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BRISTOL CONTRACTOR APPOINTED NFB CHAIRMAN

Rupert Perkins has been appointed chairman of leading construction industry body the National Federation of Builders (NFB).

Mr Perkins is contracts director of Bristol-based John Perkins Construction and has held the chair of the NFB's South West Executive Board and the Finance Group. He officially took over the national chairman's role from Mike Jones at the body's annual general meeting on June 30 2009.

The agm took place at the ss Great Britain, an historic Bristol landmark which has been refurbished by John Perkins Construction in recent years.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr Perkins said that in addition to the key areas of NFB policy work - procurement, health & safety, sustainability and utilities – he will take a particular interest in the theme of partnership during his year in the chair.

He will ensure the NFB shows leadership in establishing closer links with other trade organizations and professional bodies. He believes that by expanding its relationships, the NFB will benefit members by developing greater influence for SMEs in the industry.

A strong advocate of partnerships, Mr Perkins said: "There are lessons to be learned from the way we go about our own business in the building industry. I am a great believer in integrated teams working together to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness; I firmly believe the most successful projects are those underpinned by integrated teams with common objectives."

He said that another key issue for the sector were problems faced in public sector procurement. For example, the cost in time and resources of Pre Qualifying Questionnaires or the exclusion of SMEs from their traditional areas of work for the public sector by the increase in size of packages and framework contracts.

He described how procurement methods such as these bundled up smaller work streams that SMEs were previously in a position to bid for, into packages of a value too high for SMEs to compete.

Mr Perkins said: "The active and constructive involvement of SMEs in public sector procurement is a key requirement for thriving local economies and more broadly for the construction sector as a whole. We have urged the government to consider enabling a wider range of procurement methods by encouraging public sector clients to release work in a variety of sized packages to ensure SME contractors are able to compete."



Picture caption: Rupert Perkins pictured aboard the ss Great Britain in Bristol takes the helm of the National Federation of Builders after being appointed chairman