the
Standards Board
for England

Confidence in local democracy

Implementing ethics in practice: The English experience

Dr Gary Hickey (Research and Monitoring Manager)

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Agenda

- Introduction to the Standards Board for England

- Why are ethics important?

- Components of an ethical environment

Introduction

- **Committee on Standards in Public Life**

- **Local Government Act 2000**

- **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

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New strategic role of the Standards Board for England

- **Defining the framework**

- **Promoting and championing high standards**

- **Ensuring effective local arrangements**

- **Monitoring**

- **Supporting authorities where there are problems**

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Who do we cover? (2)

- **386 local authorities**

- **8,350 parish councils**

- **43 police authorities**

- **31 fire and civil defence authorities**

- **6 national parks and the Broads Authority**

- **6 passenger transport authorities**

- **The Greater London Authority**

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Trust and confidence

"All democratic and public governance relies on high standards of probity. When conduct and behaviour are corrupt or improper it erodes confidence in the democratic system."

(Ref: Strong and prosperous communities, Local government White paper (2006), P61)

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Governance

" …comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate lead their communities."

(Ref: Delivering good governance in local government framework (2007), page 2)

Components of an ethical environment

- Leadership

- Rules and values

- Independent overview

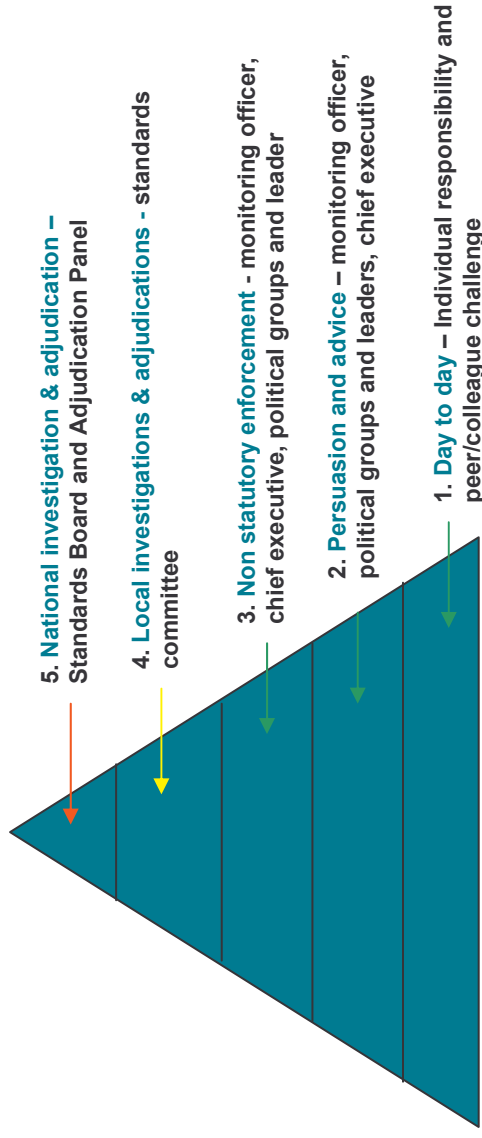- Transparency and openness

- Adaptability

Leaders

- Leadership crucial to supporting an ethical culture within community

- Providing a lead and encouraging others to self monitor and peer review

Balancing Rules and Values

VALUES

RULES

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Rules and Values

5. National investigation & adjudication – Standards Board and Adjudication Panel

4. Local investigations & adjudications - standards committee

3. Non statutory enforcement - monitoring officer, chief executive, political groups and leader

2. Persuasion and advice – monitoring officer, political groups and leaders, chief executive

1. Day to day – Individual responsibility and peer/colleague challenge

Ref: Greasley et al (2006), adapted from Ayres and Braithwaite(1992)

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Transparency

- Facilitates 'after the event' examination of decisions and decision making process

- Can act as an incentive for individuals to behave in a ethical manner

- People may be more likely to behave in a principled manner when they are subject to oversight

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Independent overview

- **Prevents ethics slipping off agenda**

- **Ethical audits**

- **Learning**

- **Provide support**

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Adaptability

- **adaptability is key to sustaining an effective approach to ethics**

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Conclusion

- Historical overview of the Standards Board

- Importance of standards to trust and governance

- The components of an ethical environment

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