

North East Derbyshire District Council

Ethical Standards Survey 2014 Survey Results – District Council

INTRODUCTION

North East Derbyshire District Council's Standards Committee wanted to identify what standards of conduct are being observed and to identify areas where further awareness raising and training are needed across four audiences: officers, district councillors, parish and town councillors and parish clerks. To gather this information a questionnaire was sent to everyone in these groups. The questionnaires were broadly the same in content with some adjustments as relevant to each sector. The questionnaire was also made available electronically via Survey Monkey and the link to this was on the paper version of the questionnaire and publicised via Nedi.

This report relates to the officer and district councillor segments only.

The questionnaires were mailed to district councillors on 14th February and were sent to officers with their February payslip. The survey closed on Friday 30th May.

For **officers** the total number circulated was 482 and we received **102** completed questionnaires; a response rate of 21.2%.

Fifty two copies were circulated to **district councillors** and we received **23**; a response rate of 44.2%.

Although the questionnaire was available both on paper and online the vast majority of those returned were completed in paper format.

This report presents the summary findings from the surveys aimed at district councillors and officers only. While the results are shown in percentages for consistency throughout the report the size of the district councillor response is very small.

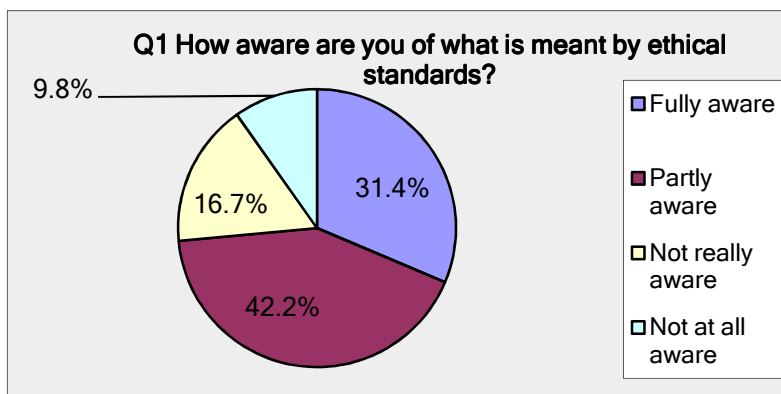
Four appendices are attached to the report, these provide:

- Data tables (Appendix A)
- Comparison Tables (Appendix B)
- Analysis of open comments (Appendix C)
- Demographic profiles (Appendix D)

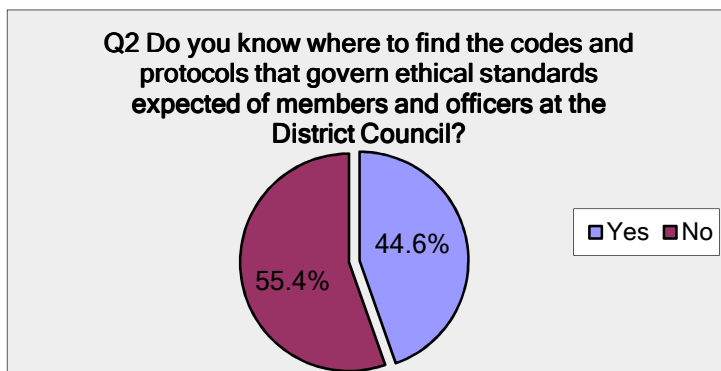
SURVEY FINDINGS

1. Officers

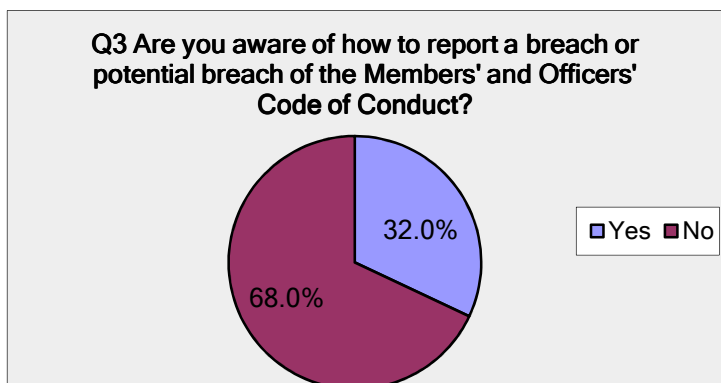
The first question on the officers' survey asked whether respondents understood what is meant by ethical standards. Almost three-quarters (73.6%) felt they were aware but the majority of these (42.2%) were only partly aware. A further 16.7% were not really aware and 9.8% were not at all aware.



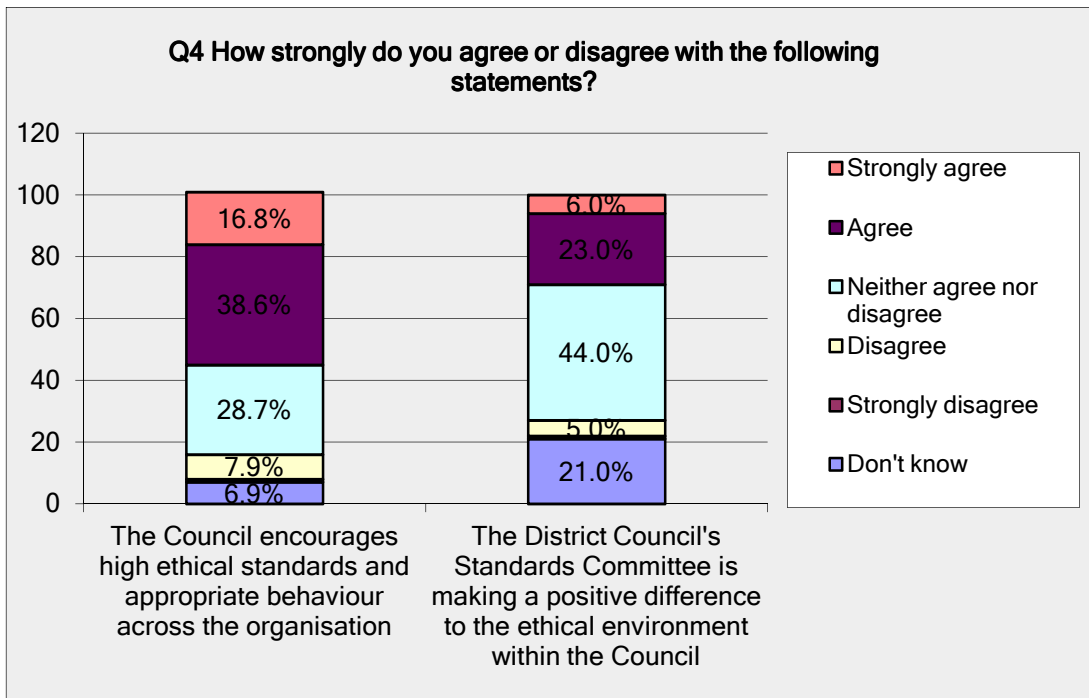
Under a half of officers (44.6%) claim to know where to find the codes and protocols that govern ethical standards.



Even fewer, just under a third (32%), are aware of how to report a breach of the Members' and Officers' Code of Conduct.

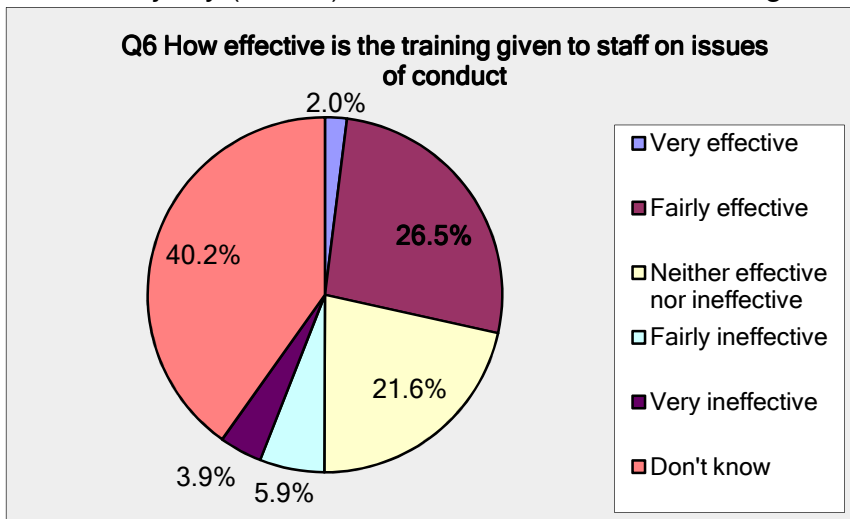


Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree that the Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment within the Council. While 28.7% agreed with the statement, there was a very large proportion (65%) that chose either 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' as a response. This certainly indicates a lack of awareness of whether the committee is making a positive difference and possibly an indication of a lack of awareness of the committee per se.



There was general agreement (55.4%) that the Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the organisation with very few (8.9%) disagreeing, however, there were still high levels of non-committal (35.6%).

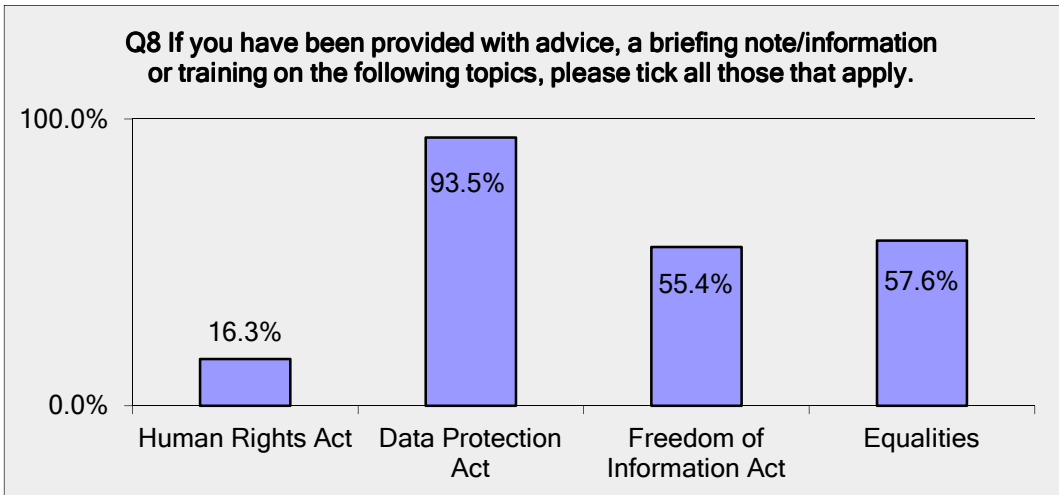
Similar levels of non-committal can be seen in the responses to how effective the relevant training for staff has been; just over a quarter (28.5%) found it effective, very few (9.8%) found it ineffective but the majority (61.8%) either were unable or unwilling to make a judgement.



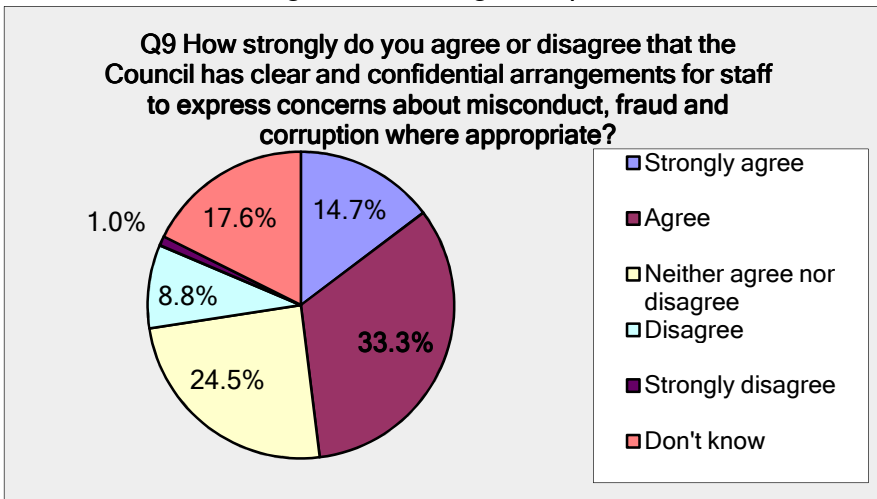
The “open” responses received also indicate a lack of awareness of any training held:

“I don’t recall having had any training – been with the council for 9 years. Equalities training was 5 years ago and haven’t had training on some items mentioned below. I can’t remember ever receiving training on this topic except for data protection”

In contrast, almost all remember having training on the Data Protection Act (training held in November and December 2013) and over half recall training on the Freedom of Information Act (December 2013 and January 2014) and Equalities (June 2013).

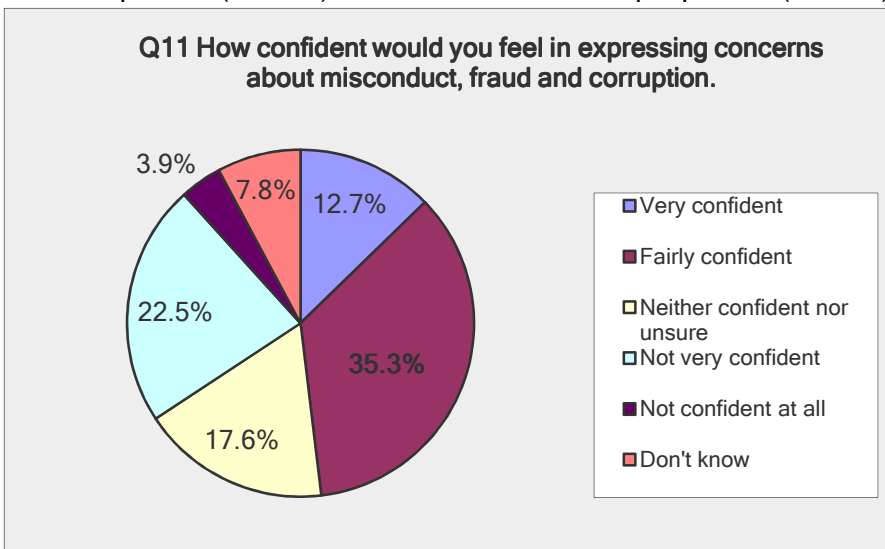


Around half of those responding to the survey (48.0%) agreed that the Council has clear and confidential arrangements for staff to express concerns about fraud, misconduct and corruption. However, again a large proportion were unable to give a view (42.1%) instead choosing the 'don't know' and 'neither agree nor disagree' options.

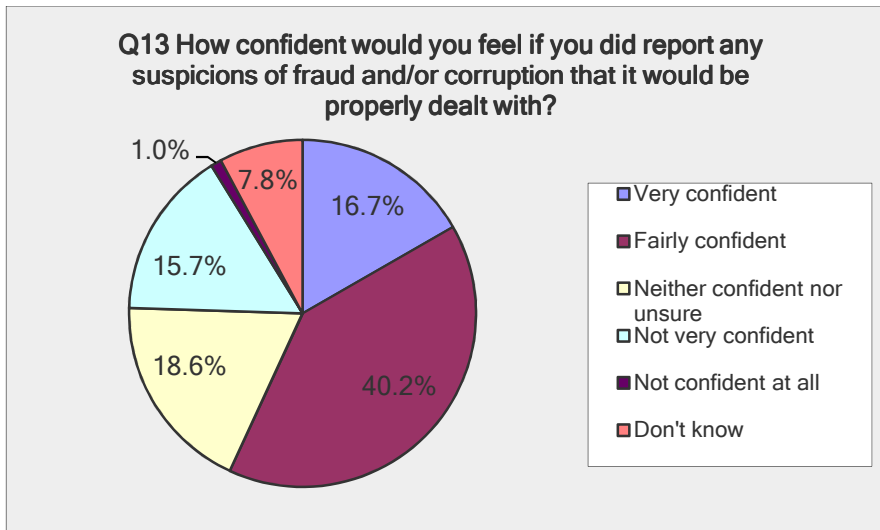


Respondents were evenly split on whether they know where to find the policy for reporting such issues – 44.9% did know where to find the policy and 55.1% did not.

Around half (48.0%) felt confident in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption while a quarter (26.4%) did not and a similar proportion (25.4%) were again non-committal.

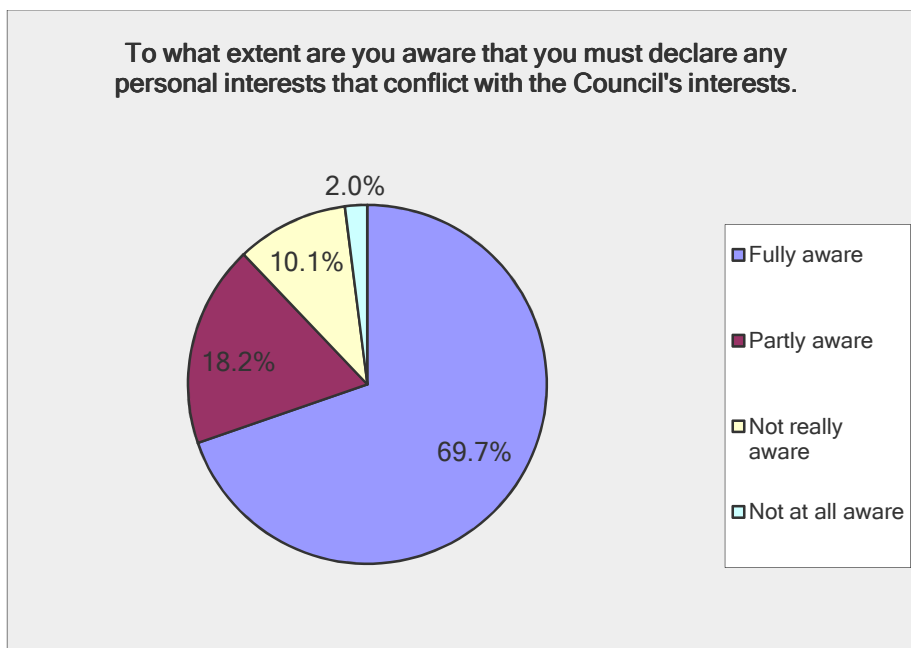


An even more positive response was seen for reporting suspicions with 56.9% confident but still a quarter (26.4%) were non committal.



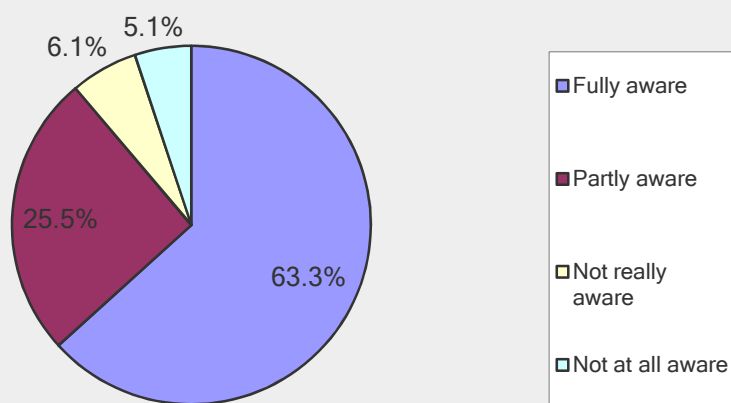
Very few respondents (9.1%) had come across any examples of activity which they would consider to be fraudulent or corrupt within their working environment in the past 12 months.

Awareness that one must declare any personal interests that conflict with the Council's interests was high (87.9%).



Awareness was similarly high (88.8%) for awareness of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality.

Q21 To what extent are you aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality.



The questionnaire included two more sets of statements with which recipients were asked to state how strongly they agree or disagree.

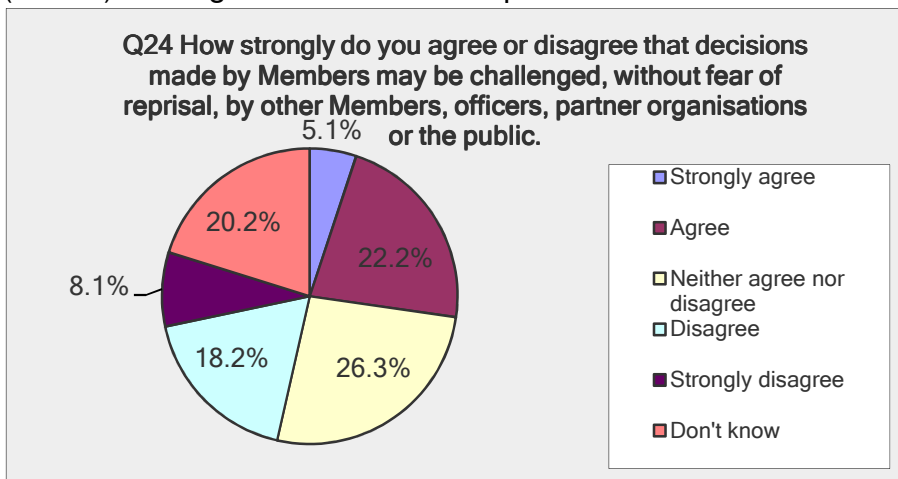
The most striking aspect of the results is the high level of non-response in terms of choosing to reply 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'don't know' throughout ranging from a third to half of respondents.

There were relatively high levels of agreement with the statements "I understand the role of the Council's Monitoring Officer" (40.8%) and "I know where to find the Member/Officer Protocol" (35.7%). Over half (54.1%) disagree with "There is a culture of bullying in the Council".

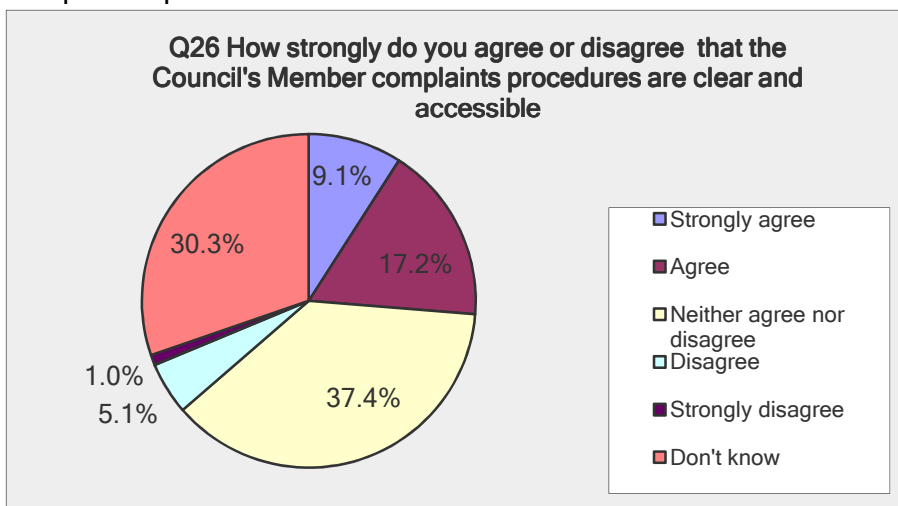
Q22 & Q23 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
Members listen to the advice of officers	25.2	36.4	23.2	15.2
Members attempt to involve officers inappropriately in party political issues	6.0	41.4	33.3	19.2
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	22.5	36.7	22.5	18.4
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	28.6	37.8	16.3	17.4
I understand the role of the Council's Monitoring Officer	40.8	26.5	18.4	40.8
The communication between Members and officers is open and constructive	23.4	34.7	23.5	18.4
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and officers.	23.1	35.4	23.3	18.2
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	11.2	22.5	54.1	12.2
I know where to find the Member/Officer Protocol	35.7	14.3	33.7	30.6
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	28.2	31.3	17.1	54.5
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions.	31.3	23.2	22.2	46.5
The public has easy access to information on who has taken particular decisions	29.3	29.3	16.1	54.6

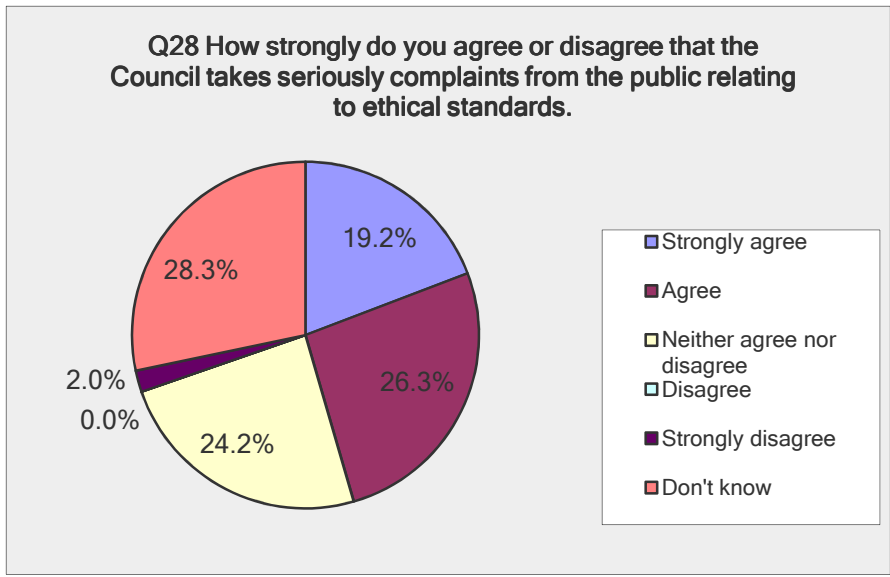
A quarter (27.3%) of officers who responded to the survey agreed that decisions made by Members may be challenged without fear of reprisal, while another quarter (26.3%) disagreed; half (46.5%) didn't give a committed response.



Almost two-thirds (67.7%) of officers were not able to agree or disagree that the Council's Member complaints procedures are clear and accessible.



Almost half (45.5%) agree that the Council takes seriously complaints from the public regarding ethical standards. Worryingly the other half (52.5%) either answered 'don't know' or 'neither agree nor disagree'. Hardly anyone (2.0%) disagreed.

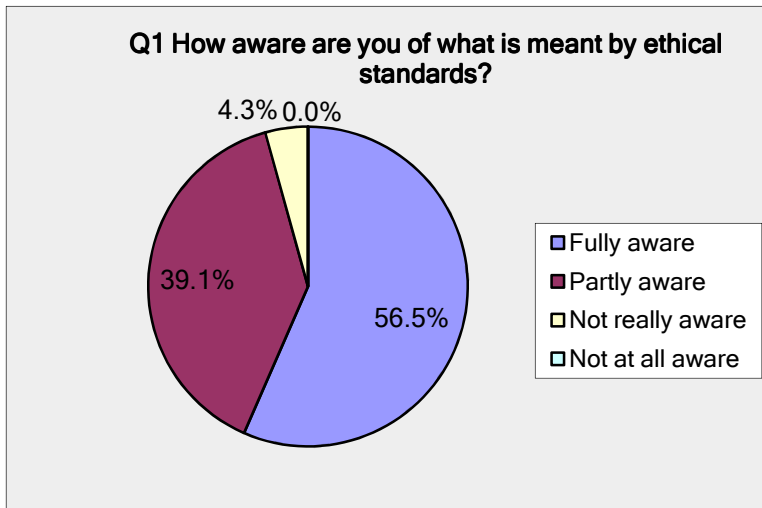


Survey Findings

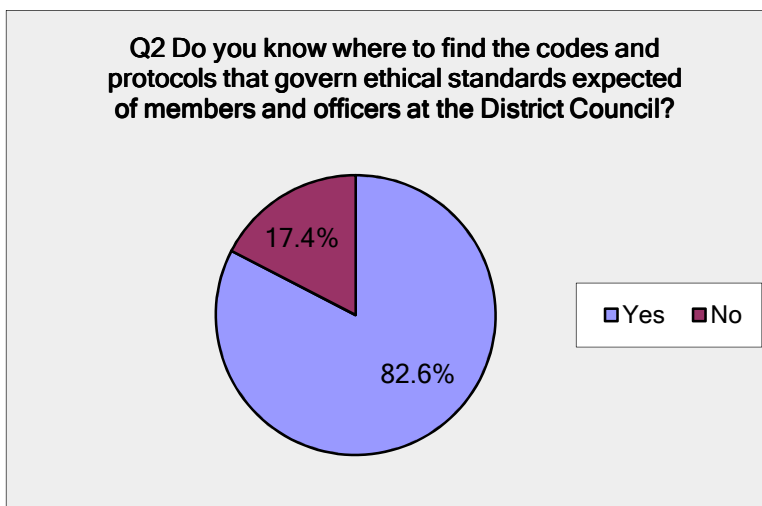
2. District Councillors

The questionnaire for district councillors followed a similar format to the one for officers. Figures are shown in percentages for consistency with the rest of the report but it should be remembered that the base for this audience is 23 respondents.

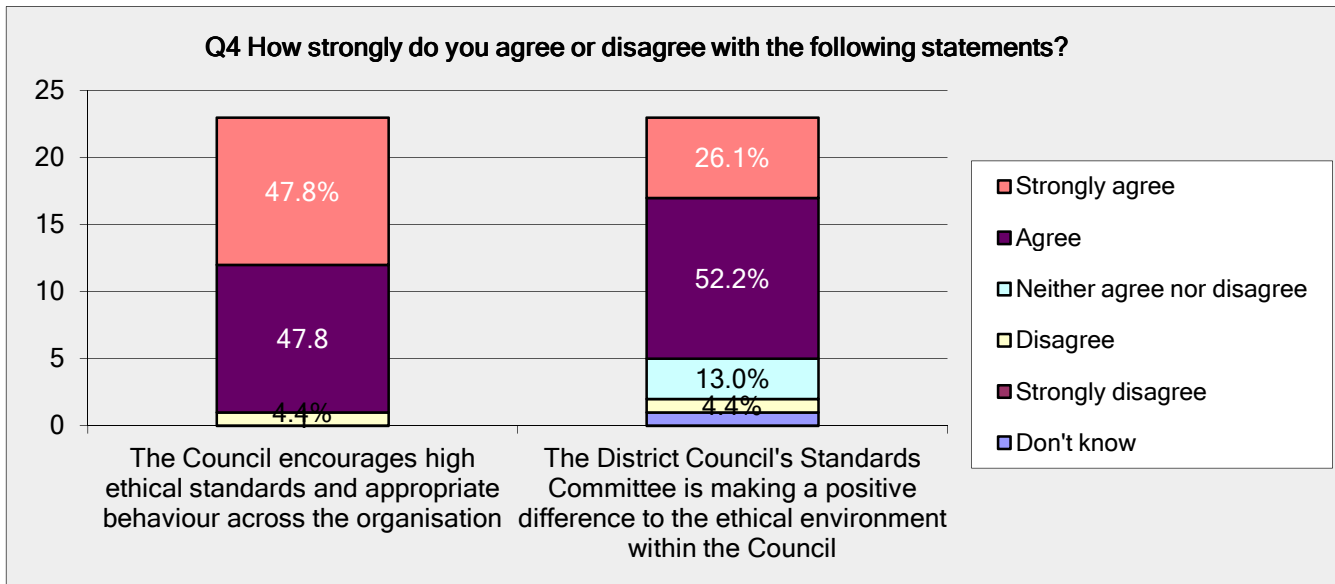
Almost all (95.6%) district councillors who responded claimed to be aware of what is meant by ethical standards.



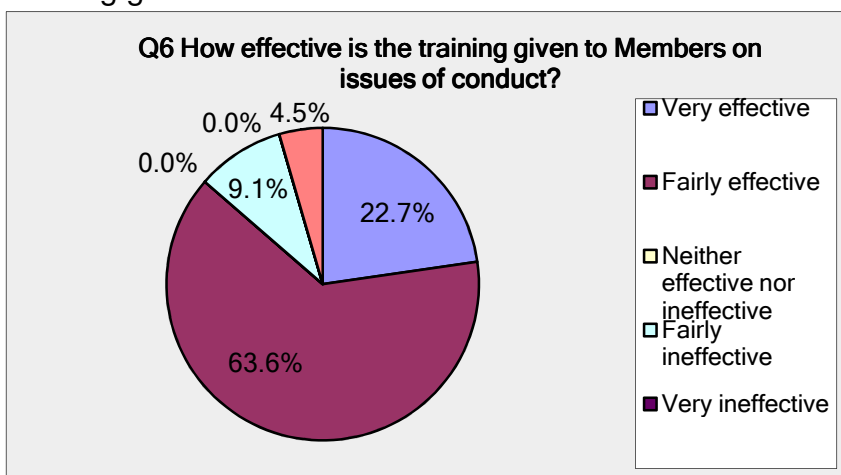
However, just under a fifth (17.4%) did not know where to find the codes and protocols that govern ethical standards at the district council. Almost all (91.3%) were aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Members' and Officers' Code of Conduct.



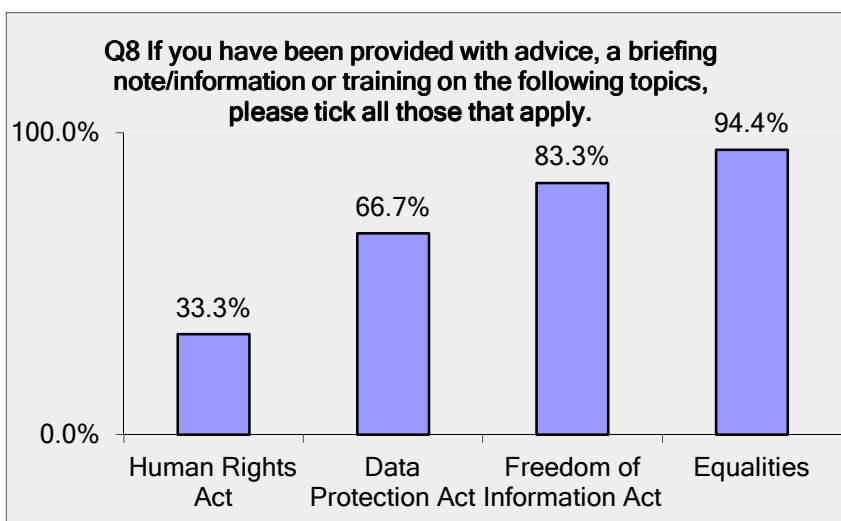
Councillors were asked how strongly they agree or disagree that the Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the organisation. Almost all (95.6%) those who responded agreed with the statement. Similarly four-fifths (78.3%) agreed that Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment within the Council. The level of respondents choosing the 'don't know' and 'neither agree nor disagree' options was very low in comparison with the officer sample.



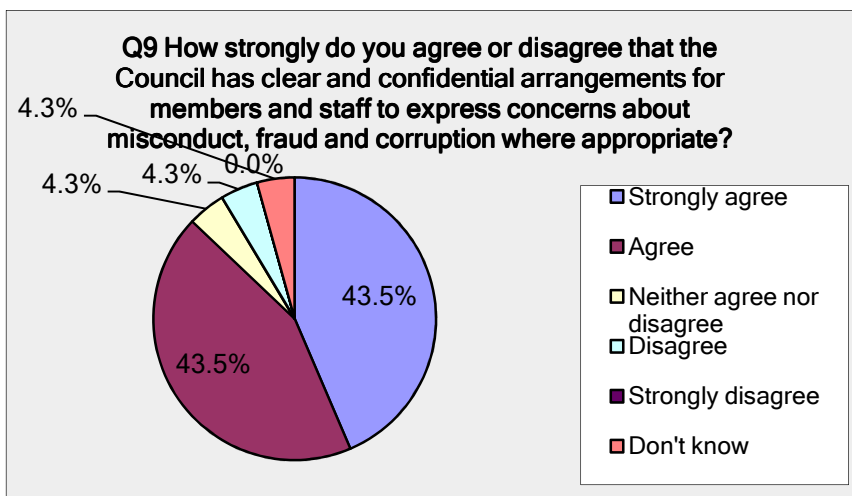
Training given to District Councillors on issues of conduct was felt to be effective (86.3%).



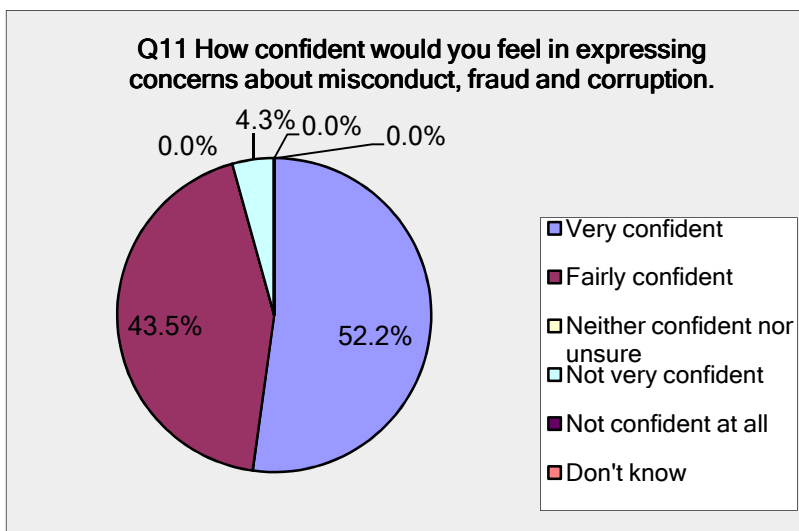
Almost all (94.4%) the District Councillors who responded remember having training on Equalities (there was an additional element of training at Member Development as well as the combined Officer/Member training in June 2013). The Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act training was also well remembered (83.3% and 66.7% respectively).



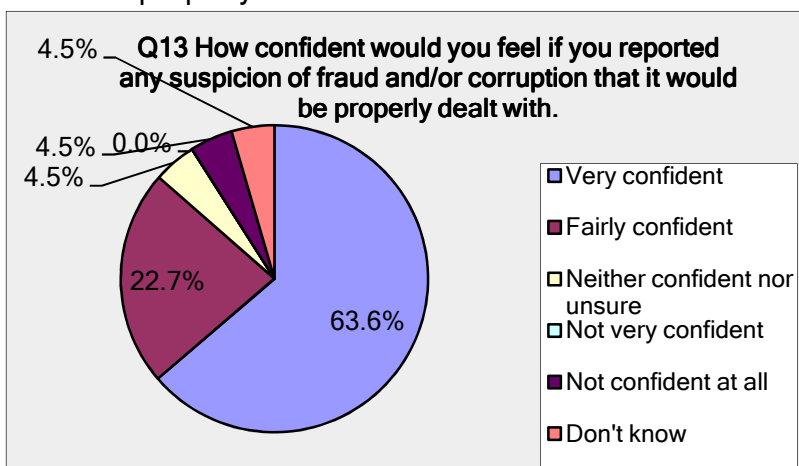
Around nine in ten (87%) agreed that the Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members and staff to express concerns and three-quarters (73.9%) claimed to know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption.



Almost all (95.7%) claim they would feel confident in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption, although a large proportion of those only felt fairly confident.



The vast majority (86.3%) felt that if they did report any suspicion of fraud or corruption that it would be properly dealt with.



No one claimed to have come across and examples of such activity in the last 12 months.

The questionnaire included three sets of statements with which recipients were asked to state how strongly they agree or disagreed.

There was a high level of agreement with almost all of the statements. The only statements with high levels of disagreement are 'There is a culture of bullying in the Council' (87.0%) and 'Members attempt to involve officers inappropriately in party political issues' (63.6%). The later statement also had a sizeable neither/nor response (22.7%).

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
I understand the differences between Disclosable Pecuniary interest and other interests	95.6	0	4.4	0
I regularly record and update my relevant interests in the Council's Register of Members' interests	73.9	13.0	13.0	0
I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' interests.	95.7	0	4.4	0
I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality.	95.6	4.4	0	0
Members listen to the advice of officers	87.0	8.7	4.4	0
Members attempt to involve officers inappropriately in party political issues	13.6	22.7	63.6	0
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	78.3	13.0	8.8	0
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	87.0	4.4	8.7	0
I understand the role of the District Council's Monitoring Officer	95.6	4.4	0	0
The communication between Members and officers is open and constructive	95.7	4.4	0	0
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and officers	100.0	0	0	0
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	8.8	4.4	87.0	0
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	81.9	13.6	4.6	0
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions	82.6	13.0	4.4	0
The public has easy access to information on who has taken particular decisions.	81.8	9.1	9.2	0

Over three-quarters (78.2%) agreed that decisions made by Members may be challenged without fear of reprisal and almost nine in ten agreed that the Council's complaints procedures are clear and accessible (87.0%) and that the Council takes seriously complaints from the public relating to ethical standards (82.6%).

Data Tables

Officers

Q1 How aware are you of what is meant by ethical standards?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully aware	31.4%	32
Partly aware	42.2%	43
Not really aware	16.7%	17
Not at all aware	9.8%	10
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q2 Do you know where to find the codes and protocols that govern ethical standards expected of members and officers at the District Council?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	44.6%	45
No	55.4%	56
<i>answered question</i>		101
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Q3 Are you aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Members' and Officers' Code of Conduct?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	32.0%	32
No	68.0%	68
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		2

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the organisation	16.8%	38.6%	28.7%	7.9%	0.99%	6.9%
The District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment within the Council	6.0%	23.0%	44.0%	5.0%	1.0%	21.0%
<i>answered question</i>						101
<i>skipped question</i>						1

Q6 How effective is the training given to staff on issues of conduct?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very effective	2.0%	2
Fairly effective	26.5%	27
Neither effective nor ineffective	21.6%	22
Fairly ineffective	5.9%	6
Very ineffective	3.9%	4
Don't know	40.2%	41
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q8 If you have been provided with advice, a briefing note/information or training on the following topics, please tick all those that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Human Rights Act	16.3%	15
Data Protection Act	93.5%	86
Freedom of Information Act	55.4%	51
Equalities	57.6%	53
<i>answered question</i>		92
<i>skipped question</i>		10

Q9 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council has clear and confidential arrangements for staff to express concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption where appropriate?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	14.7%	15
Agree	33.3%	34
Neither agree nor disagree	24.5%	25
Disagree	8.8%	9
Strongly disagree	1.0%	1
Don't know	17.6%	18
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q10 Do you know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	44.9%	44
No	55.1%	54
<i>answered question</i>		98
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Q11 How confident would you feel in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	12.7%	13
Fairly confident	35.3%	36
Neither confident nor unsure	17.6%	18
Not very confident	22.5%	23
Not confident at all	3.9%	4
Don't know	7.8%	8
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q13 How confident would you feel if you did report any suspicions of fraud and/or corruption that it would be properly dealt with?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	16.7%	17
Fairly confident	40.2%	41
Neither confident nor unsure	18.6%	19
Not very confident	15.7%	16
Not confident at all	1.0%	1
Don't know	7.8%	8
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q15 In the past 12 months have you come across any examples of activity which you would consider to be fraudulent or corrupt within your working environment?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	9.1%	9
No	90.9%	90
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Q17 Did you report your suspicions to anyone?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	37.5%	3
No	62.5%	5
<i>answered question</i>		8
<i>skipped question</i>		94

Q20 To what extent are you aware that you must declare any personal interests that conflict with the Council's interests?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully aware	69.7%	69
Partly aware	18.2%	18
Not really aware	10.1%	10
Not at all aware	2.0%	2
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Q21 To what extent are you aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully aware	63.3%	62
Partly aware	25.5%	25
Not really aware	6.1%	6
Not at all aware	5.1%	5
<i>answered question</i>		98
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Q22 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Members listen to the advice of officers	5.0%	20.2%	36.4%	13.1%	10.1%	15.2%
Members attempt to involve officers inappropriately in party political issues	1.0%	5.0%	41.4%	19.2%	14.1%	19.2%
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	5.1%	17.4%	36.7%	18.4%	4.1%	18.4%
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	3.1%	25.5%	37.8%	7.1%	9.2%	17.4%
I understand the role of the Council's Monitoring Officer	12.2%	28.6%	26.5%	17.4%	1.0%	14.3%
The communication between Members and officers is open and constructive	7.1%	16.3%	34.7%	15.3%	8.2%	18.4%

Q23 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and officers.	4.0%	19.1%	35.4%	15.2%	8.1%	18.2%
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	2.0%	9.2%	22.5%	36.7%	17.4%	12.2%
I know where to find the Member/Officer Protocol	9.2%	26.5%	14.3%	24.5%	9.2%	16.3%
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	4.0%	24.2%	31.3%	14.1%	3.0%	23.2%
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions.	8.1%	23.2%	23.2%	13.1%	9.1%	23.2%
The public has easy access to information on who has taken particular decisions	8.1%	21.2%	29.3%	13.1%	3.0%	25.3%

Q24 How strongly do you agree or disagree that decisions made by Members may be challenged, without fear of reprisal, by other Members, officers, partner organisations or the public?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	5.1%	5
Agree	22.2%	22
Neither agree nor disagree	26.3%	26
Disagree	18.2%	18
Strongly disagree	8.1%	8
Don't know	20.2%	20
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Q26 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council's Member complaints procedures are clear and accessible?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	9.1%	9
Agree	17.2%	17
Neither agree nor disagree	37.4%	37
Disagree	5.1%	5
Strongly disagree	1.0%	1
Don't know	30.3%	30
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Q28 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council takes seriously complaints from the public relating to ethical standards?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	19.2%	19
Agree	26.3%	26
Neither agree nor disagree	24.2%	24
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly disagree	2.0%	2
Don't know	28.3%	28
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Data Tables

District Councillors

Q1 How aware are you of what is meant by ethical standards?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully aware	56.5%	13
Partly aware	39.1%	9
Not really aware	4.3%	1
Not at all aware	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q2 Do you know where to find the codes and protocols that govern ethical standards expected of members and officers at the District Council?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	82.6%	19
No	17.4%	4
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q3 Are you aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Members' and Officers' Code of Conduct?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	91.3%	21
No	8.7%	2
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q4 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?						
Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the organisation	47.8%	47.8%	0	4.4%	0	0
The District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment within the Council	26.1%	52.2%	13.0%	4.4%	0	4.4%
<i>answered question</i>						23
<i>skipped question</i>						0

Q6 How effective is the training given to Members on issues of conduct?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very effective	22.7%	5
Fairly effective	63.6%	14
Neither effective nor ineffective	0.0%	0
Fairly ineffective	9.1%	2
Very ineffective	0.0%	0
Don't know	4.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Q8 If you have been provided with advice, a briefing note/information or training on the following topics, please tick all those that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Human Rights Act	33.3%	6
Data Protection Act	66.7%	12
Freedom of Information Act	83.3%	15
Equalities	94.4%	17
<i>answered question</i>		18
<i>skipped question</i>		5

Q9 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members and staff to express concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption where appropriate?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	43.5%	10
Agree	43.5%	10
Neither agree nor disagree	4.3%	1
Disagree	4.3%	1
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	4.3%	1
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q10 Do you know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	73.9%	17
No	26.1%	6
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q11 How confident would you feel in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	52.2%	12
Fairly confident	43.5%	10
Neither confident nor unsure	0.0%	0
Not very confident	4.3%	1
Not confident at all	0.0%	0
Don't know	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q13 How confident would you feel if you reported any suspicion of fraud and/or corruption that it would be properly dealt with.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	63.6%	14
Fairly confident	22.7%	5
Neither confident nor unsure	4.5%	1
Not very confident	0.0%	0
Not confident at all	4.5%	1
Don't know	4.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Q15 In the past 12 months have you come across any examples of activity which you would consider to be fraudulent or corrupt within your working environment?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	0.0%	0
No	100.0%	22
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Q17 Did you report your suspicions to anyone?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	0.0%	0
No	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		0
<i>skipped question</i>		23

Q20 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I understand the differences between a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and other interests	30.4	65.2	0	4.4	0	0
I regularly record and update my relevant interests in the Council's Register of Members' Interests	13.0	60.9	13.0	13.0	0	0
I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' interests	34.8	60.9	0	4.4	0	0
I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality	56.5	39.1	4.4	0	0	0
<i>answered question 23 skipped question 0</i>						

Q21 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Members listen to the advice of officers	26.1	60.9	8.7	4.4	0	0
Members attempt to involve officers inappropriately in party political issues	0	13.6	22.7	22.7	40.9	0
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	4.4	73.9	13.0	4.4	4.4	0
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	17.4	69.6	4.4	8.7	0	0
I understand the role of the Council's Monitoring Officer	39.1	56.5	4.4	0	0	0
The communication between Members and officers is open and constructive	34.8	60.9	4.4	0	0	0
<i>answered question 23 skipped question 0</i>						

Q22 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and officers	26.1	73.9	0	0	0	0
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	4.4	4.4	4.4	43.5	43.5	0
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	36.4	45.5	13.6	0	4.6	0
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions	34.8	47.8	13.0	4.4	0	0
The public has easy access to information on who has taken particular decisions	18.2	63.6	9.1	4.6	4.6	0
<i>answered question 23</i>						
<i>skipped question 0</i>						

Q23 How strongly do you agree or disagree that decisions made by Members may be challenged, without fear of reprisal, by other Members, officers, partner organisations or the public.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	30.4%	7
Agree	47.8%	11
Neither agree nor disagree	17.4%	4
Disagree	4.3%	1
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q25 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council's complaints procedures are clear and accessible

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	34.8%	8
Agree	52.2%	12
Neither agree nor disagree	8.7%	2
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	4.3%	1
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q27 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council takes seriously complaints from the public relating to ethical standards.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	60.9%	14
Agree	21.7%	5
Neither agree nor disagree	13.0%	3
Disagree	4.3%	1
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	0.0%	0
	<i>answered question</i>	23
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Comparison Tables

Q How aware are you of what is meant by ethical standards?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Fully aware	31.4	56.5
Partly aware	42.2	39.1
Not really aware	16.7	4.3
Not at all aware	9.8	0

Q Do you know where to find the codes and protocols that govern ethical standards expected of members and officers at the District Council/the Parish or Town Council's Members' Code of Conduct?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Yes	44.6	82.6
No	55.4	17.4

Q Are you aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Members/Members and Officers' Code of Conduct?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Yes	32.0	91.3
No	68.0	8.7

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The (Town/Parish) Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the Council/organisation.

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	16.8	47.8
Agree	38.6	47.8
Neither agree nor disagree	28.7	0
Disagree	7.9	4.4
Strongly disagree	1.0	0
Don't know	6.9	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment within the (Town/Parish) Council

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	6.0	26.1
Agree	23.0	52.2
Neither agree nor disagree	44.0	13.0
Disagree	5.0	4.4
Strongly disagree	1.0	0
Don't know	21.0	4.4

Q How effective is the training given to staff/members and clerks on issues of conduct?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Very effective	2.0	22.7
Fairly effective	26.5	63.6
Neither effective nor ineffective	21.6	0
Fairly ineffective	5.9	9.1
Very ineffective	3.9	0
Don't know	40.2	4.5

Q If you have been provided with advice, a briefing note/information or training on the following topics, please tick all those that apply.

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Human Rights Act	16.3	33.3
Data Protection Act	93.5	66.7
Freedom of Information Act	55.4	83.3
Equalities	57.6	94.4

Q How strongly do you agree that the Council/your council/the Parish and Town Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members/staff to express concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption where appropriate?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	14.7	43.5
Agree	33.3	43.5
Neither agree nor disagree	24.5	4.3
Disagree	8.8	4.3
Strongly disagree	1.0	0
Don't know	17.6	4.3

Q Do you know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Yes	44.9	73.9
No	55.1	26.1

Q How confident would you feel in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Very confident	12.7	52.2
Fairly confident	35.3	43.5
Neither confident nor unsure	17.6	0
Not very confident	22.5	4.3
Not confident at all	3.9	0
Don't know	7.8	0

Q How confident would you feel that if you did report any suspicion of fraud and/or corruption that it would be properly dealt with?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Very confident	16.7	63.6
Fairly confident	40.2	22.7
Neither confident nor unsure	18.6	4.5
Not very confident	15.7	0
Not confident at all	1.0	4.5
Don't know	7.8	4.5

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I understand the differences between a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and other interests

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	30.4
Agree		65.2
Neither agree nor disagree		0
Disagree		4.4
Strongly disagree		0
Don't know		0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I regularly record and update my relevant interests in the Council's Register of Members' Interests

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	13.0
Agree		60.9
Neither agree nor disagree		13.0
Disagree		13.0
Strongly disagree		0
Don't know		0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' interests

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	34.8
Agree		60.9
Neither agree nor disagree		0
Disagree		4.4
Strongly disagree		0
Don't know		0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members listen to the advice of officers/the Clerk.

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	5.0	26.1
Agree	20.2	60.9
Neither agree nor disagree	36.4	8.7
Disagree	13.1	4.4
Strongly disagree	10.1	0
Don't know	15.2	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members attempt to involve officers inappropriately in party political issues

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	1.0	0
Agree	5.0	13.6
Neither agree nor disagree	41.4	22.7
Disagree	19.2	22.7
Strongly disagree	14.1	40.9
Don't know	19.2	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	5.1	4.4
Agree	17.4	73.9
Neither agree nor disagree	36.7	13.0
Disagree	18.4	4.4
Strongly disagree	4.1	4.4
Don't know	18.4	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	3.1	17.4
Agree	25.5	69.6
Neither agree nor disagree	37.8	4.4
Disagree	7.1	8.7
Strongly disagree	9.2	0
Don't know	17.4	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I understand the role of the Council's Monitoring Officer

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	12.2	39.1
Agree	28.6	56.5
Neither agree nor disagree	26.5	4.4
Disagree	17.4	0
Strongly disagree	1.0	0
Don't know	14.3	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	56.5
Agree		39.1
Neither agree nor disagree		4.4
Disagree		0
Strongly disagree		0
Don't know		0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The communication between Members and Officers is open and constructive

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	7.1	34.8
Agree	16.3	60.9
Neither agree nor disagree	34.7	4.4
Disagree	15.3	0
Strongly disagree	8.2	0
Don't know	18.4	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The communication between Members and Clerk is open and constructive

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	N/A
Agree		
Neither agree nor disagree		
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Don't know		

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and Officers

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	4.0	26.1
Agree	19.1	73.9
Neither agree nor disagree	35.4	0
Disagree	15.2	0
Strongly disagree	8.1	0
Don't know	18.2	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and Clerk

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	N/A
Agree		
Neither agree nor disagree		
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Don't know		

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

There is a culture of bullying in the Council

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	2.0	4.4
Agree	9.2	4.4
Neither agree nor disagree	22.5	4.4
Disagree	36.7	43.5
Strongly disagree	17.4	43.5
Don't know	12.2	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	4.0	36.4
Agree	24.2	45.5
Neither agree nor disagree	31.3	13.6
Disagree	14.1	0
Strongly disagree	3.0	4.6
Don't know	23.2	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions/Members are aware that they are accountable for their decisions and actions.

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	8.1	34.8
Agree	23.2	47.8
Neither agree nor disagree	23.2	13.0
Disagree	13.1	4.4
Strongly disagree	9.1	0
Don't know	23.2	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The public has easy access to information on who has taken particular decisions

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	8.1	18.2
Agree	21.2	63.6
Neither agree nor disagree	29.3	9.1
Disagree	13.1	4.6
Strongly disagree	3.0	4.6
Don't know	25.3	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree that decisions made by Members may be challenged, without fear of reprisal by other Members, officers, partner organisations or the public?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	5.1	30.4
Agree	22.2	47.8
Neither agree nor disagree	26.3	17.4
Disagree	18.2	4.3
Strongly disagree	8.1	0
Don't know	20.2	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council's Members complaints procedures are clear and accessible?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	9.1	34.8
Agree	17.2	52.2
Neither agree nor disagree	37.4	8.7
Disagree	5.1	0
Strongly disagree	1.0	0
Don't know	30.3	4.3

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council takes seriously complaints (from the public) relating to ethical standards?

	Officers	District Councillors
Base:	102	23
	%	%
Strongly agree	19.2	60.9
Agree	26.3	21.7
Neither agree nor disagree	24.2	13.0
Disagree	0	4.3
Strongly disagree	2.0	0
Don't know	28.3	0

Analysis of Open Comments - Officers

Q5 What else should the Standards Committee do to encourage and develop high ethical standards within the Council? Please provide examples.

Publicise cases of poor standards

Provide short training/refreshers at SAMT/Service Managers Forum on a regular basis

Member training and awareness

Open and clear simple English in written form and make this information available in all forms to the public and staff. Encourage everyone to take part.

Member training

Training for all staff and members. Awareness raising/training required for members on equalities particularly around East European migrants.

Encourage members to aspire to these.

Ensure that the standards are consistently applied throughout the Council and publicise issues which have not met with the agreed standard.

Attend and witness members' meetings and committees.

Ensure members understand what their involvement should be.

Keep reminding and training people.

Presentation to all staff as with recent stress and data protection sessions (or on-line as for H&S).

Or part of induction.

Tell us what these standards are and what is expected of both staff and members.

Raise awareness. Training needed.

Use examples of cases elsewhere.

Information sheets. Information on Nedi homepage.

Don't know

Don't know

Promote awareness and transparency of relevant codes and standards

More awareness and understanding of what it means and advice on what to do about problems.

Remind officers and members that personal circumstances should not influence decisions made by the Council (with specific reference to planning decisions).

What does it do now?

Communicate what it does and has achieved more often.

Increase awareness and publicise breaches and sanctions.

Q7 If you think that the training is ineffective, please add comments or give examples where you think training has been lacking.

I have never had any training on issues of conduct apart from the data protection act and how to follow its standards.

I don't recall having had any training – been with the council for 9 years.

Equalities training was 5 years ago and haven't had training on some items mentioned below.

I can't remember ever receiving training on this topic except for data protection

What training?

Non existent

No training given.

Not had any or been aware of any.

I don't think I have ever had any or know anyone who has! If there was training; I can't remember it!

Not done the training.

Not sure what training there has been? Do councillors get this training?

Cannot recall any training

Not aware of any training

Never had any training on issues of conduct.

New employee – can't really comment.

I don't remember ever having any training on this issue.

I have worked part-time for 9 months and not been aware of it. I have had no induction.

Only seen the officer once who deals with this.

What training, not sure.

Training?

Not enough, no ones bothered about it.

I am unaware of when training was last carried out, hence my answer above.

No real training.

Only seen him once for training.

Q12 If you answered not very or not at all confident, please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

Ensure that issues are dealt with in an appropriate manner and by a responsible officer.

By not giving the impression that the conduct of members or senior staff is not subject to the same policies etc as staff/officers. Questionable actions by members etc seems to never be questioned or dealt with. They don't appear to be accountable.

Tell staff where to find this information and give training to all staff about it

I don't feel that my concerns may be kept confidential and sometimes it feels like no complaints should be made in case it has a comeback on your job.

Need to create an environment where staff can report concerns about members or other staff without fear of losing job – difficult in current economic climate and influence members have on recruitment and job losses.

More information on the process. Issue of anonymity.

Could be made clear how you go about raising concerns and to be answered that it is confidential. You wouldn't lose your job.

Have any incidents dealt with by outside body – not internal.

Targeted training

Many members of staff are scared of implications of crossing members – members need training and to follow advice.

Not sure if there wouldn't be a backlash against whistleblower.

No consequences for poor performance. No one is challenged over anything.

More information on procedures/what to expect.

Relationships within the workplace between higher management and lower management should not be allowed. Unless your judgement can not be swayed.

Concerned of being labelled a trouble maker.

Q14 If you answered not very or not at all confident please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

Install more trust and belief that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with.

Not very confident if the report was against senior managers or members. Everyone should be subject to the same policies and procedures genuinely – not just on paper. Openness and accountability!!!

Training, training, training.

Would worry about my job

Depends on where the issue has been identified/reported – consistency is essential.

No confidence that anything would change.

More info.

Unfortunately I feel it depends on the person you were reporting.

Some members often make comments that are archaic, misinformed and prejudice around all strands of key equality issues. This even occurs in public arenas. Yet no challenge and bringing them to task seems to occur: very much “this is how it is and has been, so let it slide again this time” approach.

No experience of this.

Q16 If yes, please give brief details.

Not prepared to provide details

Can't comment. Risk losing job etc.

May be unethical or changing things to suit themselves rather than for the good of the general public (members).

Do not feel comfortable in doing so.

No way!!!

At a disciplinary hearing.

Timesheets

With a colleague. It was dealt with.

Q18 If yes, please give brief details

Senior officers aware or made aware.

Q19 If no, please explain what reasons prevented you from reporting the matter.

No confidence in it being dealt with

Others seemed to already be aware but not dealing with it/ignoring it?!

It seems like members can do what they want and there is a lot of "yes" people that allow them to continue as Directors/Assistant Directors are not sure of the policies so are not sure what they are agreeing to.

Managers already aware.

Already in disciplinary process.

More to report/identified

Not informed with information as work in leisure.

Q25 If you disagree, please give your comments.

It is not easy to challenge a member decision.

The phrase "they are members, they can do what they want" seems to be commonplace.

If there is a challenge too many people get involved and normally its the wrong people who are unaware of the impacts etc and this can have a knock on effect down the chain.

I feel officers would be uncomfortable in challenging members' decisions.

I would not feel confident that reporting an issue would not be held against me.

If decisions are taken that 'backfire' members blame officers claiming they were unaware of facts.

No reasons are given why members make decisions against officers advice but we are the ones who have to deal with the public and this puts us in an uncomfortable position.

Planning committee decisions are without any founding in Planning Policy - officer advice totally ignored on a regular basis.

Planning committee is a farce.

Lack of 'ownership' of decision making especially in planning.

Everyone is fearful for their job. I don't expect anyone would want to blot their copy book for fear of being written out of the structure.

Planning decisions frequently going against informed, reasoned officer advice seems like point scoring and/or parochial interests instead of the best decision for a council as a whole. Very NIMBY approach. No point challenging them sometimes, as decision is often already made before listening to professional advice.

No experience.

Q27 If you disagree, please give your comments.

We have zero interaction with members and would not have a clue how to complain if we needed to.

No information made public.

Don't know if they do or do not.

Q29 If you disagree, please give your comments.

In general I would agree. Unethical behaviour by officers is taken very seriously but at a more senior level I doubt it. Issues would be brushed under the carpet or staff discouraged or too afraid to make a complaint.

No experience.

No knowledge of this.

Q30 Please add any additional comments about how the Council could ensure compliance with ethical standards and build public confidence in local democracy?

Member and Officer training, regular review and adherence to policies

Advertise the public access to this information to all members of staff and the public.

Ensure members are fully aware of consequences and members should take advice from officers who are experts within their field from higher management who don't know what they are agreeing to. Members should not have personal views on who should get a council house on an individual basis.

The responses regarding members are not across the board but there does appear to be a culture of members being in control and unchallengeable. This is perhaps

more so since the Audit Commission was abolished.

More openness.

Members should set/agree policy and not then interfere with the delivery of this policy because it doesn't serve the interests of their mother/brother/Bob down the road etc etc.

No experience.

Easier access to guidance (of all kinds) on the intranet.

No knowledge of this. Members should have respect for officers advice and even if they don't agree they should treat officers with respect.

I think knowledge of staff in this area is particularly weak.

Not bothered about form. Waste of time again and paper.

Promote awareness and transparency of relevant codes and standards

When searching for the listed documents on the intranet these are not easily found.

Please make this easier.

This survey seems to have made an assumption that officers know what ethical standards is / are, who is involved, what it does, what service area it is in, etc. On discussion with colleagues it appears we don't really know what this is all about, so people may be answering this survey a little blindly!

Members should have respect for officer's advice and even if they don't agree they should treat officers with respect.

Analysis of Open Comments – Councillors

Q5 What else should the Standards Committee do to encourage and develop high ethical standards within the Council? Please provide examples.

Realistically there is probably not a lot more that the Standards Committee can do other than to act as, and publicise itself as the standard bearer of ethics within the authority.

It should be more democratic and cross-party aware. Each group within the council should be involved and represented as Vice Chairs. Each councillor should have knowledge of each ward on planning.

Sessions at least once a year.

It should be non-political as both the Chair and Vice-Chair are from the Labour party.

Members development/workshop etc.

Lead by example and not play politics with this committee eg Labour councillors being Chair and Vice-Chair. Should be cross-party!

Refresher sessions at least once a year.

Officer & member training.

Q7 If you think that the training is ineffective, please add comments or give examples where you think training has been lacking.

No training has been undertaken because of instructions from group leader.

Attendance of Councillors

Re-arrange Members Development sessions (some, not all) to take into account those members who work full-time.

It's the take-up of training that's the problem.

Q12 If you answered not very or not at all confident, please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

Transparent process where there is an apolitical approach.

Q14 If you answered not very or not at all confident please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

Need to be sure that the officer is able to deal with issues in an apolitical way ie no 'interference' from political masters.

Q16 If yes, please give brief details.

Q18 If yes, please give brief details

Q19 If no, please explain what reasons prevented you from reporting the matter.

Q24 If you disagree, please give your comments.

Bullying from individuals.

Q26 If you disagree, please give your comments.

Comment made from experience!

Q28 If you disagree, please give your comments.

Q29 Please add any additional comments about how the Council could ensure compliance with ethical standards and build public confidence in local democracy?

Should be democratic and cross party aware.

Satisfied with arrangements that are in place.

Cross working between all parties.

Demographic Profiles

Q What is your gender?

<i>Base in brackets</i>	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
	%	%	%
Officers (102)	39.6	44.6	15.8
Councillors (23)	65.2	30.4	4.3

Q What is your age group?

	24 and under	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 – 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 and over	Prefer not to say
<i>Base in brackets</i>								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Officers (102)	3.0	19.8	18.8	25.7	13.9	1.0	-	17.8
Councillors (23)	-	-	13.6	4.5	27.3	40.9	9.1	4.5

Q Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

<i>Base in brackets</i>	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
	%	%	%
Officers (102)	3.0	84.8	12.1
Councillors (23)	13.6	81.8	4.5

Q Please describe yourself.

<i>Base in brackets</i>	White British/Irish/Other	Other background	Prefer not to say
	%	%	%
Officers (102)	87.3	2.0	9.8
Councillors (23)	95.7	-	0.4