

Ethical Governance- Feedback on Findings

Standards Committee

July 2010

Survey Format

- Online survey (hard copies upon request)
- All 80 elected Members, 9 Co-opted Members and 197 senior officers invited to complete the survey.
- An additional level of managers was included in this year's survey, increasing the officer sample from 33 to 197.

Response Rate

- The overall response rate was 59.1%, compared to 51.6% in 2009.
- Responses received from:
 - 42 elected Members (**52.5% response rate**)
 - 8 Cabinet/34 Non-Cabinet Members
 - 3 Co-opted Members (**33% response rate**)
 - 124 senior officers (**62.9% response rate**)

Summary of findings

- The following slides focus on the same areas as identified in 2009 to enable the Standards Committee to review progress.
- Direct comparison is not possible in some areas where different questions/wording has been used although the general themes are the same.
- The full results of the Review of Governance will be shared with Members by the Audit Commission shortly.

What do people think about the ethical environment at Surrey County Council?

We wanted to find out how the way councillors conducted themselves in their day to day functions was perceived by colleagues.

Member Conduct

- 73.9% felt the Members always or usually performed their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity (with 5.9% saying they only did this sometimes and the remainder stating they did not know.)
- 64.5% felt that Members always or usually abide by the members' code of conduct (with 2.4% saying they only did this sometimes and the remainder stating they did not know.)

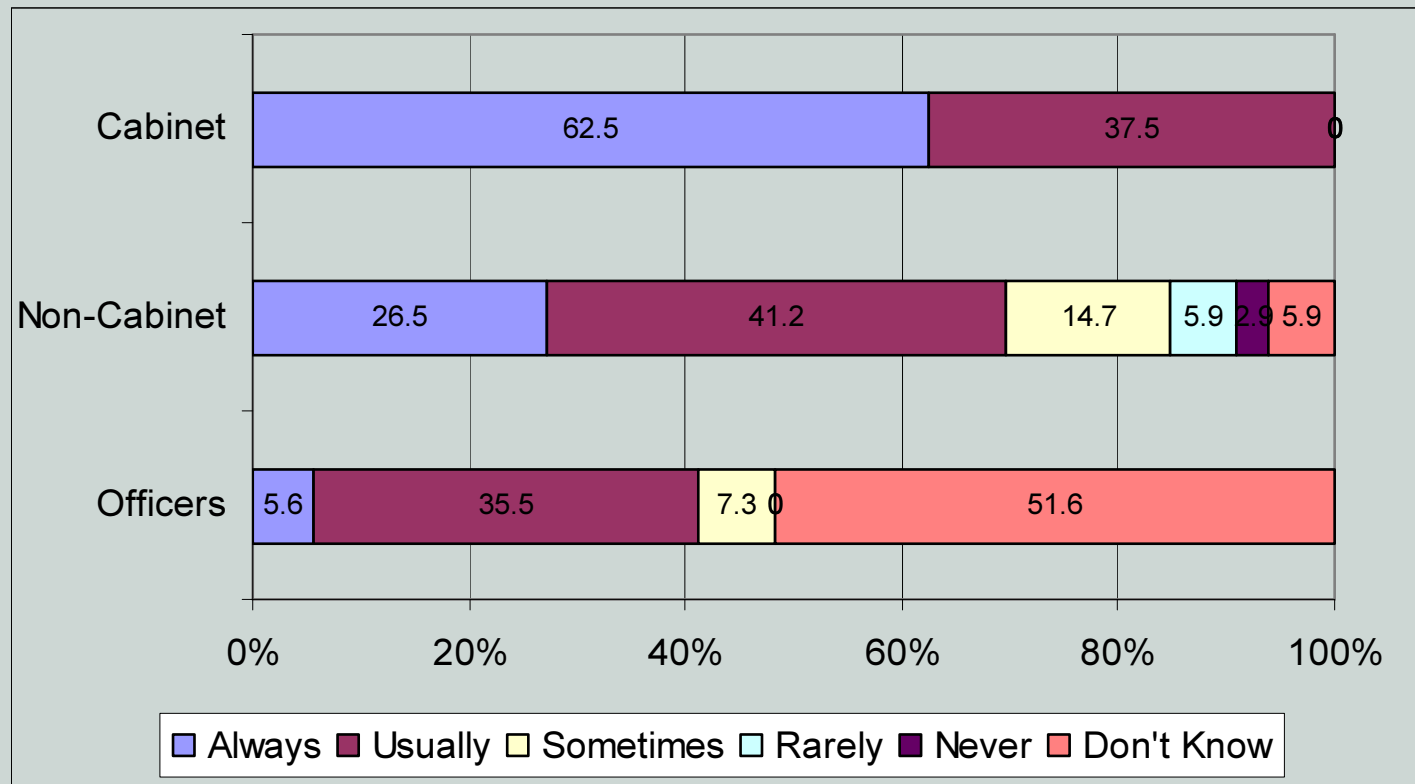
How do others perceive us?

We wanted to find out how :

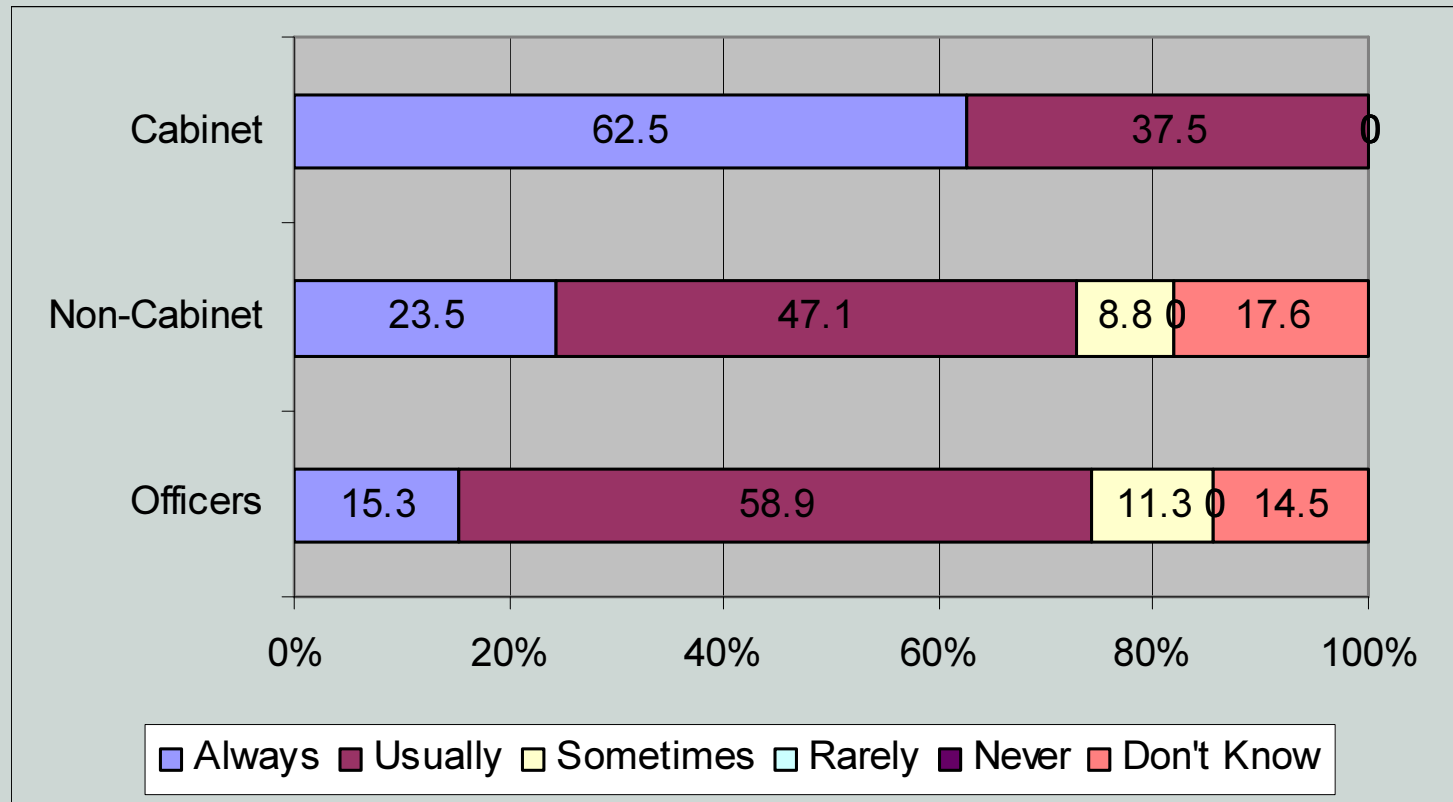
- The Cabinet
- Members and
- Senior Officers

see each other – do they agree that each is behaving well ?

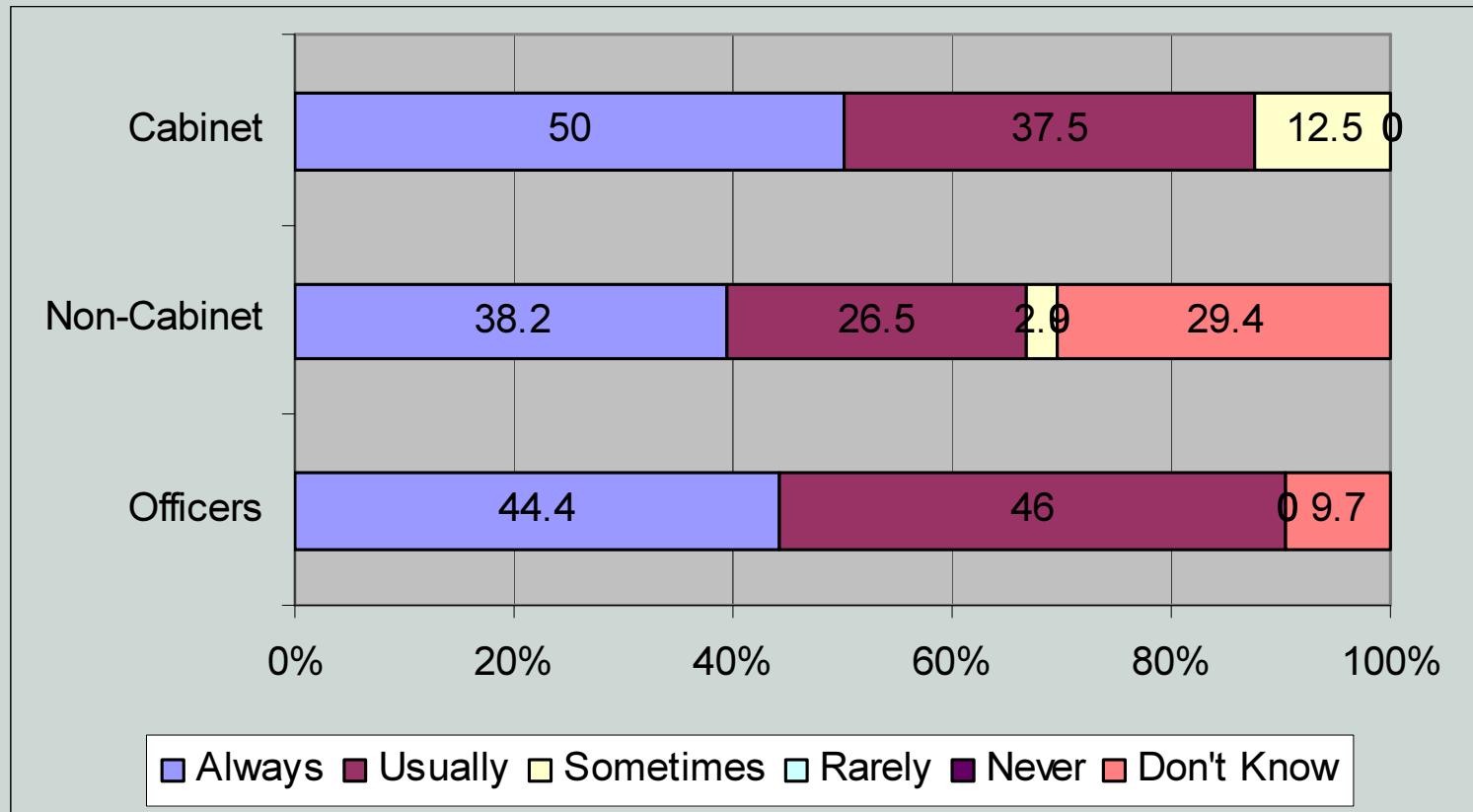
Cabinet Members treat Non-Cabinet Members with respect



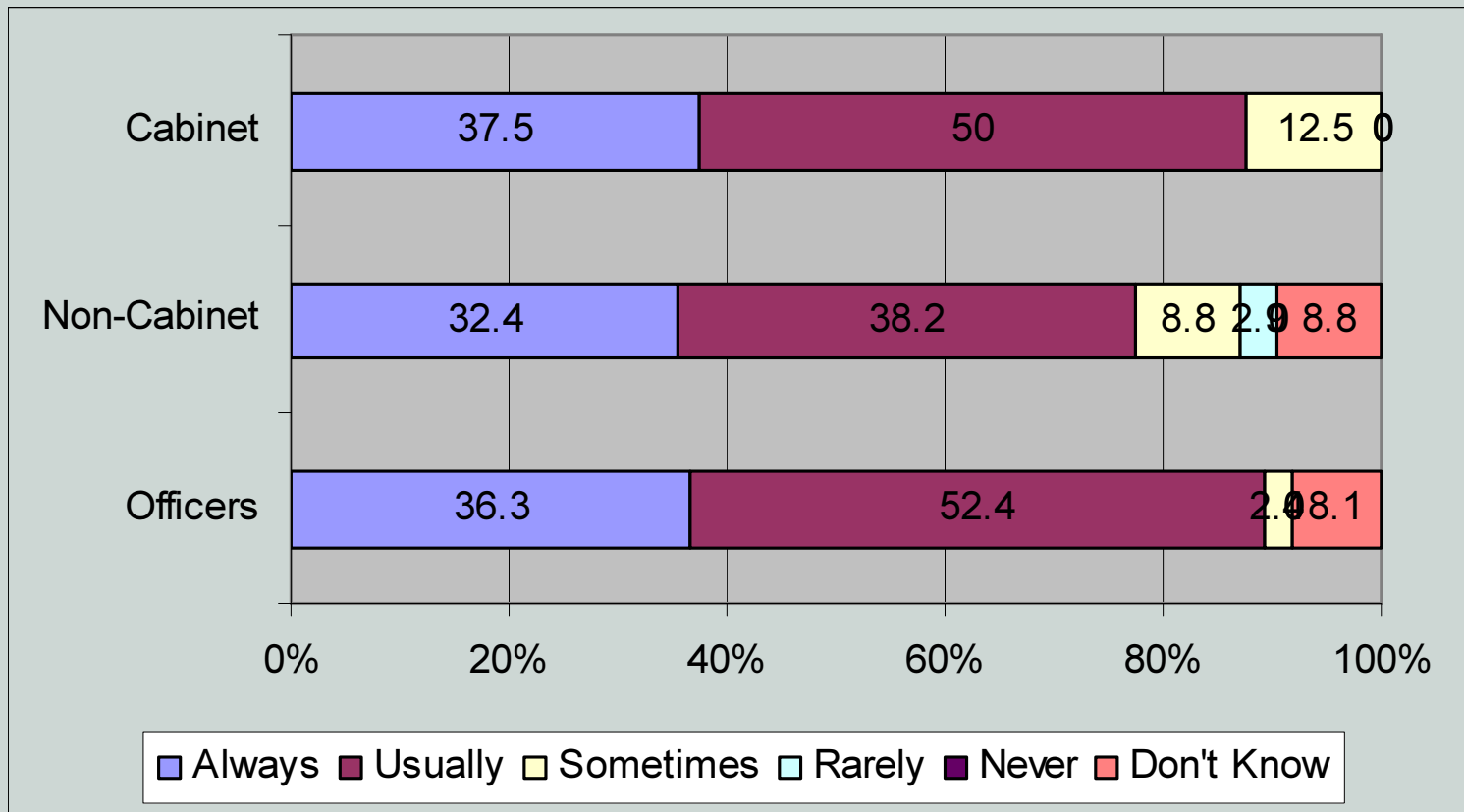
Cabinet Members treat officers with respect



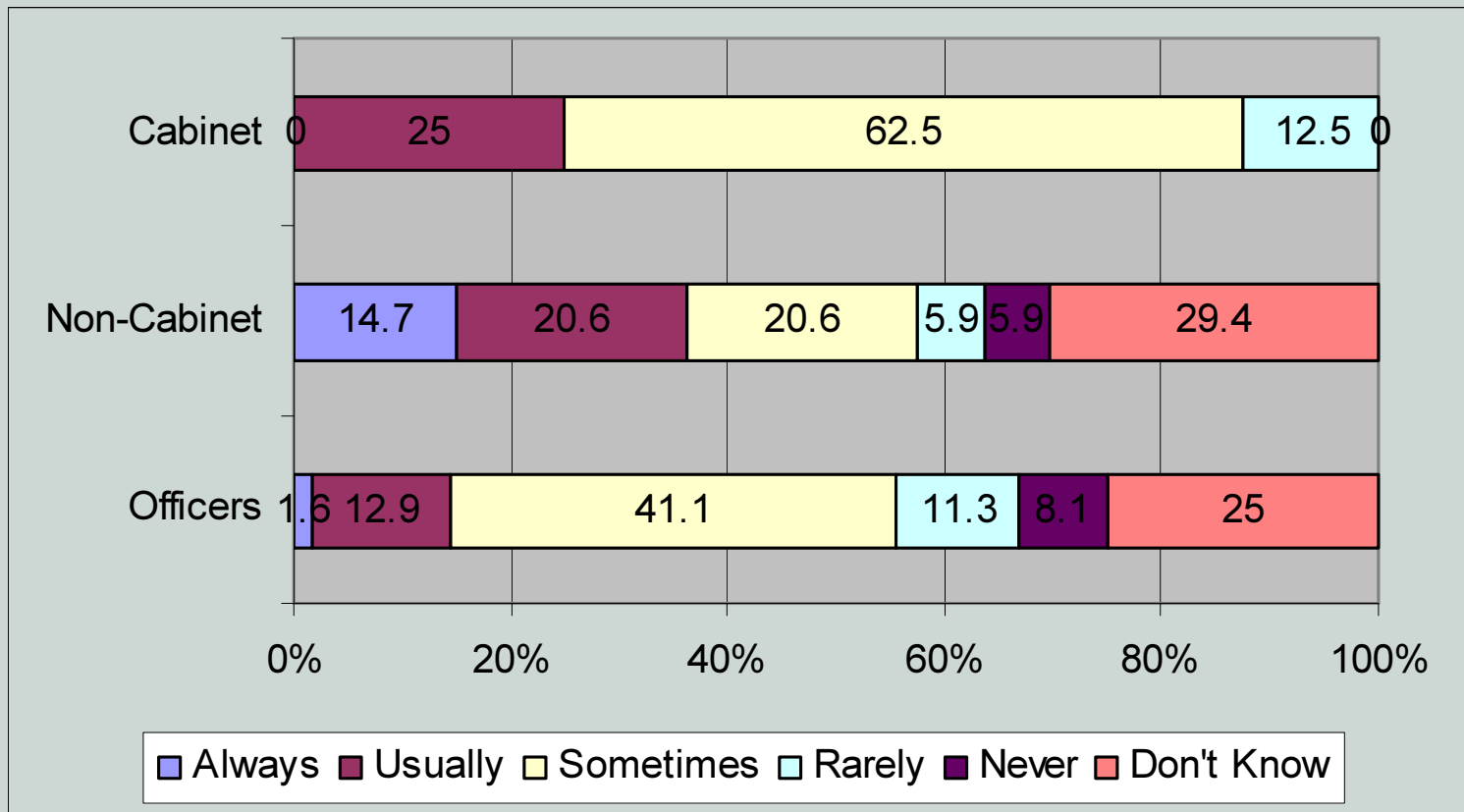
Officers treat Cabinet Members with respect



Officers treat Members with respect



Officers give preferential treatment to the Members they believe are influential



How do others perceive us? (Conclusions)

- Generally, there is more agreement between the various groups' perceptions of how they treat each other compared to 2009.
- Overall, respect for each other has improved although 8.8% of non-Cabinet Members still feel they are rarely or never treated with respect by Cabinet Members.
- 14.8% felt officers always or usually gave preferential treatment to Members they believe are influential. This was especially strong with non-Cabinet Members (35.3%)

Understanding the Ethical Standards Agenda

We wanted to find out if people were getting the help they needed to behave ethically.

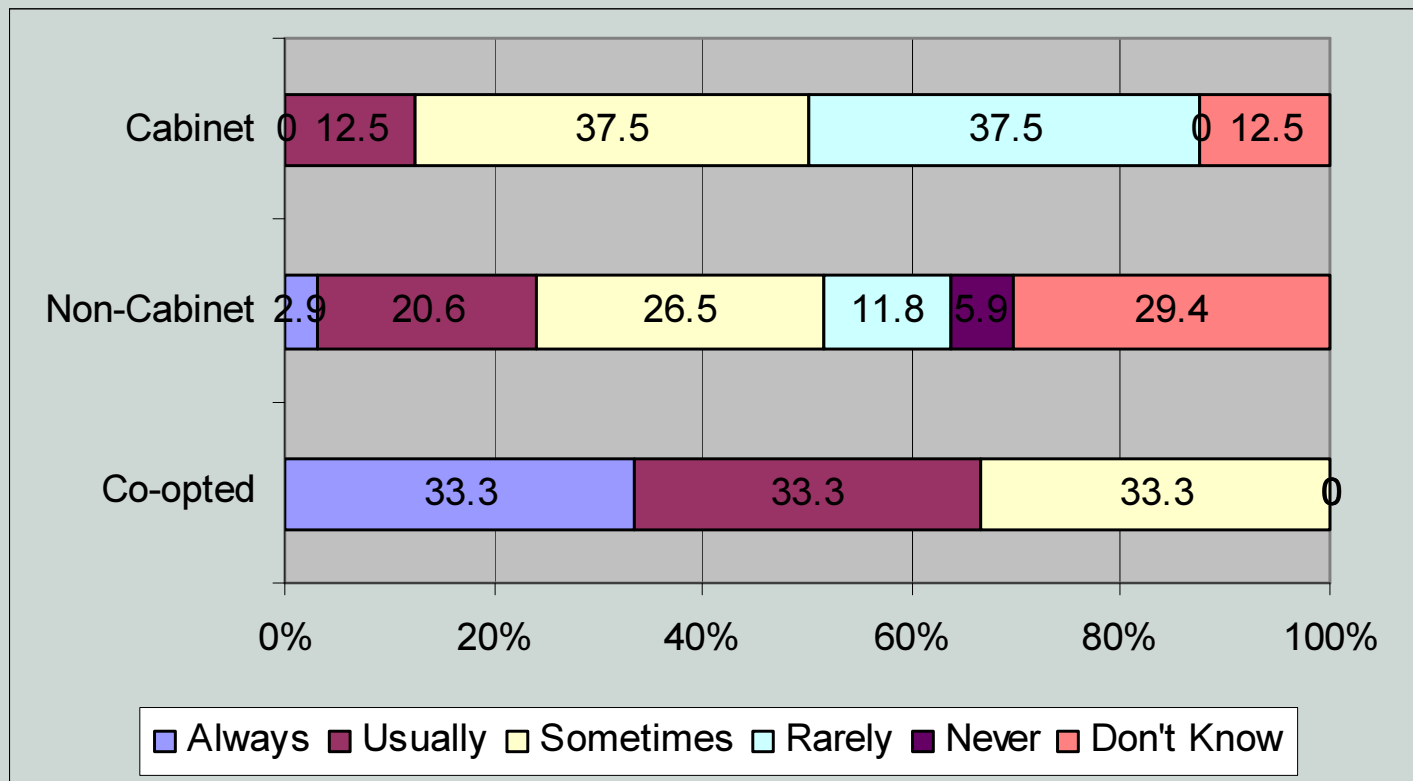
Advice and Guidance

- 63.4% felt Members are provided with appropriate advice on ethics and standards, with 2.4% feeling this rarely or never happened and 33.7% not knowing.
- 82.3% of Members felt that the importance of high ethical standards is always or usually communicated to them, with the rest acknowledging it sometimes happened.
- 95.5% of members felt that guidance on ethics and conduct is always or usually included in the induction of new Members.

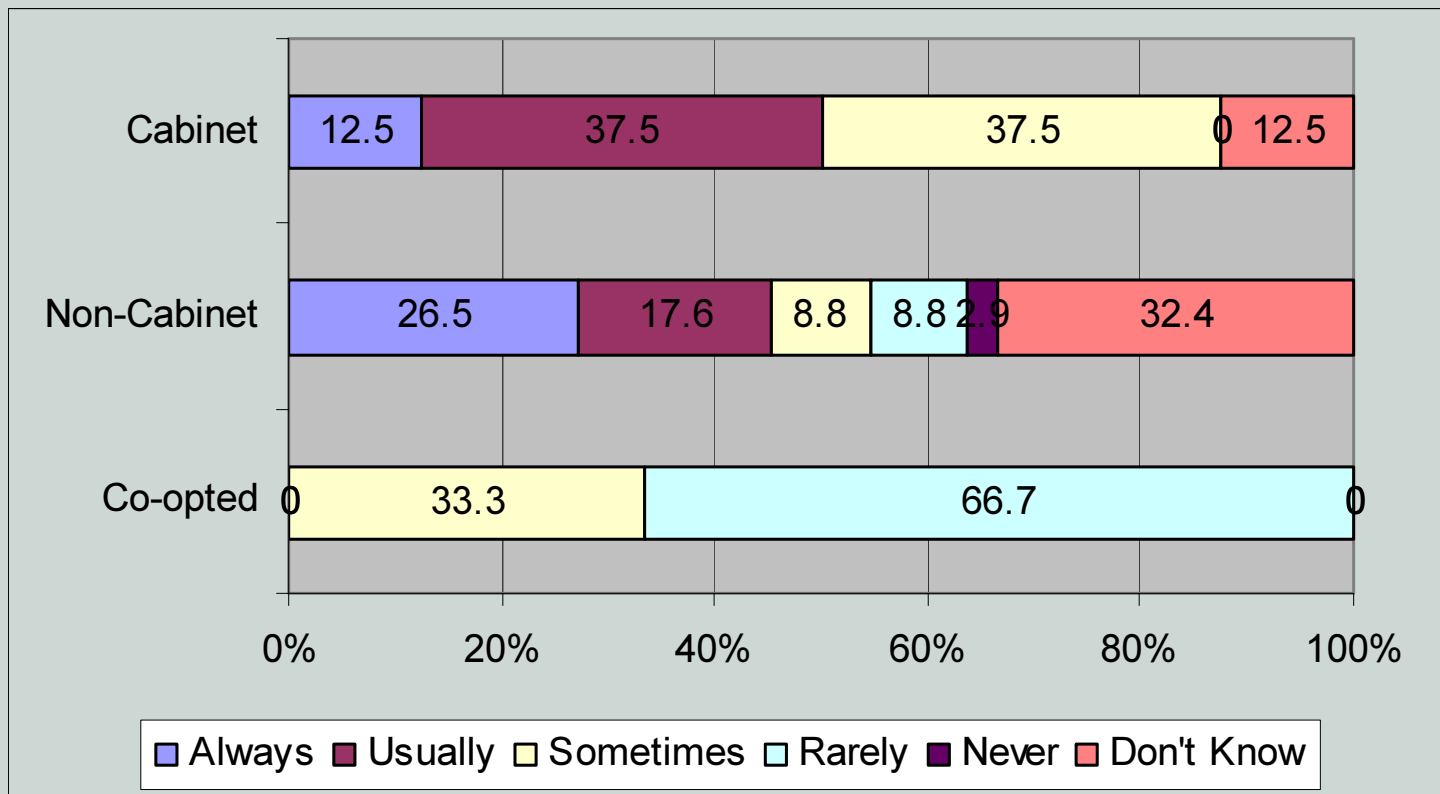
Register of Interests

- The majority of respondents agreed that Members understand the need for a Register of Interests (including Gifts and Hospitality)
- This is consistent with the results of the 2009 survey.

Members have differing views about what should be included in the Register of Interests



Members regularly review their entries on the Register of Interests (including Gifts and Hospitality) to ensure they are kept up to date



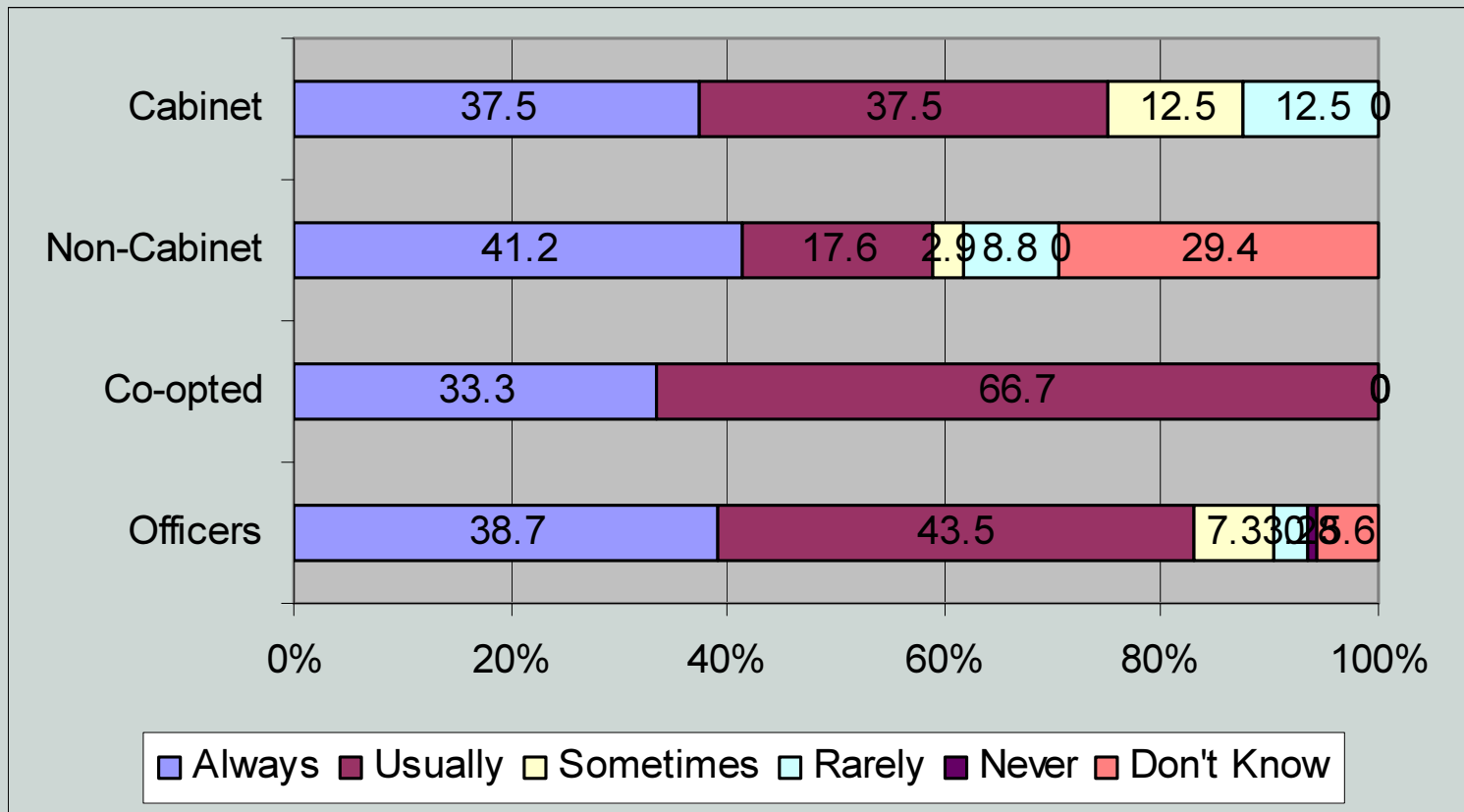
Understanding the ethical standards agenda (Conclusions)

- Majority of respondents agree that advice and guidance is available with nearly all Members acknowledging that training is available to new Members.
- Members agree that the importance of high ethical standards is communicated to them.
- Officers were less aware of the advice and guidance available to Members (41.9% answered “don’t know”) or about the training available to new Members (46.8%)
- In line with 2009, it is still felt that Members have differing views on what should be included in the Register of Interests and that they do not regularly review their entries in the Register.

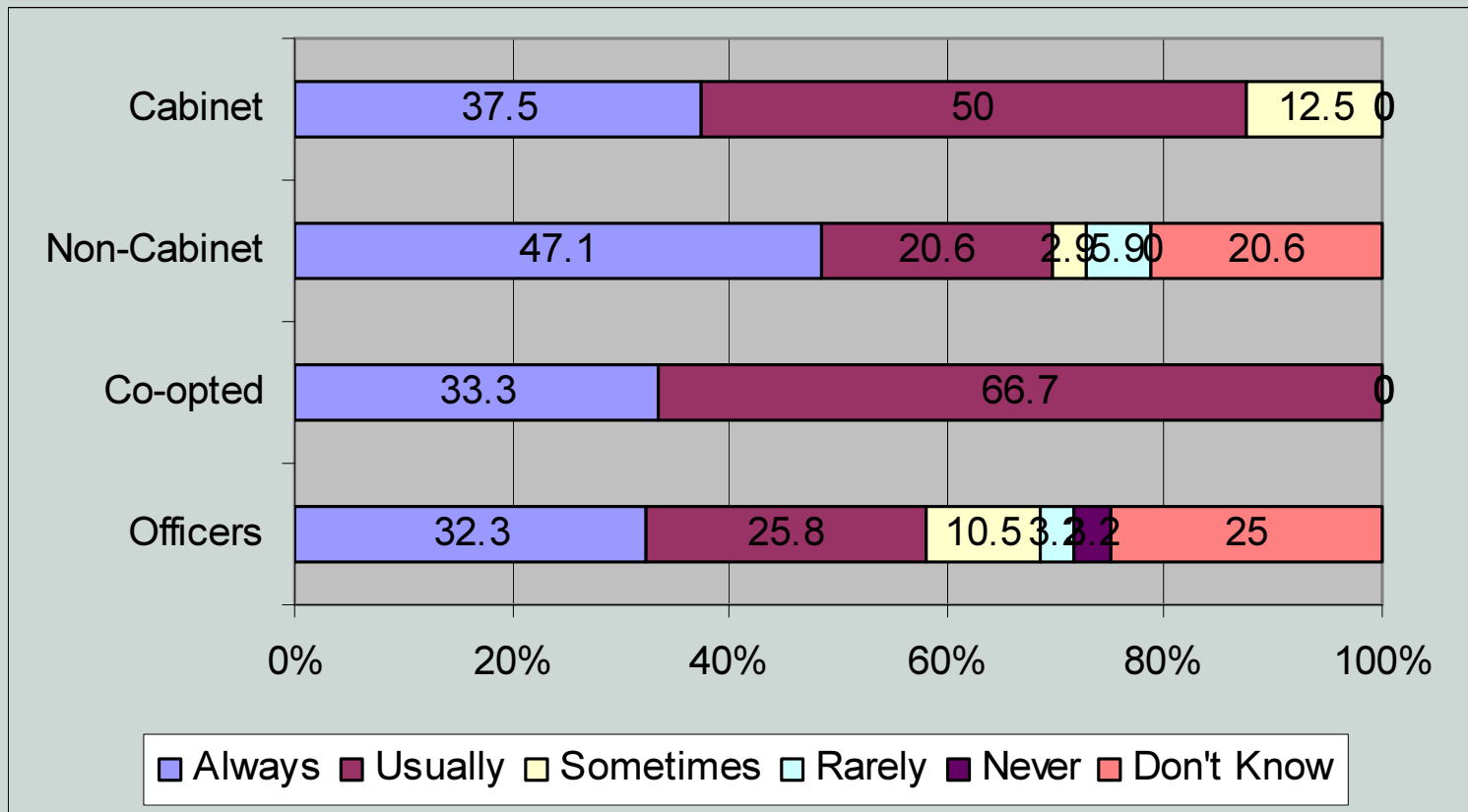
Can we act on poor conduct in others?

We wanted to know if there is sufficient information about how to raise concerns about poor conduct and whether the environment at SCC enables us to do so.

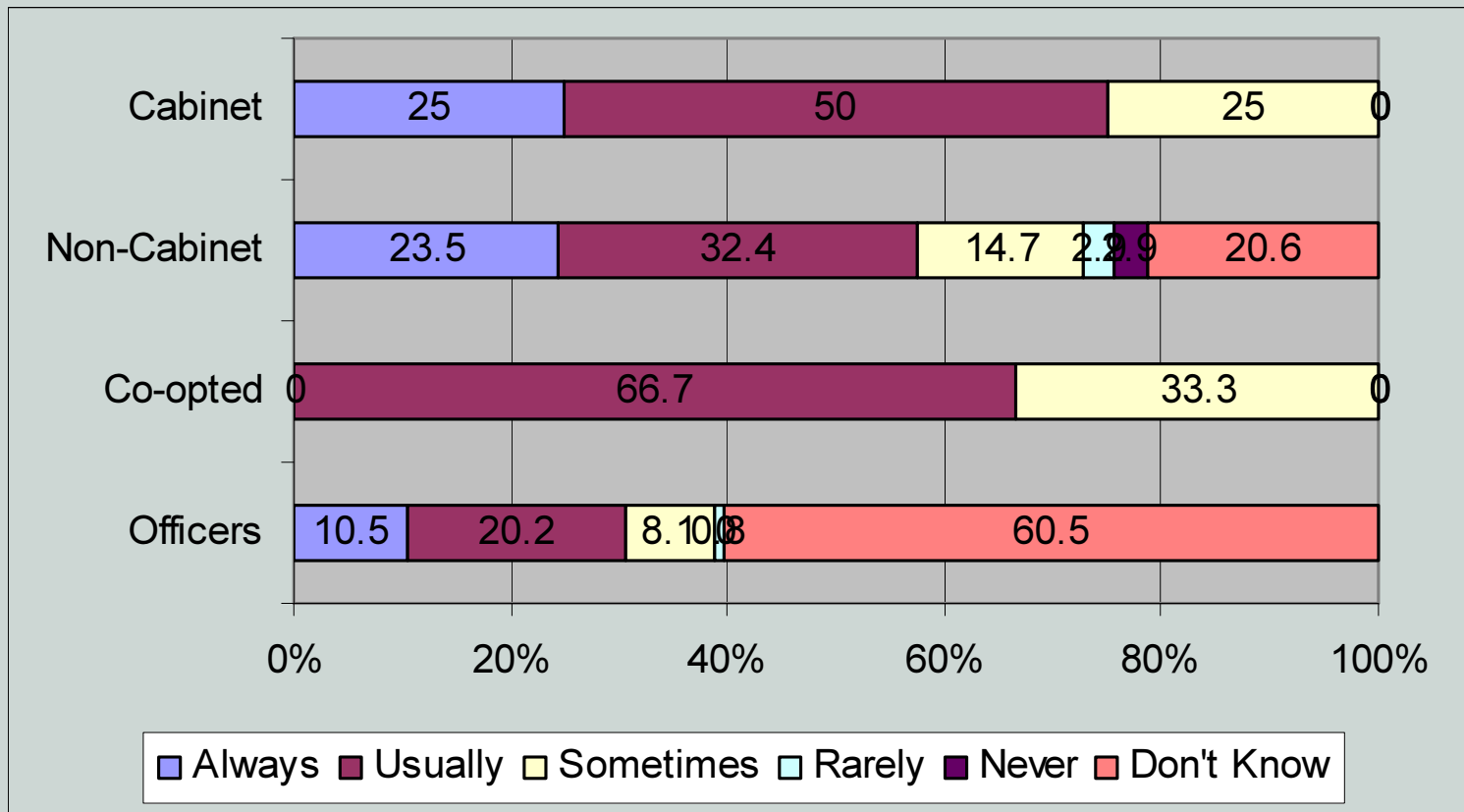
The process to report inappropriate officer behaviour is clear



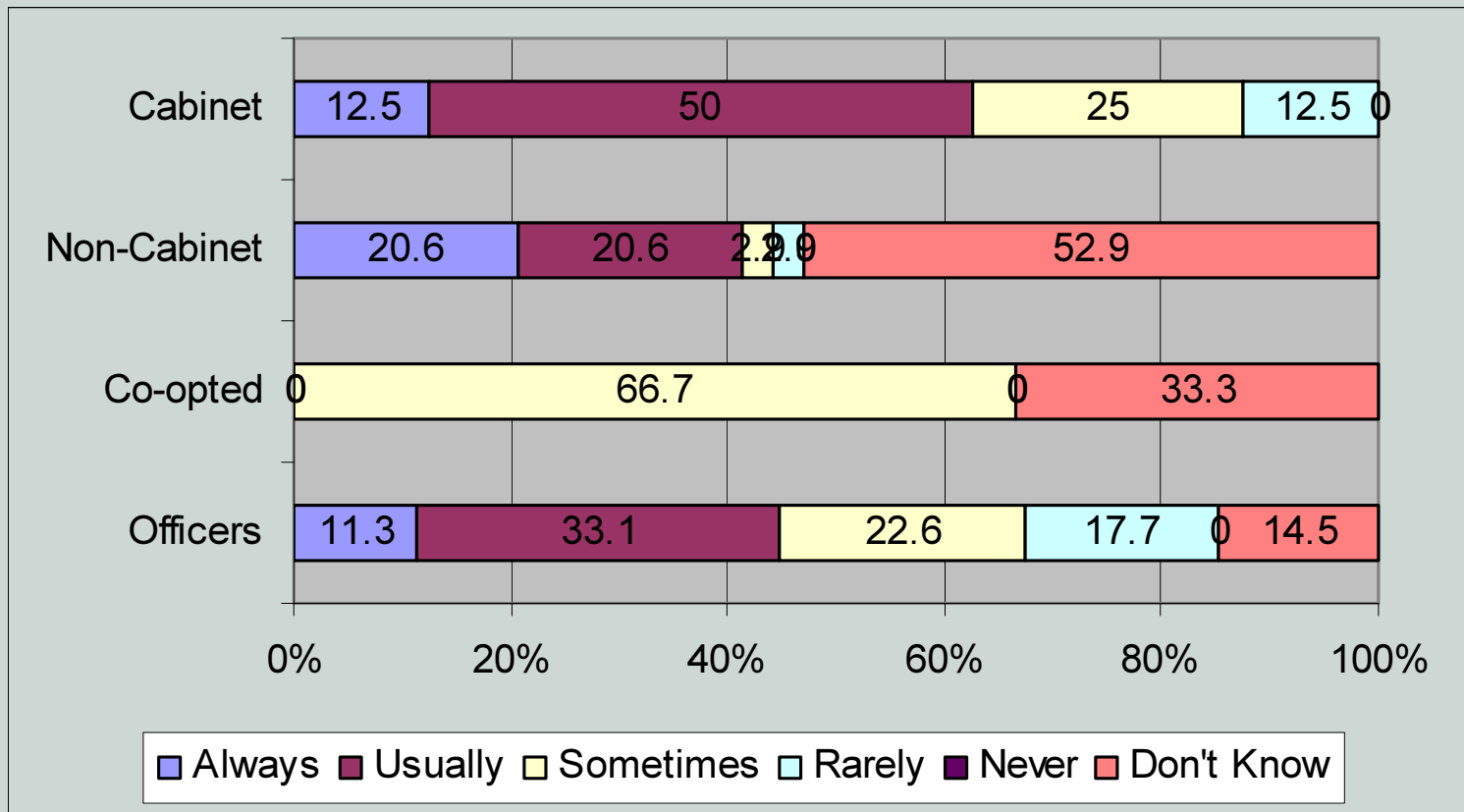
The process to report inappropriate Member behaviour is clear



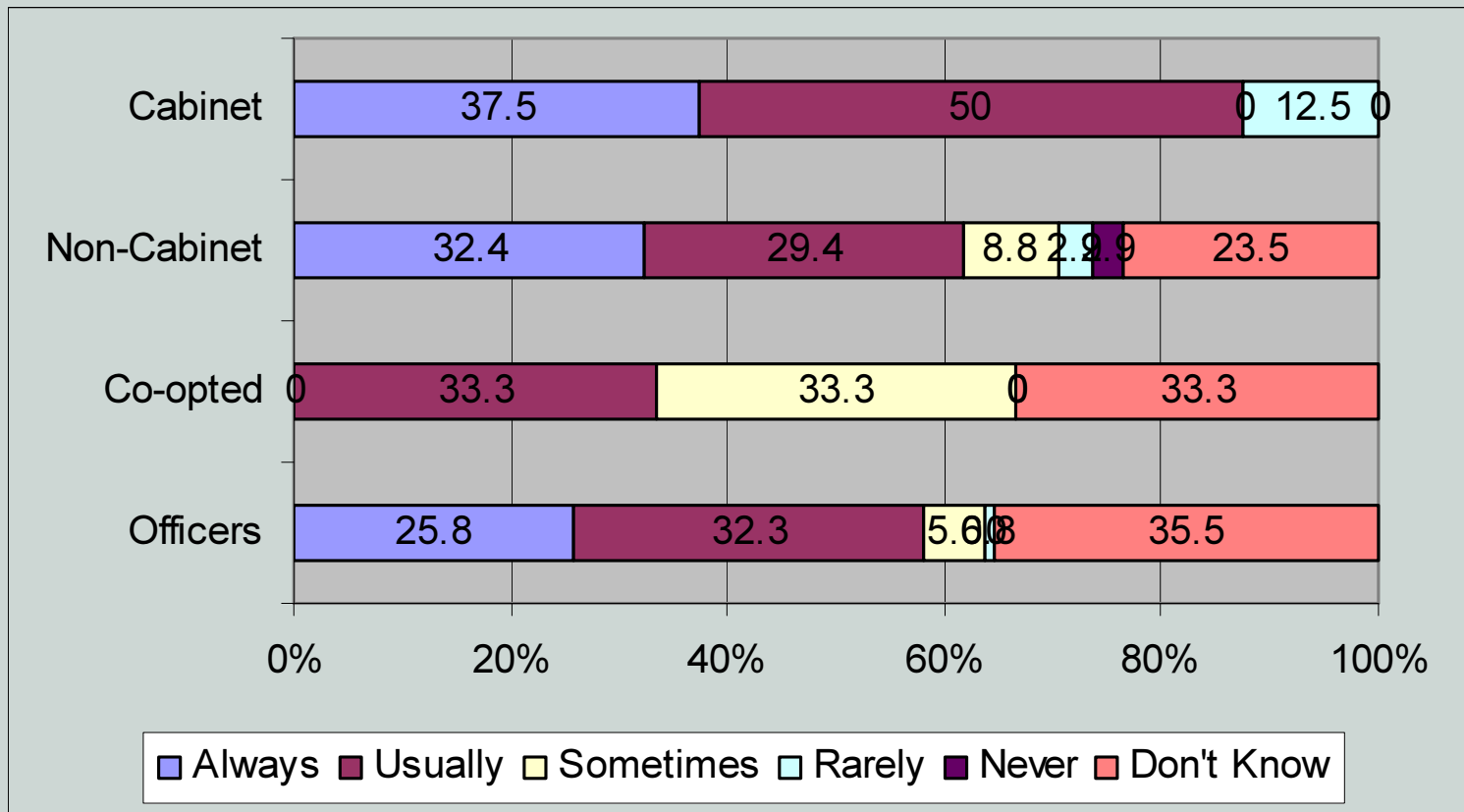
Members feel able to challenge Members' inappropriate behaviour



Officers feel able to challenge Members' inappropriate behaviour



Members feel able to challenge officers' inappropriate behaviour



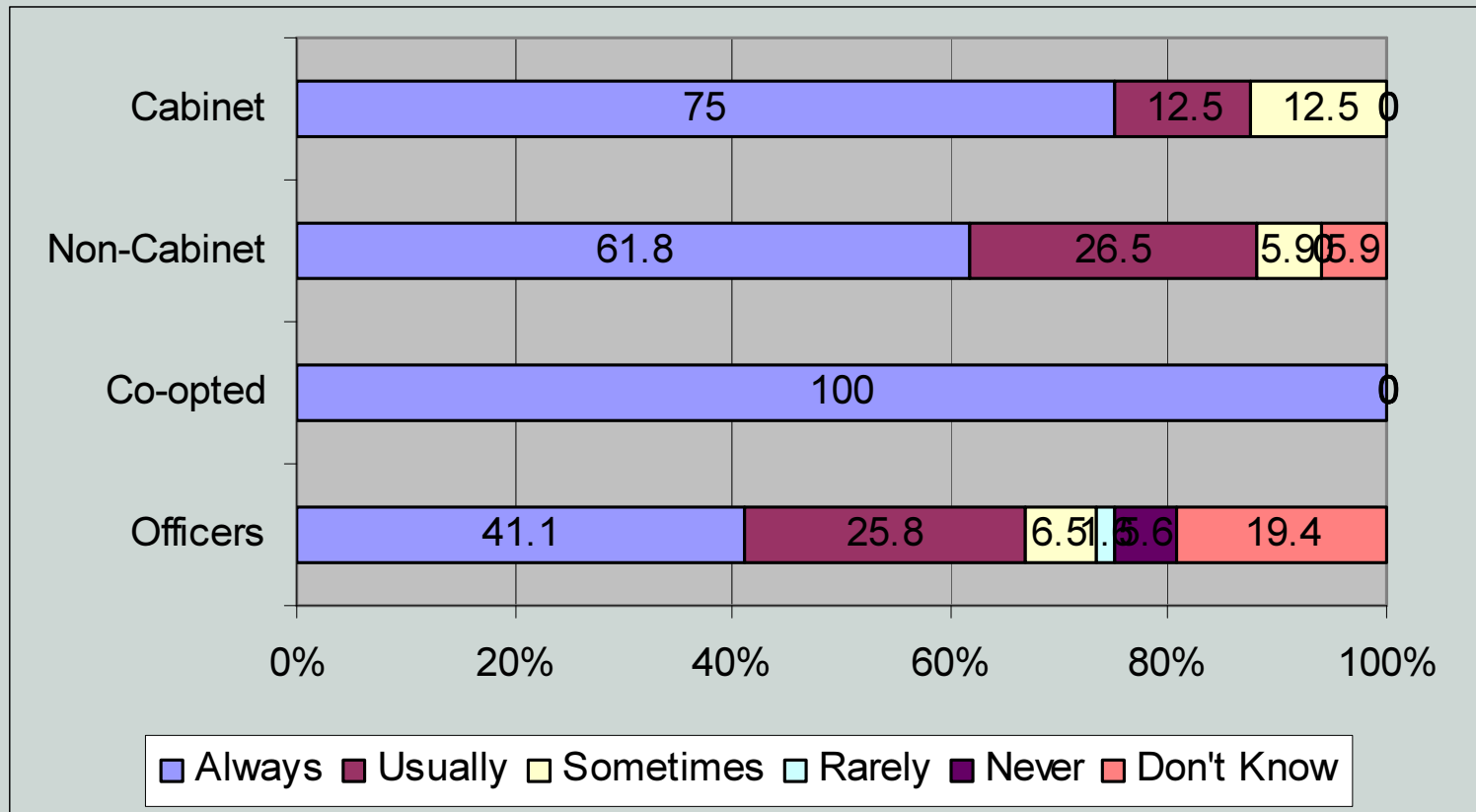
Can we act on poor conduct in others? (Conclusions)

- Compared to 2009, there is an increased understanding of the processes for reporting inappropriate officer and member behaviour.
- 60% of Members felt they were always or usually able to challenge other Members' inappropriate behaviour (compared to just under 50% agreeing in 2009)
- 44.4% of officers felt they were always or usually able to challenge other Members' inappropriate behaviour (compared to 15.4% agreeing in 2009)

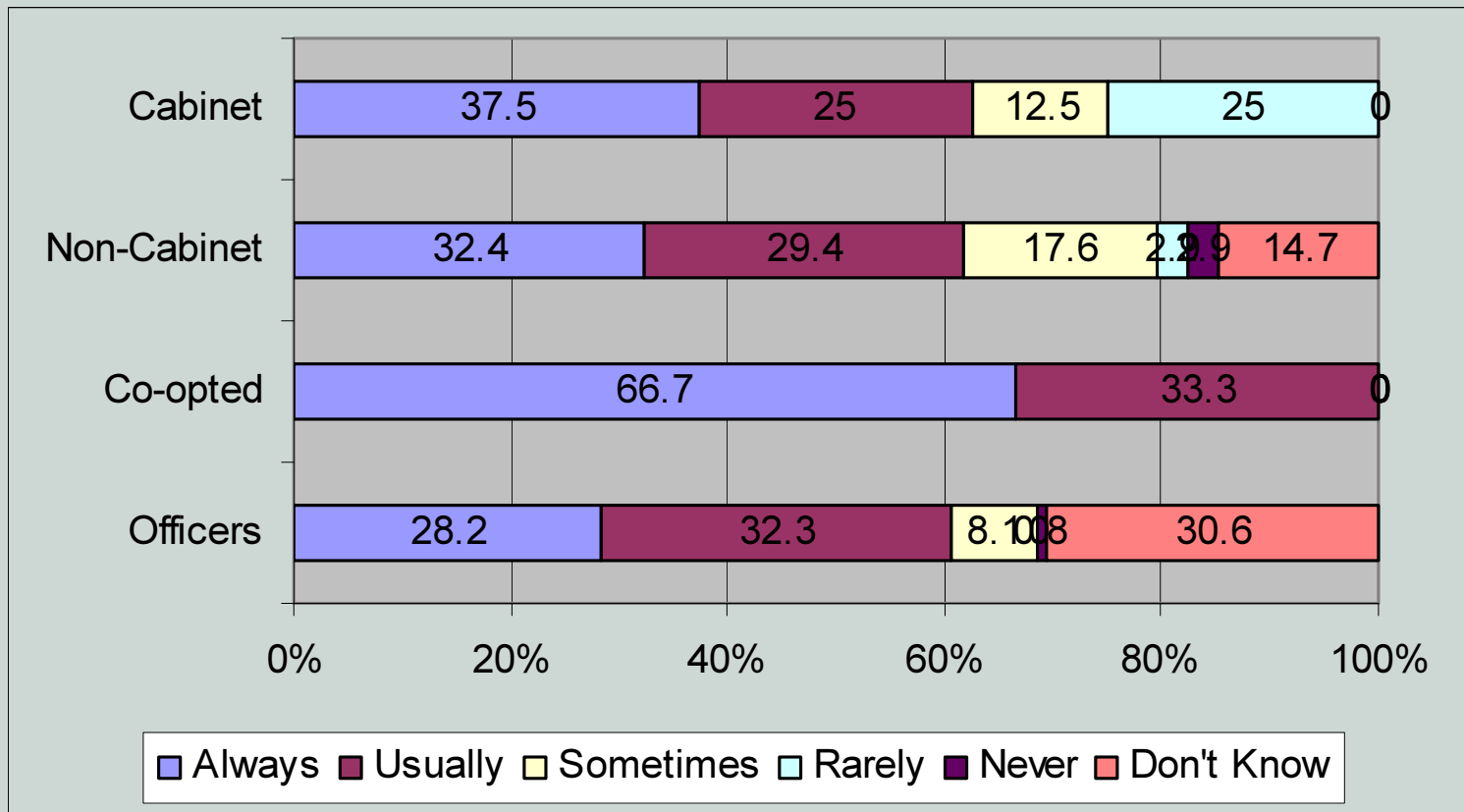
The role of Standards Committee

We wanted to know what people think about Standards Committee.

I understand the role of the Standards Committee



The work of the Standards Committee adds value to the Council



The Role of Standards Committee (Conclusions)

- The vast majority of Members (88.9% always/usually) understand the role of the Standards Committee.
- 64.5% of Members felt the Standards Committee always or usually adds value to the Council.
- While the majority of officers understand the role of the Standards Committee and feel it adds value, a significant number answered that they didn't know (19.4% and 30.6% respectively)

Areas for Action

The Standards Committee is asked to consider the results from the survey and identify:

- any areas for further consideration
- recommendations for further attention by the committee.