



APPENDIX

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD (2) REVIEW GROUP – CITY ACADEMIES

January 2006

1. Background

- 1.1 In September 2005, at the request of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, Scrutiny Board (2) established a Review Group which included elected members who had expressed a particular interest, to examine the City Academies proposals relating to Woodway Park School and Barr's Hill/Sidney Stringer Schools. The membership of the Review Group was as follows:

Councillors:

*Asif
Chater
Crookes
Mrs Dixon
Field (Chair)
Gazey
Mrs Lacy
*Ms Mckay
Ruddy
Mrs Stone
Williams

Others:

Mr J. Vickers] Secondary Head
Mr B. Worrall] Teacher Representatives

Mrs L. Wainscot (Church of England Representative)
Mr R. Potter (Catholic Representative)

**Primary Head Teacher Representative
**Special School Head Teacher Representative
**Parent Governor Representative

* In the event, these members were unable to attend meetings of the Review Group.
** It was not possible to appoint representatives of these groups.

- 1.2 The terms of reference of the Review Group (as decided by them) were as follows:-

- (1) To understand the Government policy objectives and framework for academies and other strategies for the future of secondary school provision.
- (2) To examine objectively the proposals to establish two academies in Coventry (one replacing Woodway Park School and the other replacing Barr's Hill and Sidney Stringer Schools) in the context of Government policy.
- (3) To form a view on these proposals, including a consideration of alternative realistic and affordable strategies open to the City Council. This would be passed on (via Scrutiny Board (2) and the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee) to the Cabinet, as Scrutiny's response to the consultation proposals.

- 1.3 Support for the review was provided by officers from the Education and Libraries Directorate and the Legal and Democratic Services Directorate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Board (2) and the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee are recommended to consider the views of the Review Group set out in section 5 below and to forward them to the Cabinet.
- 2.2 The Cabinet are recommended to consider the views of the Review Group and to take them into account when making decisions in relation to the academy proposals.

3. Review Process

- 3.1 The Review Group have met on 5 occasions between September 2005 and January 2006.

- 3.2 Initially they considered a draft of the public consultation document which set out in full the proposals to establish 2 academies in Coventry.

The document made it clear that the 2 academy proposals were different and at different stages of development:-

- a) One proposal was for the replacement of the existing Woodway Park Community School with a new academy to be based on the same site and to be sponsored by the Chairman of IM Group (Bob Edmiston).
- b) The second proposal (in principle only because as yet there was no sponsor) was for the replacement of both the current Barr's Hill and Sidney Stringer Schools with a new academy to be located within the proposed Swanswell Learning Quarter, as part of the overall Swanswell Regeneration Development.

Both the existing Barr's Hill and Sidney Stringer Schools would be closed to create the new academy.

- 3.3 As well as setting out the proposals in detail, the consultation document also explained briefly academy governance arrangements and legal status and the Government's rationale for the academies policy.

- 3.4 At this stage, the Review Group were given information emphasising that, other than the provision of academies, there was no credible funding option available. This was re-emphasised at the end of the review process, when the Review Group were again informed of alternatives (Building Schools for the Future, using Council capital resources, prudential borrowing, hope that the Government changes the rules/introduces new funding streams) and reminded that none of these was tenable.

- 3.5 As the proposals for Barr's Hill/Sidney Stringer Schools were still "in principle" only, the Review Group from this point on concentrated on the proposals for Woodway Park School. However they continued to receive brief updates on the progress of the consultation on the Barr's Hill/Sidney Stringer proposals. They were informed that a number of concerns had been identified during this consultation.

- 3.6 The Review Group then met the Sponsor of the proposed Woodway Park Academy (Bob Edmiston). This was one of a series of meetings he had with interested parties in Coventry.

The questions asked by the Review Group at this meeting, and the answers given by the Sponsor, Steve Chase (the Academy Project Manager) and David Wootton (the Principle of the Grace Academy in Solihull, which has the same Sponsor) are set out in **Appendix 1** to this report. The Review Group gained reassurance from the responses they received.

- 3.7 Subsequent to their meeting with the Sponsor, the Review Group met the Chair of the Governing Body (Ken Sloan) and the Headteacher (Steve Allen) of Woodway Park School, to seek their views on the proposals. The notes of this meeting are attached as **Appendix 2** to this report.

- 3.8 The Review Group held a final meeting to draw together their views on the Academy proposals. They took into account their findings and concerns from their consideration of the draft consultation document and from their discussions with the Sponsor of the proposed Woodway Park Academy and the Headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body of Woodway Park School. These are set out in the following section of this report.

4 Findings of the Review Group

4.1 During their consideration of the draft consultation document, the Review Group noted the following:-

- a) If an academy failed, its ownership reverted to the LEA.
- b) Academies were not bound by national guidelines for teachers' pay, terms and conditions. However, if an academy did not pay the "going rate" for teachers it was unlikely that they would attract the required staff.
- c) Academies dealt with their own admissions process and the Sponsor would be allocated a place on the LEA Admissions Forum.
- d) The LEA had responsibility for a student excluded from an academy.
- e) If an academy wished to change its catchment area, it would have to consult widely and submit the proposal to the LEA Admissions Forum for a decision.
- f) Pupil numbers in the City were falling and there was a need to plan for predicted surplus places; therefore the proposed Swanswell Academy would be smaller than the combined rolls for both Barr's Hill and Sidney Stringer Schools.
- g) It was hoped that the proposed Woodway Park Academy would make that part of the City more attractive to people moving into the area.
- h) The Woodway Park Academy would not be a faith school, but the Sponsor had indicated that it would have an underlying Christian ethos.
- i) Any potential sponsor for the proposed Swanswell Academy would need to support the "Swanswell Vision" and work in partnership with the other educational organisations involved.

4.2 During the course of their discussions with the Sponsor of the proposed Woodway Park Academy and with the Headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body of Woodway Park School, a number of concerns were identified by the Review Group. These concerns, together with information on how these might be met (including reassurances given by the Sponsor), are set out in **Appendix 3** to this report.

5. Views of the Review Group

a) in relation to Woodway Park School

Majority View

- i.) The majority of the Review Group, whilst not wholly supporting the concept of academies, nevertheless recognise that establishing an academy is the only way by which new premises can be provided for Woodway Park School in the foreseeable future (as there is no other viable funding option) and therefore support these proposals.
- ii.) The Review Group have expressed a number of concerns and been given information on how these might be met (see Appendix 3).

They recommend that the Cabinet take note of these concerns and make every effort to

ensure that they are addressed, through the Council's action (where this can be done) or influence (where issues are beyond their direct control).

Minority View

The Cabinet are asked to note that a minority of Review Group members indicated that, whilst they were committed to providing the best possible education for children, they nevertheless remained opposed to the concept of academies.

b) in relation to Barr's Hill/Sidney Stringer Schools

The Review Group intend to re-convene to consider these proposals in detail once the process is further advanced and a Sponsor identified.

In the meantime, they wish to draw the Cabinet's attention to their concern as to whether the site currently identified for this proposed academy is suitable, particularly in relation to its size and the amount of recreational space available.

APPENDIX 1

City Academies Review Group Meeting with Woodway Park Sponsor 14th November, 2005

Questions and Responses

1. **What factors influenced your decision to sponsor the proposed Woodway Park Academy rather than the proposed Barr's Hill/Sidney Stringer Academy?**
(Asked by Councillor Chater)

Mr Edmiston indicated that there had been a number of factors for this decision. Having had experience another Academy project in Chelmsley Wood, he wanted to do something similar in Coventry. The project in Chelmsley Wood involved only one school, which was similar to the Woodway Park proposal. The proposed Barr's Hill/Sidney Stringer Academy involved the merger of two schools into one, on a much smaller site, which made it a more complicated option. In addition, the new school would be based on a Christian ethos and, whilst he intended the school to be inclusive, he felt that it was inappropriate to impose a Christian ethos on a community that had a high percentage of non-Christian children. He acknowledged that that community would share similar values but still thought that it was inappropriate to impose a Christian ethos.

Councillor Chater asked a supplementary question in relation to the fact that a number of refugees of the Islamic faith were being housed within the Woodway Park catchment area.

Mr Edmiston responded that the issue was a question of trying to be sensitive to other people's faith. It was easier if the children shared the same belief but at the end of the day, the Academy was not intended to be a faith school. He indicated that he had spent four years looking at the proposal and did not want to make things more difficult than they needed to be.

2. **How will your personal beliefs shape the ethos of the School?**
(asked by Councillor Mrs. Stone)

Mr Edmiston indicated that he had Christian beliefs but had no intention of proselytising at the School. What he personally believed in was no different to what people had believed in and had been taught at school 50 years ago. He believed in Jesus Christ, the principles of Christianity and the merits of caring, understanding and being kind to each other. He indicated that he had given over £100m to Christian charities overseas and had a desire to serve rather than be served. He wanted well adjusted children who were taught the merits of being kind to each other, contributing to society and who had a sense of duty. He believed that a Christian ethos provided an alternative to the worst aspects of society.

Councillor Mrs. Stone asked a supplementary question in relation to Mr. Edmiston's personal beliefs not being mainstream Christianity.

Mr Edmiston responded that he had been told by others that his beliefs were not mainstream and that the press had indicated that he was a "fundamentalist". He believed in the fundamentals of Christianity, in that there was a God in heaven and he believed in Jesus Christ. He indicated that he did not understand the term "fundamentalist" and confirmed that he was not an extremist and would be comfortable in nearly all Christian churches.

3. How do you intend the Academy to be governed?

(Asked by Councillor Gazey)

Mr. Chase referred to the Grace Academy, of which he was the Principal. Like the proposals for Woodway Park, Grace Academy specialised in business and enterprise. It had a smaller than normal Governing Body that carried out a statutory function, made up of nine governors (five sponsor appointments, one LEA representative, one elected parent governor, and two co-opted governors). There was also an Academy Council, which had an advisory and consultative role and had an input into the Leadership Team, made up of teaching staff, non-teaching staff, community representatives, and parents. Mr. Edmiston gave a comparison of how the school would be governed in a similar way as to how a Company would operate. The Board of Governors would carry out the statutory role, with the Academy Council undertaking the real work and making recommendations to the Governing Body. The Principal would have a remit to get on with the job without interference.

Councillor Mrs. Lacy asked about how the Board of Governors and the Principal would report back to the Academy Council. Mr. Edmiston confirmed that, whilst the Board of Governors would make the final decision on issues, the Academy Council would have an important role to play and gave the example of absenteeism problems, with the Academy Council coming up with recommendations to address the issue, which would then be submitted to the Board of Governors for approval.

Councillor Mrs. Lacy asked if there would be children on the Academy Council and Mr. Chase confirmed that this would be the case, indicating that the "head girl"/"head boy" were on the Grace Academy Council.

Councillor Mrs. Lacy also asked if parent/teacher association representatives would be welcome. Mr. Edmiston indicated that he wanted to engage parents as much as possible and that, in his experience, one of the biggest problems was actually getting parents involved. He indicated that he believed that discipline started at home and that it was very important to get parents involved. He also indicated that he wanted to provide adult education after school hours and have community facilities and would be open to any suggestions as to how to achieve this.

In relation to a question from Mrs. Lacy regarding the individuality of children, Mr. Wootton agreed with this, indicating that the most important thing was the personal development of each child. Mr. Edmiston confirmed his commitment to

children's personal attainment and outlined some of the work he had done with schools in Angola.

4. **What do you intend the curriculum to be?**
(Asked by Brian Worrall)

Mr. Edmiston indicated that the proposed Academy would follow the national curriculum, with an emphasis on business and enterprise, linking with local businesses. Mr. Wootton indicated that he did not expect the curriculum at the proposed Academy to be very different to many schools, although the Academy would have more freedom in relation to delivery. This would be shaped to the needs of the community. There would be a focus on business and enterprise, particularly in relation to IT and the needs of children, combined with a more personalised approach. The core subjects, especially literacy and numeracy, would still be followed and he pointed out that examinations were tied to the National Curriculum. The Academy would also be judged by OFSTED on its National Curriculum and therefore it would be foolish to stray away from that path. The aim was to have full access to the National Curriculum but with a business and enterprise flavour. Key Stage 3 would be broad and balanced, allowing students to move to Key Stage 4 with all options open. It was also intended to provide work-based learning. Key Stage 4 would also provide diversity and choice by providing vocational subjects, especially business. Post-16, it was intended to provide a variety of courses and increase the numbers in post-16 education. A wide variety of qualifications would be on offer, including NVQs, BTEC and vocational training.

Mr. Edmiston outlined some of his proposals for the school, for example the establishment of a radio station in the summer holidays, to be run by students. He indicated his desire that education should be fun. Another example would be to allow students to participate in stocks and shares games. It was intended to make subjects relevant, and outlined his desire to provide students with life skills, such as how to fix electrical plugs, how to choose a mortgage and social skills, all of which would help the students to succeed in a business environment.

Mr. Worrall questioned Mr. Edmiston on the transfer of staff and whether TUPE would apply. Mr Edmiston confirmed that TUPE would apply and that everyone who wanted to transfer would be able to. Chris West also indicated that the legal position was that a list would be drawn up of those who wished to transfer and TUPE would then apply to all those on that list.

Councillor Ruddy asked how the extra hours (i.e. 30 hours standard week instead of 25 hours) would be achieved.

Mr Edmiston indicated that he hoped that the school would be full, which would deliver additional funding. He indicated that it would be possible to generate funds and gave the example of the Thomas Telford Academy, which sells educational packages to generate money.

David Wootton outlined the potential for economy savings by linking the proposed Woodway Park Academy with other academies, like the Grace Academy, which would

then provide an economy of scale. Mr. Edmiston explained that the Woodway Park Academy would be a brand new school and therefore would have less maintenance costs. He indicated that it would also be possible to share, for example, IT back office costs, payroll costs, etc with other Academies and that his aim was to have three Academies in the long term. These could share curriculum innovations, ICT/sports facilities etc and could also enable short-term vacancies to be covered. Mr. Wootton indicated that the growth of the sixth form, together with bids from Government, could also achieve additional funding.

Councillor Ruddy asked if there would be an increase in teaching hours and Mr. Wootton confirmed that this was not the intention.

5. **How do you intend the Academy to work with other schools?**
(Asked by Mr. Vickers)

Mr Wootton indicated that if the current White Paper went forward, there would be a number of changes in relation to this anyway. He indicated that the Academy would sit alongside other schools and would work in collaboration on issues, for example, such as Inclusion and 14-19 initiatives. He indicated that it was important to collaborate, both with secondary and primary schools and that the Academy would share innovation and facilities.

Mr. Vickers asked whether it was proposed that the Academy would work with existing protocols, for example that on admission arrangements.

Mr. Wootton confirmed that the proposed Academy would abide by the existing admissions policies of the City Council and would not be selecting on the basis of faith or any other criteria. He confirmed that it was intended that the Academy would be a school for the community and that therefore the admissions for the school needed to come from that community.

Mr. Edmiston indicated that the academy would not use its ability to choose 10% of its pupils unless other schools in the City did. In other words whatever other schools in the City did, the Academy would do the same.

Mr. Vickers asked about projected number for new entrants to the large proposed sixth form.

Mr. Wootton indicated that he had no actual figures as yet, other than it was hoped that 65% to 75% of students ought to stay on into the sixth form. He confirmed that more detailed work needed to be done on this issue.

In relation to questions regarding the admissions criteria, Chris West confirmed that the Expression of Interest indicated that the admissions policy should mirror those currently in place.

6. **Other Questions**

Councillor Crookes asked about the sixth form at Grace Academy and whether it was open to students from other schools.

Mr. Wootton confirmed that it was intended to create the sixth form at the proposed Woodway Park Academy mainly from pupils in the Woodway Park catchment area. It was not intended to jeopardise arrangements at other schools. It was the intention to work collegiately with other schools, for example, perhaps sharing a course between two schools where there were small numbers in both which would otherwise mean that the courses would not be viable. He indicated that it would be the intention to seek partners, for example colleges, and work in partnership.

Mr. Edmiston confirmed that there were still a number of issues that needed to be worked out, such as the behaviour of students from partnership organisations attending courses at the proposed Woodway Academy. However, the approach was positive. The intention would be to do whatever was best for the students.

In response to a question from Mr. Potter, about relationships with the neighbouring Catholic school, Mr. Edmiston indicated that the proposed Academy would work with Catholic schools.

Councillor Mrs. Dixon asked about how bullying would be tackled.

Mr. Edmiston indicated that this would be discouraged right from the very start. The new Academy would have CCTV cameras and provide the opportunity for teachers to observe and monitor students. He indicated that a very tough approach would be taken to bullying right from the outset and that students would be encouraged to be kind to others. He did, however, acknowledge that bullying would always exist.

Mr. Wootton indicated that bullying was a human condition which occurred naturally. However, the proposed ethos of the school should discourage this type of behaviour. There would be a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and he gave examples of how it would be addressed, including low level discussions, peer counselling and ultimately, exclusion. He confirmed that pupils would be taught respect and that in any event, the new school would hopefully design out bullying by the introduction of IT, high levels of security and smart card payments for school meals, which would mean that students did not need to carry cash on them. Mr. Edmiston indicated that parents should be able to access reports and results etc, via the internet.

Councillor Chater asked if it was proposed to be part of a partnership approach to bullying, including the adoption of the City Council's anti-bullying strategy. Mr. Edmiston confirmed that he would be happy to co-operate with any such initiatives.

The Chair, Councillor Mrs. Dixon, opened up the session to the public and a member of the public made a statement on the proposals.

In addition, Councillor Nellist asked how long the IM Group intended to have a controlling interest in Woodway Park.

Mr. Edmiston responded that as long as it was doing a good job, it would continue. He also referred to the agreement with the DfES and indicated that there could be a change in Government policy at any time.

Steve Chase pointed out that the proposed Academy would not be within the IM Group's control but would be charitable trust.

Councillor Crookes asked how it would be intended to measure the success/failure of the proposed Academy.

Bob Edmiston responded that the school would be subject to OFSTED and examination results and referred to the success of the Academy in Bristol, which had had a significant improvement in this area. He also indicated that the proposed Academy would have benchmarks and targets to achieve, like any other school.

APPENDIX 2

Notes of City Academies Review Group Meeting with Chair of Board of Governors and Headteacher of Woodway Park School – 1st December, 2005

The Head teacher and the Chair of the Board of Governors of Woodway Park, Steve Allen and Ken Sloan respectively, attended the meeting to enable the Review Group to seek their views on the proposals.

Mr. Sloan indicated that the Governing Body had formally considered the proposals last week and, following careful consideration, would be making a positive recommendation for the establishment of a City Academy at Woodway Park. He indicated that the Governing Body had considered what was in the best interests of the children in the area. There had been constant discussions over a number of years regarding the need to provide a better environment for both pupils and staff and that whilst the school had seen a good improvement under the current leadership, further improvement was limited by the environment of the school. The proposal therefore had the full support of the Governing Body given that the Sponsor had given undertakings that Woodway Park would continue to be an active member of the family of schools of the LEA; would have links with feeder primary schools and other secondary schools in the City; and would have a role in the local Community

Mr. Allen indicated that when he was appointed to the position of Head teacher of Woodway Park, 22 months ago, it had been made clear at the outset that the Woodway Park site was not fit for the purpose. Following the disappointment being unsuccessful regarding "Building Schools for the Future", something else needed to be done to provide a school fit for the purpose. He indicated that Woodway Park was an improving school, however the building was deteriorating at an alarming rate and would be a barrier to any future capacity building at the school. The principle of having an Academy at Woodway Park was the only option available at the moment and it certainly was not an alternative to remain in the current school buildings for the next 10 to 12 years. He indicated that he had met the Sponsor on numerous occasions over the past few weeks and was confident in the Sponsor's vision and the fact that the Sponsor's principles and standards were the same as his own, the only difference being that by making Woodway Park an Academy, there would be a new £25m to £30m building. He outlined the positive impact that this would have on pupils and staff.

Following a question from Councillor Field regarding the fact that Mr. Allen would not be guaranteed to be the Principal at the new Academy, Mr. Allen acknowledged this, but indicated that it was a question of making the right decision for the school. Mr. Sloan indicated that the issue of the new Principal at the school had been raised with the Sponsor and that he had accepted that where schools had converted to Academies and a new Principal appointed, this was normally the case for a failing school. Woodway Park was not a failing school but an improving school and the Sponsor had acknowledged that Mr. Allen could apply for the role of Principal at the new Academy.

In response to questions from Councillor Field regarding any concerns, Mr. Sloan indicated that initially, there had been concerns regarding governance. However the establishment of an Academy Council would mean that existing Governors would still be able to continue and in fact, the Sponsor had indicated that he would be looking to mobilise as many interested people

as possible to be involved in the new Academy. He was also assured by the fact that any Academy would be inspected just like any other school and that this had given a degree of assurance.

Councillor Crookes asked about TUPE arrangements and Mr. Sloan confirmed that the only post that would be advertised would be that of Principal of the new Academy. Mr. Allen indicated that there were a small minority of staff who were against the principle of an Academy and who therefore may not be willing to transfer although generally staff were supportive of the proposals. Chris West confirmed that TUPE would apply and that in these circumstances staff could not be redeployed. However, he indicated that a small number of staff who did not want to transfer to the new Academy would be handled sensitively and sympathetically.

Councillor Gazey asked about the control that the Sponsor would have and Mr. Allen responded that the Sponsor had confirmed his commitment to the relationship with the family of secondary schools in the City and his wish to work within the North East Federation. He indicated that he had been satisfied with the Sponsor's responses in relation to this issue and that he had spoken to the Principal of the Grace Academy who had confirmed that he was left to manage the school without interference from the Sponsor. Mr. Allen indicated that he would welcome the business links that the Sponsor would be able to provide and that it was fortunate that the Grace Academy could be used as an example.

Mr. Vickers referred to the answers given by the Sponsor at the last meeting, particularly in relation to the structure of the Board of Governors which would be unable to work without the confidence of the Academy Council. He indicated that he felt reassured by this structure, having had experience of the politics of governance. Mr. Sloan pointed out that the Sponsor was not required to have an Academy Council and it was in addition to the Governing Body, which was statutorily required.

Mr. Potter referred to the Funding Agreement, which would stipulate a number of conditions and asked if the Review Group could look at some existing Funding Agreements for other Academies. Chris West responded that these documents were public documents as they were business agreements. He confirmed that the City Council would have influence in the Funding Agreement and pointed out that the Sponsor had never quibbled on any key issue and had always indicated his willingness to go along with City Council policies. He confirmed that the DfES would monitor the Academy and the operation of the Funding Agreement very closely and indicated that the Sponsor was an extremely busy businessman and would not have time to be at the Academy on a daily or even weekly basis.

Councillor Field asked about the ethos at Woodway Park at the moment. Mr. Allen confirmed that the school operated "Christian principles" with a multi-faith approach. This involved values such as respect, listening to others, citizenship, discipline etc. The Sponsor had referred to personalised curriculum for pupils, which was something that he supported. He indicated that there was approximately 20% of pupils at the school with an ethnic background.

In relation to a question from Councillor Mrs. Lacy regarding strictness and exclusions, Mr. Allen confirmed that Woodway Park currently operated a strict discipline policy and that the Sponsor had indicated that the new Academy would be part of the current process of managing moves within secondary schools in the City.

Councillor Gazey asked about what would happen if the Sponsor decided to sell his interest in the future and Mr. Sloan confirmed that the Sponsor would not "own" the Academy and could not sell anything. The £2m would be a one-off investment. There would also be a clause in the Funding Agreement which would indicate that if the school was not operating successfully, it could return to being a state school.

APPENDIX 3

Concerns/responses in relation to the proposed Woodway Park Academy

Concern	Response
<p>1. That the Sponsor might try to impose his personal religious ethos on the Academy.</p>	<p>The Sponsor stated that the Academy would not be a faith school, nor does he intend to impose his own beliefs. He wanted the pupils to uphold values such as respect and care for others and to have a sense of duty.</p> <p>The Academy would welcome pupils of all faiths and backgrounds.</p>
<p>2. That the Academy might not follow the same admission criteria as LEA schools.</p>	<p>The Sponsor stated that the Academy would use the same criteria.</p> <p>Chris West (Acting Director of Education and Library Services) indicated that this point would be covered by the Funding Agreement between the Sponsor and the Government.</p>
<p>3. That the Academy might not participate in the current partnership arrangements between schools in the city, particularly for the provision of the sixth form curriculum, for handling exclusions and for tackling bullying.</p>	<p>The Sponsor gave an assurance that the Academy would participate in partnership arrangements.</p>
<p>4. That the Academy's governance arrangements might not be as broad-based as they are currently.</p>	<p>The Sponsor indicated that it was intended to involve staff, pupils and members of the local community in the Academy Council (which would advise the governing body). The Head Teacher of Woodway Park School pointed out that the Sponsor had proposed having an Academy Council – he was not required to do this.</p> <p>The Chair of the Woodway Park School governing body indicated that school governance was included in OFSTED inspections.</p> <p>The DfES will keep the governance of all Academies under review.</p>

<p>5. Arrangements for the current staff at the School.</p>	<p>Chris West stated that TUPE would apply to all posts. If staff did not wish to transfer to the Academy they would not have re-deployee status, but would be handled sensitively and sympathetically.</p>
<p>6. That the Sponsor might try to interfere in the running of the Academy.</p>	<p>The Head Teacher had contacted the principal of the Grace Academy in Solihull (which has the same Sponsor), who confirmed that he was left to manage the Academy without the Sponsor's interference.</p> <p>Management and Governance arrangements will be monitored by OfSTED and DfES.</p>
<p>7. The content of the Funding Agreement.</p>	<p>Chris West indicated that the City Council would have influence over the content of the Funding Agreement and that the DfES would closely monitor it.</p>
<p>8. That the Council's control and influence over the School would be reduced.</p>	<p>Chris West indicated that schools are currently quasi-independent – they work in partnership with the Council. The Sponsor has said that he wanted the Academy to continue to work in this way.</p> <p>Chris West also indicated that an Academy had a similar basis in law to a Voluntary Aided (church) school and the Council had worked well in partnership with them for many years.</p> <p>Government policy was to push schools to more and more independence from local authorities. Therefore the difference between an Academy and other schools might be very small in a few years' time.</p>

A significant reassurance in relation to the Review Group's concerns was that the Governing Body of Woodway Park School were fully supportive of the Academy proposal, given all the assurances they themselves had received from the Sponsor.

The Review Group satisfied themselves that the Sponsor had met many different interested parties and had responded consistently to all their questions.