

**LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY
ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE
4 MARCH 2010**

SUBJECT		ETHICAL GOVERNANCE QUESTIONNAIRE	
REPORT BY	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE		
CONTACT OFFICER	JOHN KING, COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICER TELEPHONE: (01522) 558635		
SUMMARY AND PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To consider the results of the Ethical Governance questionnaire.			
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the results of the Ethical Governance questionnaire be considered; 2. future surveys include input from members of the public and key stakeholders; 3. Member/Officer induction processes and ongoing training in relation to standards, ethics and probity be reviewed; 4. the Committee receive a report exploring ways of enhancing confidence in the way it deals with matters of ethics and probity. 		

A. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Committee held on 2nd December 2009, Members approved an Ethical Governance questionnaire to ascertain both Member and Officer perceptions of conduct/behaviour and ethical governance in the Authority.

2. ETHICAL GOVERNANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

2.1 Results

- 2.1.1 Copies of the questionnaire were circulated to all members of the Authority and Officers of the Secretariat for completion and return by the deadline of 31 January 2010. Returns were as follows:

Category	Returns	%
Members (17)	7	41%
Officers (8)	4	50%

- 2.1.2 The results of the questionnaire are set out in Appendix A.

2.2 Summary of Responses

2.2.1 The following is a summary of the responses provided by Members and Officers to the survey:

- (a) All respondents thought it important to establish and operate a strong set of ethical values (question 1), although both Members and Officers were less emphatic in their belief that standards of ethical conduct in the Authority were high (question 3). A significant number of Members were unsure about public perceptions of standards within the Authority (question 2).
- (b) There was a divergence of views on the questions about awareness of documentation (question 6), where to actually find it (question 7) and understand it (question 8). This is not surprising as some have more practical relevance to the daily work of Officers than Members and vice versa. All Members responding indicated that they had a high awareness of the Code of Conduct, Guidance on the Code of Conduct, procedure for declaring of gifts and hospitality, and the procedure for declaring financial and other interests. Whilst all Members and Officers seem to know to some degree where to find the documentation, the broad understanding of it was less emphatic.
- (c) Responses to understanding of the role of the Authority's three statutory officers (question 9) and processes for the conduct of Authority business (question 10) were very similar, with both Officers and Members indicating a reasonably high level of understanding.
- (d) Both Members and Officers agreed that they received clear and relevant information (question 11).
- (e) The questions about complacency on standards, the roles of Members and Officers in ensuring good conduct and high standards, and understanding the ethical framework (questions 12 to 16) produced divergent views. Officers have concerns about Member complacency towards standards of conduct, whilst neither Members nor Officers seem to be wholly positive about their understanding of the new ethical framework - though proportionally Members were more positive than Officers.
- (f) With regard to roles and accountabilities (questions 17 to 19) the majority of Members and Officers were positive in their responses. This consensus continued in relation to provision of relevant, up to date and clear practices and procedures (question 20 and 21).
- (g) The majority of Members did not know whether the Authority was effective in dealing with Member/Officer misconduct (questions 22 and 23).
- (h) The majority of those responding indicated they personally understood the role of the Standards Committee (question 26), though Officers were less emphatic than Members. When asked about understanding amongst others (question 27), the response was slightly more negative.

- (i) The majority of Members believed standards issues were owned by both Members and Officers. Interestingly, half the officers indicated their belief that Members had little or no ownership.
- (j) Members and Officers were generally positive in their responses when asked if they knew where they could obtain advice and support on standards issues (question 30), and from whom (question 31). However, half the officers indicated that they had not been offered any relevant training (question 32).

2.3 Key Messages

- 2.3.1 A total of 11 Members and Officers completed the survey, a response rate of just 44%. This is somewhat lower than the response rate for the survey conducted back in 2006 (67%) and will have an affect on the quality and accuracy of the results. Why so few questionnaires were completed is not clear but could be indicative of a lack of understanding of the importance of the issue of ethical governance or demonstrates a degree of complacency about standards in general.
- 2.3.2 Whilst the Authority is perceived by both Members and Officers as operating ethically, the Committee may wish to consider opening up future surveys to obtain an independent view from the public and from key stakeholders, such as the Force.
- 2.3.3 Responses in relation to training and awareness of ethical issues would suggest that depth of knowledge could be improved particularly (but not solely) for Officers.
- 2.3.4 There are mixed views on whether misconduct issues are being dealt with effectively. The Committee may want to look at ways of enhancing confidence in the way it deals with matters of ethics and probity.

B. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None specific.

C. LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

None specific.

D. PERSONNEL, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None specific.

E. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

None specific.

F. RISK MANAGEMENT

None specific.

G. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Date	Description	File
	None	