

**Minutes of the GMCA Standards Committee Meeting held
19 November 2020 via Microsoft Teams**

Present

Geoff Linnell
City Mayor Paul Dennett
Councillor Brenda Warrington
Councillor Andrew Western

Co-opted Independent Member
Salford Council
Tameside MBC
Trafford Council

Also in attendance

Gwynne Williams
Sarah Horseman
Nicola Ward

GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer
GMCA Head of Audit and Assurance
GMCA Governance

GMSC 20/01 Welcome and Apologies

Resolved /-

That apologies were received and noted from Councillor Elise Wilson, Councillor David Greenhalgh and Nicole Jackson (Independent Person).

GMSC 20/02 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

There were no chairs announcements or matters of urgent business.

GMSC 20/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest raised in relation to any item on the agenda.

**GMSC 20/04 Minutes of the GMCA Standards Committee meeting held 17
September 2019**

Resolved /-

That the minutes of the GMCA Standards Committee held 17 September 2019 be approved.

GMSC 20/05 Whistleblowing, Anti-fraud and Anti-Bribery Policies

Sarah Horseman, Head of Audit and Assurance for the GMCA took Members through the latest version of the GMCA's Whistle Blowing Policy and changes made since the last version which was published in February 2018. There had been no significant changes to the policy, but some additions in relation to the safe storage of documentation regarding an allegation, and further identity protection of those who whistle-blow.

Members welcomed the changes to the policy and sought assurance as to how it has been embedded in the culture of the GMCA to ensure that all staff are aware as to how the process of whistleblowing operates. Officers reported that over the past 12 months there had been a range of awareness activity taking place across the organisation, including increased communications, reports of changes as a result of whistle blowing cases and additional information on the intranet. These assurances would continue to be embedded across the organisation.

Members further asked whether employees of suppliers to the GMCA would be able to raise concerns under the policy. Officers confirmed that they would be able to report any concerns or disclosures over wrongdoing as a member of the public has the ability to do, however, unlike disclosures made by employees, protection under PIDA law would not apply.

Resolved /-

That the draft of the updated Whistleblowing Policy be noted.

GMSC 20/06 Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members

Gwynne Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer GMCA took the Committee through a short paper which outlined the process by which complaints made under the Code of Conduct for Members would be dealt with. It detailed that the GMCA Monitoring Officer would oversee all such complaints, and in consultation with the Independent Person, determine whether there had been a breach of the Code of Conduct and if so, which type of breach. This evaluation would then determine whether a local hearing of the Standards Committee (or sub-committee of the Standards Committee) would be required.

Members asked how a complaint that was regarding a Member's conduct in their Local Authority role would be dealt with. Officers confirmed that the complainant would be notified that it falls within the remit of the Local Authority, and then the complaint would be forwarded to the relevant Monitoring Officer for investigation.

Resolved /-

That the report be noted.

GMSC 20/07 Fraud in the age of Covid-19 - Article

An article by Laura Hough, Head of Counter Fraud Policy and Strategy, CIPFA regarding the risk of fraud in the public sector during the Covid pandemic was shared with the Committee for information.

Members highlighted the potential impact to Local Authorities through such activities and the concerning examples of where schemes to support people through Covid were creating further opportunities for fraudulent activities to take place.

Resolved /-

That the article be noted.

GMSC 20/08 Standards Committee Work Programme

Members of the Committee discussed the proposed work programme and considered the proposed items for future agendas.

Resolved /-

That the work programme be noted.

GMSC 20/09 Dates of future meetings

Resolved /-

That the GMCA Standards Committee would next meet at the start of the next municipal year.