

**Stephen Clarke**, Chair of Standards Committee, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

**Kirsty Cole**, Assistant Chief Executive, Newark and Sherwood District Council, and President, ACSeS

Dawn Hands, Research Director, BMG Research

Reverend Paul Lipscomb, Chair of Standards Committee, Slough Borough Council

Chair: Elizabeth Hall, Board Member, The Standards Board for England



Dawn Hands, Research Director, BMG Research



#### Survey method

- 1,308 completed questionnaires received:
  - 1,127 local councils
  - 181 other authorities
- Survey work was undertaken in July and August 2006



### Standards committee member profiles

- 75% male, 25% female
- Mean age of respondents is 62 years:
  - 12% aged up to 50
  - 27% aged 51-60
  - 37% aged 61-70
  - 18% aged 71+
  - 5% refused



### Length of time on the standards committee

- 12% less than one year
- 63% over one year, but less than five years
- 25% five years or more



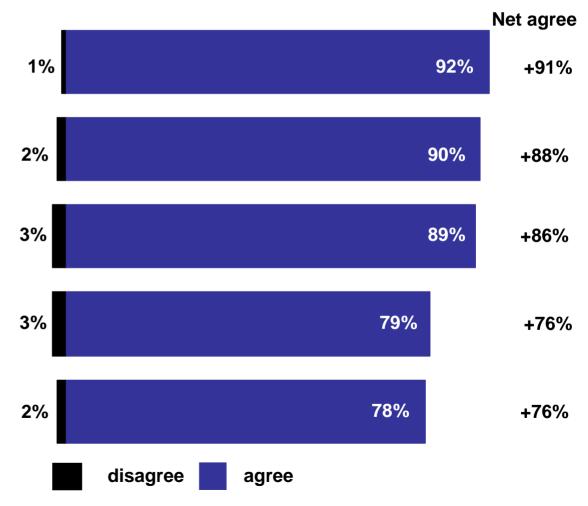
Standards committee has a good working relationship with monitoring officer

Standards committee gets enough support from the monitoring officer

Main function of standards committee is to promote ethical behaviour

My authority values what the standards committee does

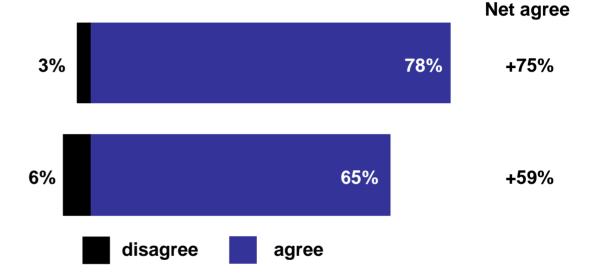
Chief executive is supportive of the work of the standards committee





Authority believes that the role of the standards committee is part of wider ethical framework

Work of standards committee has positive impact on behaviour of members

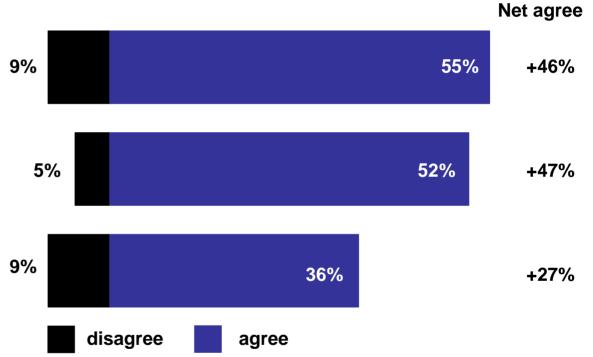




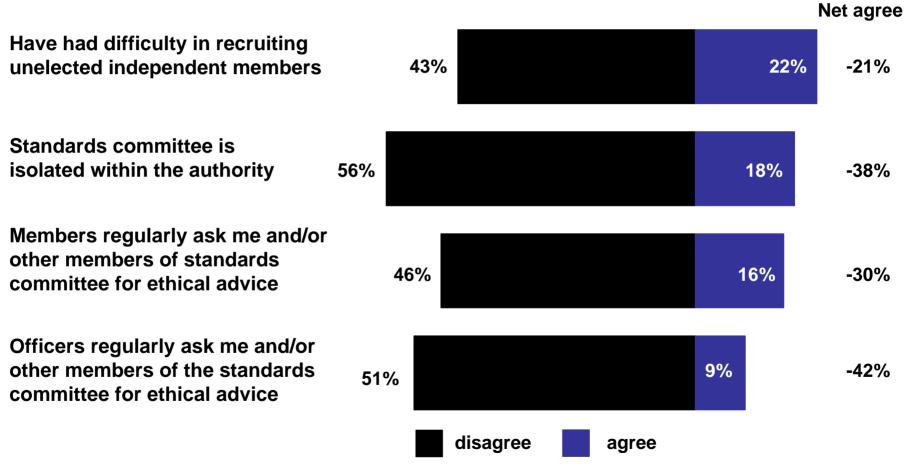
Standards committee receives an adequate level of financial support

Standards committee has positive impact on behaviour of officers

Standards committee has an appropriate influence over corporate management team









#### Role on the committee

How prepared do standards committee members feel in relation to their role?

- 86% well prepared (including 25% very well prepared)
- 8% neither well prepared nor unprepared
- 4% unprepared



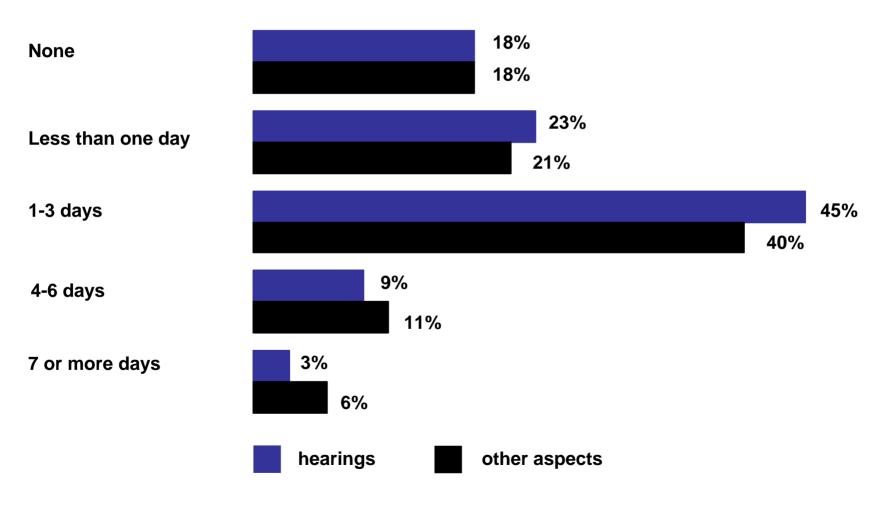
#### Hearings

How prepared do standards committee members feel in relation to undertaking hearings?

- 76% well prepared (including 23% very well prepared)
- 12% neither well prepared nor unprepared
- 8% unprepared (including 3% highly unprepared)

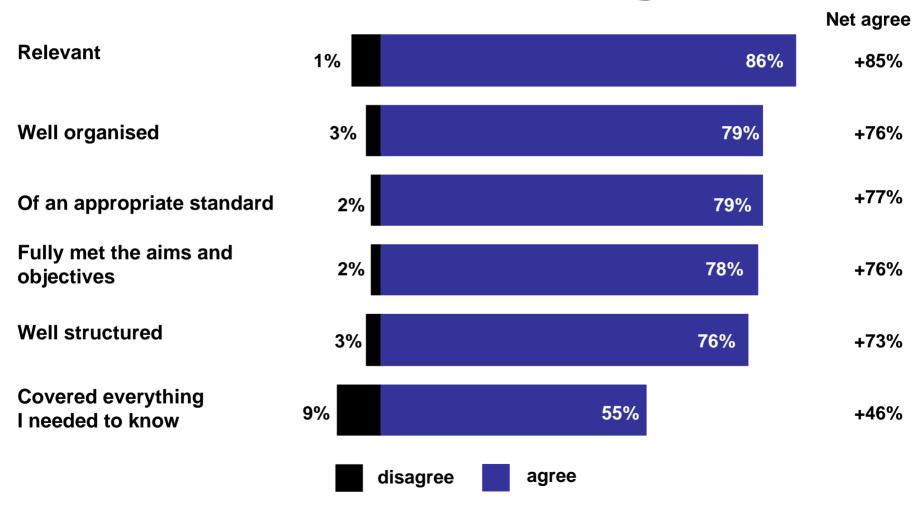


#### Number of training days received





### Attitudes towards training received





#### Impact of training

- Of those who do not feel prepared for their role, 52% have undertaken some training, 44% have not.
- Of those who feel prepared for their role, 92% have undertaken some training, 7% have not.



#### **Future training**

- 59% would welcome more training:
  - 86% of respondents who felt unprepared for a hearing
  - 77% of those who felt unprepared for their role



### Local investigations: positive impacts

Raised awareness of the standards committee

Raised awareness of the Code of Conduct

Reinforced the importance of the Code of Conduct

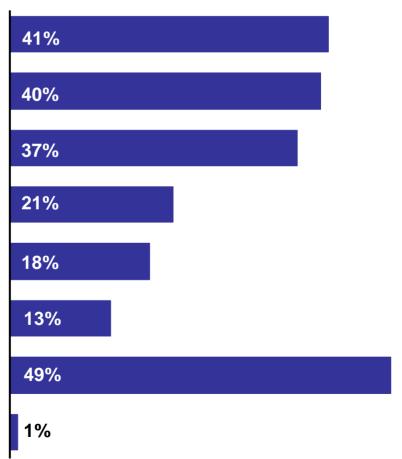
Raised public awareness of the Code of Conduct

Improved ethical behaviour

Now more transparent or open

No local hearings

No positive impacts





### Local investigations: negative impacts

Impact on relationship between standards committee and members

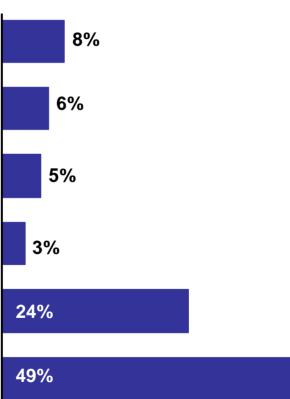
Impact on public image

Impact on image of standards committee

Impact on relationship between standards committee and officers

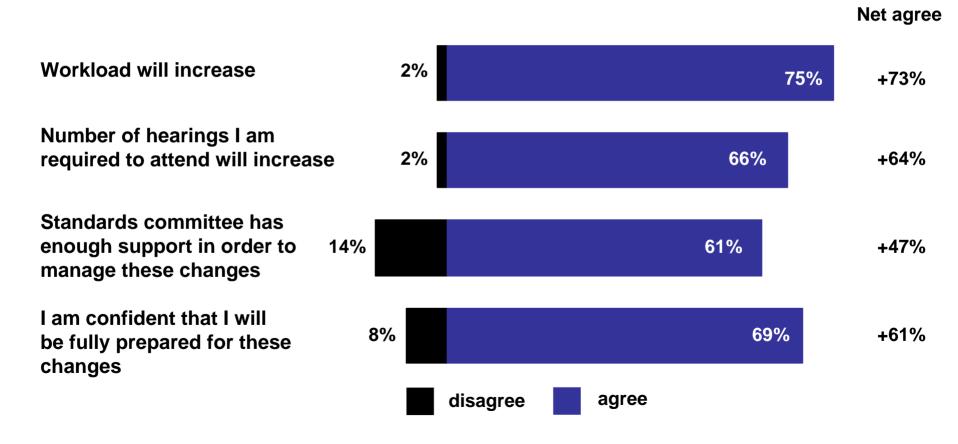
No negative impacts

No local hearings





# Future impact of local investigations and hearings





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### Monitoring officers – what do you look like ?

- 60% male, 40% female
- Average age is 50 years:
  - 41% are aged 41-50
  - 41% are aged 51-60
- 92% classified themselves as 'White British'
- 81% are solicitors
- 11% are not qualified in any legal position

#### Bridging the gap

- 62% are members of their authority's corporate management team
- 80% have worked in local government for more than 15 years
- Time as monitoring officer:
  - 37% − 1 year < 5 years</li>
  - 22% 5 years < 8 years
  - 22% more than 10 years
- 47% work in authorities with overall Conservative control, 16% Labour, and 10% Liberal Democrats



#### Support and training in the job

- 1% of monitoring officers have no support staff
- However, 5% have one member of staff in support, and 92% have two or more support staff



### Perceptions and attitudes of monitoring officers

As monitoring officer I have a good working relationship with the standards committee

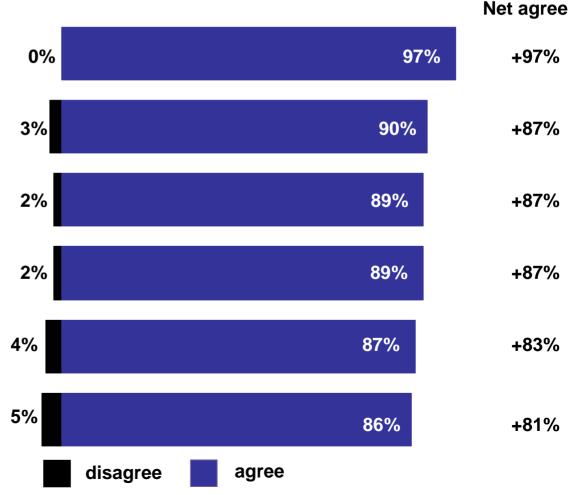
Members regularly ask me for monitoring officer advice

The chief executive (or similar) is supportive of my work as monitoring officer

The chief finance officer is supportive of my work as monitoring officer

I am consulted on the legal implications of decisions made by the authority

My authority values what I do as monitoring officer





### Perceptions and attitudes of monitoring officers

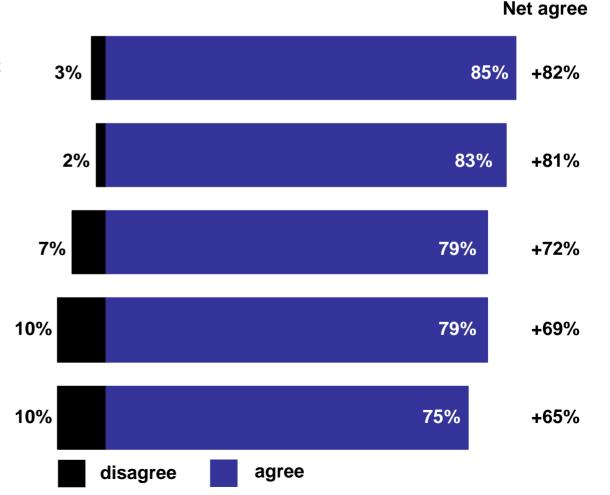
My authority believes that my role as monitoring officer is part of its wider ethical framework

My work as a monitoring officer has a positive impact on the behaviour of members

I have had adequate training to undertake my current role of monitoring officer

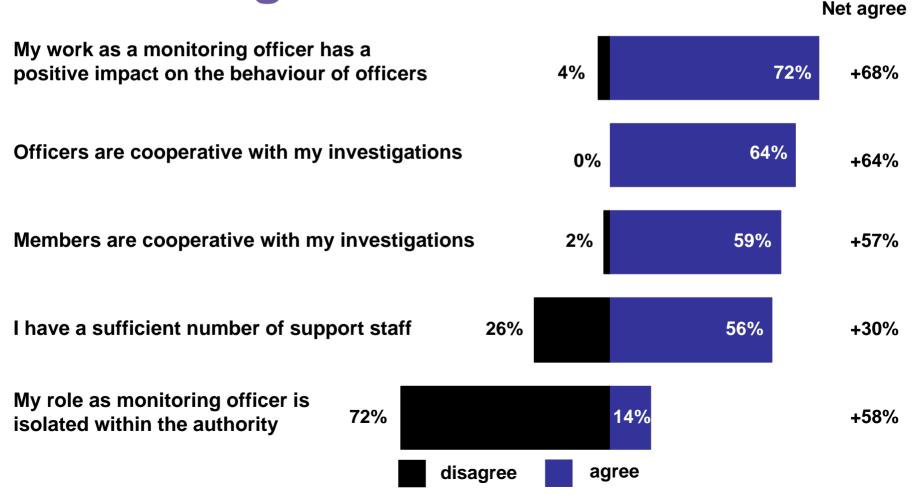
As monitoring officer I have an appropriate influence over our corporate management team

Officers regularly ask me for monitoring officer advice





# Perceptions and attitudes of monitoring officers





#### Standards committee activities

Activity	Within terms of reference (%)	Involved in activity (%)
Monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct	98	73
Training/arranging training/seminars on the Code of Conduct	97	76
Inclusion of Code/ethics issues in the induction of new members	61	57
Providing advice/assistance to members/officers on the Code/ethics	81	57
Overview of whistleblowing Code	47	30
Overview of constitution or relevant extracts	41	38
Hearings	89	37
Functions relating to authority's complaints procedure	30	24
Responding to/receiving feedback on national or governmental developments regarding ethical governance	69	74



### Independent members of standards committees

- 34% of respondents feel it is easy to recruit independent members
- 24% neither easy nor difficult
- 40% difficult
- Key measures to recruit independent members: Adverts in local press (97%), website (50%), personal approach (38%). Adverts are considered the most effective approach by 59% (personal approach 19%).



#### Conduct of local investigations

#### Agreement with statements about local investigations:

We experienced problems in understanding the investigations process

We experienced problems in finding someone to undertake the investigation

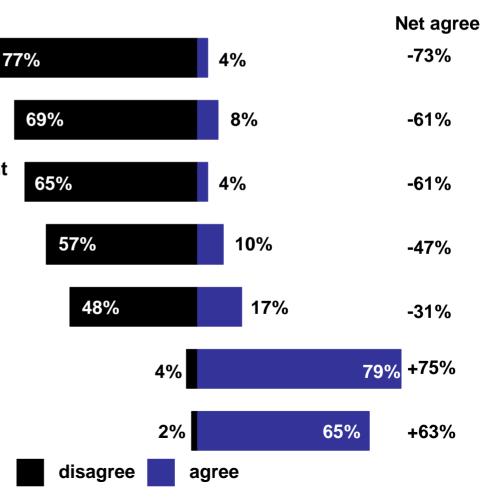
We experienced problems in getting sufficient independent members for a hearing

There were difficulties in deciding breach

We experienced problems in paying for the cost of the investigation

The investigation was carried out to an acceptable standard

The hearing was carried out to an acceptable standard





### Local investigations: positive impacts

Raised awareness of the monitoring officer

Raised awareness of the standards committee

Raised awareness of the Code of Conduct

Reinforced the importance of the Code of Conduct

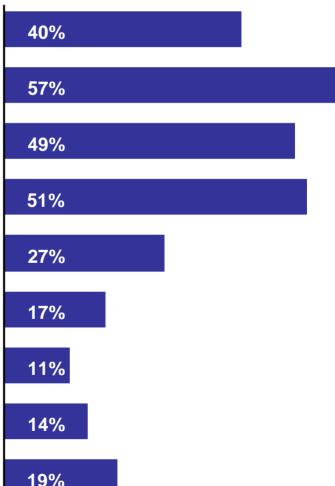
Raised public awareness of the Code of Conduct

Improved ethical behaviour within the authority

Authority now more transparent or open

No positive impacts

**Unsure/not provided** 





## Local investigations: negative impacts

Impact on relationship between monitoring officer and members

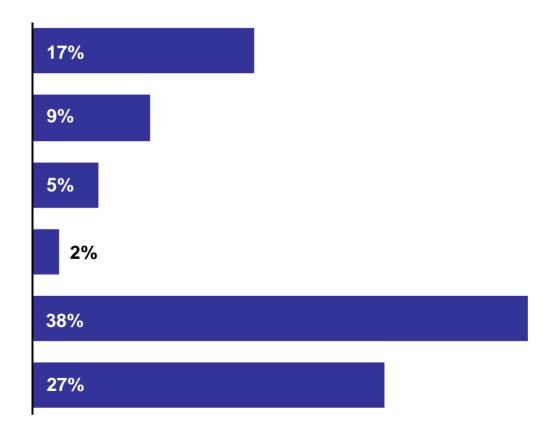
Impact on image of authority to the public

Impact on image of standards committee within the authority

Impact on relationship between monitoring officer and officers

No negative impacts

**Unsure/not provided** 



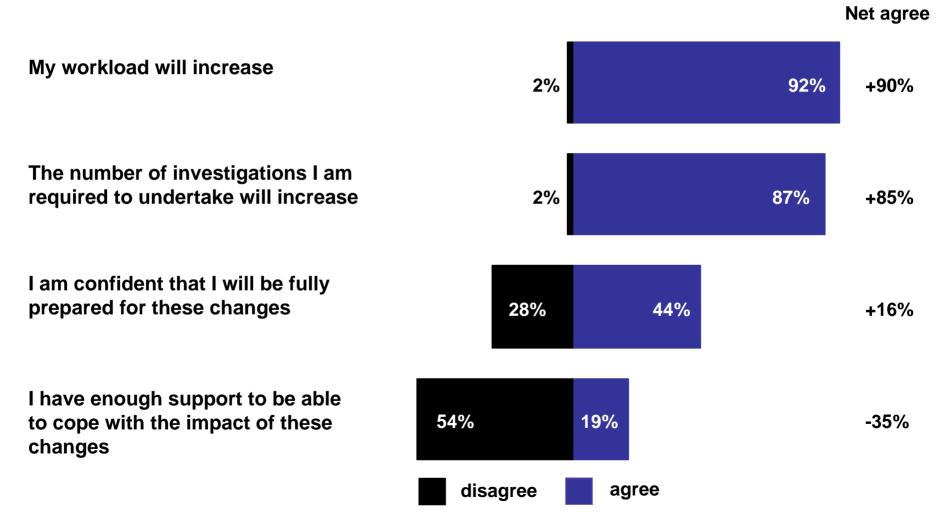


# Training on undertaking local investigations

- 74% have received training
- 62% would like more training



#### Impact of future changes





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