace Sir Frank Markham Community School. This is the first project to reach this stage since Partnerships for Schools (PfS) launched its 'Design and Build' national framework in January 2007 to streamline and accelerate delivery of the academies programme nationwide.

The company was chosen after a selection process through the National Framework – the new national system which allows local authorities to select contractors from an approved group of companies with expertise in such projects and with established regional supply networks to ensure cost-effective and efficient delivery of academies.

Cllr Euan Henderson, MKC Cabinet Member responsible for new school build, said: “We are pleased with the way the national framework has allowed selected bidder status to be reached in a streamlined way. The process has been rigorous and all stakeholders have worked in partnership to achieve a superb design which will provide outstanding learning and teaching opportunities for students and staff at the academy.

“This Academy will act as a catalyst to transform the life chances of current and future generations of young people in its catchment area. The partnership created with Edge has grown in strength and offers exciting new opportunities for the local community.”

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The 1,550-student school, which will specialise in business and enterprise with a particular emphasis on practical learning across the curriculum, is sponsored by Edge – which is also sponsoring an academy in Nottingham.

It is expected that construction work will start in March 2008.

John Kerr, Edge's development director, said: "Edge is delighted to move to the next stage of this exciting project."

Kier Education Senior Director, Neil Pates, said: "Kier is delighted and proud to be selected as Selected Bidder to deliver the Milton Keynes Academy as part of the PfS academies framework and look forward to building on the excellent relationships developed with the Authority, sponsor and stakeholders prior to selection. The academy is set to become a landmark building for Milton Keynes and provides a great opportunity for us to demonstrate excellence in the design and delivery of first class educational facilities for the 21st century. We will be working closely with our partners to provide a facility to make a real difference to the lives of those benefiting from the new academy and for which Milton Keynes can be justifiably proud."

The National Framework provides local authorities and sponsors with procurement and project management expertise gained through the Building Schools for the Future programme, and will ensure that similar economies of scale are achieved in the academies programme.

Tim Byles, Chief Executive of Partnerships for Schools, said: 'I congratulate all those involved in the Milton Keynes Academy project for reaching this important milestone. The new academy is good news for Milton Keynes, providing facilities and resources which students, teachers and the local community deserve.'

Adrian Hewitt, Director of Hewitt Freeborn Associates, said: "We are extremely delighted to be project managing this highly prestigious scheme for both Milton Keynes Council and Partnership for Schools. It is a significant achievement for everyone involved and as the first new academy

procured through the framework we are clearly seeing the benefits that streamlining the process brings.”

The academy is expected to open for the start of the academic year in September 2009.

Notes to Editors:

1. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is the largest single schools capital investment programme for over 50 years. The aim is to rebuild or renew every one of England's 3,500 state secondary schools during the 15-year lifetime of the programme.
2. Partnerships for Schools (PfS) is the delivery agency for Building Schools for the Future. PfS was established in April 2004 as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), and is operated and funded under a joint venture between DCSF (formerly DfES) and Partnerships UK.