

28 May 2009

94% in favour of councillor's Code of Conduct

There's a high - and growing - level of support among councillors for the national Code of Conduct covering their behaviour.

Councillors and council officers recognise the importance of high standards to local democracy, and they are increasingly supportive of the work of the Standards Board for England, the national regulator of councillor behaviour.

The Standards Board for England researches the views of councillors and council officers every two years.

This year's survey shows support for the Code of Conduct and the local standards framework is at an all time high:

- 95% support the need for members to sign up to the Code, an increase of 10% since 2004
- 83% consider maintaining high standards of behaviour to be one of the most important issues facing local government
- More than 70% feel that it is right for complaints to be handled locally
- 89% are confident that their authority is doing a good job of upholding standards
- Four times as many agree as disagree that 'member's standards of behaviour have improved over recent times.'

Results also show that 77% think the Standards Board has been successful in defining standards of behaviour for councillors, an increase of 12% since 2004.

The Standards Board is also seen to be more successful in improving the reputation of local government amongst the public, and those who are satisfied with the work of the organisation has grown by 17% since 2004.

Dr Robert Chilton, the Chair of the Standards Board said: "This is a very encouraging set of results. At a time when public trust in politicians is under serious challenge, and standards matter more than ever, they show that local government is leading the way, embracing the high standards of conduct, transparency and accountability that the public has every right to expect.

"The Standards Board will continue to support authorities in this essential work, providing the expert, independent national scrutiny needed to protect standards and boost public confidence in local democracy."

Ends.