THE SPONSOR SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALCONBURY WEALD SPECIAL SCHOOL

The main elements of the sponsor selection process date back several years as they were established in response to the requirements of the 2006 Education Act. The process was reviewed and updated in 2012 to take account of the requirements of the 2011 Education Act, receiving Cabinet approval on 17 April 2012. More recently, some slight adjustments were made to take account of the Council's implementation of a Committee system in place of its Cabinet arrangements. The process consists of six main stages:

1. Development and publication of a specification detailing the requirements and expectations of the potential academy or free school sponsor together with a background document which provides the context for the need for the school and the area in which it will be established.
2. Invitation to potential sponsors to submit applications within a set timeframe.
3. Assessment and scoring of the applications. Only applications deemed to have met a certain standard will be shortlisted and taken forward to the next stage.
4. A public meeting at which the applicants are asked to share their proposals and answer questions from the audience.
5. An interview with a joint Officer and Member panel during which the applicants are asked a series of questions. This usually lasts around 1 hour. The panel is also provided with a summary of the capacity, capability and recent performance of each short-listed applicant from the DfE. The panel membership is drawn from the following:
- the Chair and Vice Chair of the CYP Committee;
- the CYP Lead Members;
- a DfE representative
- the local County Councillor(s)
- the 0-19 Strategic Policy and Place Planning Manager; and
- the Head of Service, 0-19 Place Planning and Organisation (Chair)
- other officers as appropriate, for example, an education advisor with experience of teaching in and/or managing a special school
6. The panel discusses each of the proposals in detail, taking account of what they have read from which a combined score for each application is derived.