

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ELECTED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS
QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been approved by the Council for the purposes of its proposed ethical governance audit for 2006/07. Responses from a sample of members, officers, co-opted representatives and key partners will assist in assessing any ethical issues facing the Council. The responses will be collated and will be non-attributable. The results will help in deciding how best to recommend that resources should be prioritised and allocated to addressing specific issues, and to training, on ethical matters. Members, Officers, Co-opted representatives and Partners who would like to participate in further confidential discussions on the issues raised are asked to complete the statement at the end of the questionnaire.

Please tick the answers you feel best reflect your view.

22 REPLIES RECEIVED

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Values						
1.	Is it important for local government to establish and operate by a set of strong ethical principles or values?	18	1			
2.	Are you aware of the Council's core purpose and values?	8	11	3		
Standards of Conduct						
3.	Do you think that public perception of ethical standards within the Council is good?	2	9	11		
4.	Do you think that standards of ethical conduct in the authority are high?	8	12	1	1	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
5.	Is there any complacency about standards of conduct a. amongst Members?	5	4	10	2	
	b. amongst Officers?	1	1	11	8	
6.	a. Do you think that Members see themselves as having a role in ensuring good conduct and high standards on the part of others?	9	8	4		
	b. Do you see yourself as having a role in ensuring good conduct and high standards on the part of others?	16	4	1		
7.	Do you think that Officers see themselves as having a role in ensuring good conduct and high standards on the part of others?	10	10			

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
8.	Do you think that Standards issues are perceived as being the responsibility of and owned by Members and employees generally?	6	10	5		
9.	Can you obtain advice and support to help you on Standards issues when you need it?	20	1	1		
Members' Code of Conduct						
10.	a. Do you fully understand the Members Code of Conduct?	13	8	1		
	b. Have you received relevant training on issues relating to the Members Code of Conduct?	15	3	2	1	
	c. Do you know where to seek advice on issues relating to the Code of Conduct?	19	1	1		
11.	Do you think there is common understanding on how to deal with conflicts of interests?	6	9	5	1	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Constitutional Framework						
12.	Are you aware of and do you have a broad understanding of the following documents:-					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Constitution 	10	9	2	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of Reference for Cabinet, Executive Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees, Committees, Panels etc 	8	11	3		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schemes of Delegation for Cabinet, Executive Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees, Committees, Panels etc 	9	11	2		
13.	Do you have a good understanding of the processes relating to the conduct of local authority business?	9	10	2		
14.	Do you think that the Council's practices and procedures are relevant, up to date and clear?	6	11	4	1	
15.	Do you think that the Council consistently follows proper procedures?	9	10	2		

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Ethical Framework						
16.	Do you think there is an understanding throughout the authority of the new ethical framework introduced by the Local Government Act 2000?	4	10	5	1	
17.	Are you clear about the role of the national Standards Board for England?	8	10	3	1	
18	Do you fully understand the role and responsibilities of the Council's Standards Committee?	11	7	3	1	
Member and Officer Roles						
19.	Are you aware of, and do you broadly understand the roles and responsibilities of:-					
	• Cabinet Members	15	5	2		
	• Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive)	14	4	4		
	• Section 151 Officer (Finance)	13	3	6		

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Officer (Director, Law and Democracy) 	16	4	2		
20.	Do you think that Officers are clear as to their roles and accountabilities?	14	6			
21.	a. Do you think that Members are clear as to their roles and accountabilities?	3	15	3		
	b. Are you clear about your roles and accountabilities?	14	8			
22.	Are you clear as to who is responsible for what under the Council's structure?	4	13	5		
23.	Do you think that non-executive Members identify strongly with the overview and scrutiny role?	3	9	8	1	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Information						
24.	Is there good access to information for a. Members b. the Public?	8 17	13 12	1		
25.	Do you receive clear information about the work of the Council which is relevant to you?	15	7			

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES

131 replies received

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Values						
1.	Is it important for local government to establish and operate by a set of strong ethical principles or values?	119	11	1		
2.	Are you familiar with the 10 general principles of Conduct for Councillors?	18	19	41	53	
3.	a. Are you aware of the Council's core purpose and values?	51	42	28	9	
	b. Are you aware of the Council's six core management principles?	40	17	46	27	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Standards of Conduct						
4.	Do you think that public perception of ethical standards within the Council is good?	19	65	36	3	
5.	Do you think that standards of ethical conduct in the authority are high?	43	74	10	1	
6.	Is there any complacency about standards of conduct:- a. amongst Members?	11	12	58	14	
	b. amongst Officers?	13	14	69	22	
7.	a. Do you think that Members see themselves as having a role in ensuring good conduct and high standards on the part of others?	43	56	14	1	
	b. Do you see yourself as having a role in ensuring good conduct and high standards on the part of others?	102	21	6	1	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
8.	Do you think that Officers generally, see themselves as having a role in ensuring good conduct and high standards on the part of others?	66	52	12		
9.	Do you think that Standards issues are perceived as being owned by Members and employees generally?	27	62	26	2	
10.	Can you obtain advice and support to help you on Standards issues when you need it?	78	26	13	2	
11.	Have you had relevant training on issues relating to standards of conduct?	22	13	46	49	
Codes of Conduct						
12.	a. Are you familiar with the provisions of the employees code of conduct?	47	39	37	8	
	b. Have you received any training relating to the employees code of conduct?	13	11	50	56	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
	c. Do you know where to seek advice on issues relating to the employees code of conduct?	71	25	24	9	
13.	a. Do you fully understand the Members Code of Conduct?	12	32	53	29	
	b. Have you received relevant training on issues relating to the Members Code of Conduct?	8	4	45	70	
	c. Do you know where to seek advice on issues relating to the Code of Conduct?	55	20	36	18	
14.	Do you think there is common understanding on how to deal with conflicts of interests?	18	59	33	14	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Constitutional Framework						
15.	Are you aware of and do you have a broad understanding of the following documents:-					
	• The Council's Constitution	31	29	48	22	
	• Terms of Reference for Cabinet, Executive Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees, Panels etc	20	27	52	30	
	• Schemes of Delegation for Cabinet, Executive Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees	23	27	51	29	
	• Officers Scheme of Delegation	32	27	44	26	
16.	a. Are you aware of the new Scrutiny and Select Committee Structure?	21	28	47	24	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
	b. Are you familiar with the new duties and responsibilities of the:-					
	• Executive Scrutiny Committee; and	16	24	53	42	
	• the six Select Committees?	17	36	47	39	
17.	a. Do you have a good understanding of the processes relating to the conduct of local authority business?	20	47	45	18	
	b. Do you think that members of the public have a good understanding of the processes relating to the conduct of the Council's business?	2	14	77	29	
18.	Do you think that the Council's practices and procedures are relevant, up to date and clear?	22	67	24	4	
19.	Do you think that the Council consistently follows proper procedures?	35	59	13	3	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Member and Officer Roles						
20.	Are you aware of and do you broadly understand the roles and responsibilities of:-					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Members • Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) • Section 151 Officer (Finance) • Monitoring Officer (Director, Law & Democracy) 	49	34	33	8	
		46	36	29	6	
		24	31	43	22	
		28	26	47	17	
21.	Do you think that Officers are clear as to their roles and accountabilities?	43	60	8	3	
22.	a. Do you think that Members are clear as to their roles and accountabilities?	32	67	9	1	
	b. Are you clear about your roles and accountabilities?	82	39	8		

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
23.	a. Are you clear as to who is responsible for what under the Council's structure?	33	64	29	4	
	b. Do you think that members of the public are clear as to who is responsible for what under the Council's structure?	1	20	86	20	
24.	Do you think that non-executive Members identify strongly with the overview and scrutiny role?	8	36	37	5	
Corporate Governance Arrangements						
25.	Are you aware of the procedures for dealing with Officers' interests in contracts, applications etc?	42	39	33	15	
26.	Are you aware of the procedures for dealing with gifts and hospitality offered to or received by Officers?	76	34	15	4	
27.	Are you aware of the protocol on Member/Officer working relations?	36	37	36	20	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Decision-making						
28.	Are you familiar with the Council's Statutory Forward Plan which is published monthly?	35	19	43	33	
29.	Do you know about the forward planning document which contains details of proposed key decisions, and also other significant matters in the twelve months ahead?	34	24	39	33	
30.	a. Are you familiar with your Service's internal scheme of officer delegations?	45	31	32	22	
	b. Are you clear about the procedures for officer delegated decision making and recording?	35	37	38	19	
Information						
31.	Is there good access to information for a. Members b. the Public?	38 34	50 55	3 5		

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
32.	Do you receive clear information about the work of the Council which is relevant to you?	50	56	17	5	
Ethical Framework						
33.	Do you think there is an understanding throughout the authority of the new ethical framework introduced by the Local Government Act 2000?	9	29	59	20	
34.	Are you clear about the role of the national Standards Board for England?	12	24	45	47	
35.	Do you understand the role and responsibilities of the Council's Standards Committee?	15	29	49	35	

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE QUESTIONNAIRE - KEY PARTNERS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been approved by the Council for the purposes of its ethical governance audit proposed for 2006/07. Responses from a sample of members, officers, co-opted representatives and key partners will assist in assessing any ethical issues facing the Council. The responses will be collated and will be non-attributable. The results will help in deciding how best to recommend that resources should be prioritised and allocated to addressing specific issues, and to training, on ethical matters. Members, Officers, Co-opted representatives and Partners who would like to participate in further confidential discussions on the issues raised are asked to complete the statement at the end of the questionnaire.

Please tick the answers you feel best reflect your view.

37 REPLIES RECEIVED

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
Values						
1.	Do you think it is important for local government to establish and operate by a set of strong ethical principles or values?	36	1			
2.	Are you aware of the Council's core purpose and values?	16	11	10		
3.	Is your perception of ethical standards within Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council good?	12	19	13	3	
Standards of Conduct						
4.	Are you aware of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council?	16	10	7	4	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
5.	Would you know how to complain about the conduct of any Member of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council?	18	6	9	3	
6.	Are you aware of the Council's Employee Code of Conduct?	12	9	8	5	
7.	Do you know how to complain about the conduct of any of the Council's employees?	15	11	6	3	
Decision-Making						
8.	Are you clear about the role of the following in the decision-making process at Stockton:-	5	3	3		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council; • Cabinet; • Select Committees; • Officers? 	13	7	7	1	
		12	8	6	1	
		11	9	6	1	
		11	8	7	1	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
9.	Do you think that access to information about decision-making at Stockton Council is adequate?	10	15	9	3	
	If not, do you think it could be improved and if so, how?	6	2	2		
Member Roles						
10.	Do you understand the role and responsibilities of Members when they are appointed to an external organisation by the Council?	11	11	10	5	
11.	Do you understand the role and responsibilities of Members when they are appointed to an external organisation by someone other than the Council eg the community?	10	7	14	6	

No.	Questions	Answer				Comments if any
		Yes	To a large extent	Not really	Not at all	
12.	Do you think that there are any differences between these roles and responsibilities?	13	2	13	2	
	If so, what are they?					

Elected and Co-opted Members Comments

3. Do you think that public perception of ethical standards within the Council is good?

Most people seem to think the Council is corrupt - especially the public perception of elected Members. (2)

- 10b. Have you received relevant training on issues relating to the Members' Code of Conduct?

Training does not seem to be offered as regular updates. (2)

14. Do you think that the Council's practices and procedures are relevant, up to date and clear?

Noticed some documents on the website are in need of update.

22. Are you clear as to who is responsible for what under the Council's structure?

Officers do not communicate changes very well - examples are all of the recent changes involving a number of Heads of Service and other Officers leaving.

23. Do you think that non-executive Members identify strongly with the overview and scrutiny role?

Many do not think it has any real purpose or benefit - hence their non-attendance at meetings.

The feeling is that they have a reduced say in decision-making.

24. Is there good access to information for Members and for the public?

The public have to be very interested.

It is difficult for the ordinary member of the public to know what is going on.

Yes if you have web access.

Ward Councillors are often the last to know.

Significant improvements due to E-Government agenda, but staff don't seem to know about FOI requests and use data protection inappropriately.

Employees Comments

- 3.b Are you aware of the Council's six core management principles?
Need revisiting and re-training/Don't know what they are (2)
10. Can you obtain advice and support to help you on standards issues when you need it?
Don't know/Not sure/From where? (11)

(NB of those who commented it appears to be more of a issue for employees at Scales 1 - 6)
11. Have you had relevant training on issues relating to standards of conduct?
New to the Authority (and unsure)/not sure/not specifically (4)
- 12.b Have you received any training relating to the employees' code of conduct?
Yes, but years ago at induction/not specifically (4)
- 13.a Do you fully understand the Members' Code of Conduct?
Don't know what it is/never seen it (3)
- 13.b Have you received relevant training on issues relating to the Members' Code of Conduct?
Not sure/not specifically (8)
- 13.c Do you know where to seek advice on issues relating to the Code of Conduct?
I guess there's something on the intranet/Democratic Services?/Not sure (5)
14. Do you think there is common understanding on how to deal with conflicts of interest?
More training is needed.
21. Do you think that Officers are clear as to their roles and responsibilities?
More information is needed on both Officer and Member roles and responsibilities
24. Do you think that non-executive Members identify strongly with the overview and scrutiny role?
Don't know what executive/non-executive really means or what their respective roles are.
27. Are you aware of the protocol on Member/Officer working relations?
Didn't know there was one.

28. Are you familiar with the Council's statutory forward plan?

Never heard of it/don't get to see a copy (2)

31. Is there good access to information for a. Members and b. the public?

Could be more on the website about how decisions are made/website and intranet could be much better in terms of finding up to date information (2)

Key Partners Comments

4. Are you aware of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council?

As a partner organisation I have not seen the Members' Code of Conduct.

9. How do you think access to information about decision-making at Stockton Council could be improved?

Consideration should be given to involving people in processes instead of single hit consultations.

Consultees need more time and their input should be given greater weight.

More information needed on the website (5)

Details should be given in the local press.

More specific information and awareness is needed. (3)

Should be more open meetings. (1)

Greater transparency is needed. (4)