

Minutes of the GMCA Standards Committee Meeting held

12 February 2019 at Churchgate House, Manchester

Present	
Geoff Linnell	Co-opted Independent Member
Councillor Alex Ganotis	Stockport MBC
Councillor Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
City Mayor Paul Dennet	Salford Council
Councillor Brenda Warrington	Tameside MBC
Councillor Andrew Western	Trafford Council
Also in attendance	
Gwynne Williams	GMCA Deputy Monitoring Officer
Tom Powell	GMCA Head of Internal Audit
Nicola Ward	GMCA Governance
Helen Smith	GMCA Internal Audit

GMSC 19/01 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the GMCA Standards Committee. Apologies were received from Councillor Allan Brett.

GMSC 19/02 Declarations of interest

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

GMSC 19/03 Minutes of the GMCA Standards Committee meeting held 2 November 2017

Resolved /-

To approve the minutes of the GMCA Standards Committee held on 2 November 2017.

GMSC 19/04 Short Guide to the Code of Conduct for Members

Gwynne Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer of the GMCA took members through a guide to the Code of Conduct which was requested at the meeting of the Standards Committee on the 2 November 2017. It had been designed to be a simple document which could be circulated to all members to remind them of their obligations under the Code and gave detailed explanation as to the differences in personal and prejudicial interests which needed to be declared by any member of the GMCA and

its committees through their annual Register of Interest and at any meeting where their interest may affect how they speak or vote on an agenda item.

Members questioned whether detailing their home address on their annual Register of Interest and publishing this on the GMCA website was still required as some organisations (such as the Electoral Commission) had withdrawn this information from the public domain due to the potential risk it poses to the individuals.

Resolved /-

1. To note the short guide and ensure it is circulated to members at the beginning of the municipal year.
2. To add the information on the types of interest to declare on the reverse of the declaration of interest form for every meeting.
3. To remind members that they may need to complete different declaration of interests form for their different roles across GM and with other organisations.

GMSC 19/05 GMCA Anti-fraud and Corruption Policies

Tom Powell, Head of Internal Audit for the GMCA took members through a report which presented the current position in respect of the anti-fraud and corruption policies for the GMCA and noted details regarding the development of the anti-fraud framework.

Since the GMCA had also received the fire and rescue and police and crime functions the policies had been reviewed to ensure strong linkages across all working practice and that they were also in line with GDPR.

The final policies will be reported back to the GMCA Audit Committee in April 2019 along with further information on the GMCA whistleblowing confidential helpline.

Members discussed the availability of the helpline and whether this had been promoted across the organisation. It was confirmed that the line was now active and would be further promoted once approved by the trade union.

Members further asked about the process for whistleblowing at a senior level. Officers confirmed that there were a number of routes, including through the Chair of Audit or to the Monitoring Officer depending on who the whistleblowing was regarding.

The Committee questioned whether there was a Social Media Policy for the GMCA and whether intelligence regarding whistle blowing through Facebook and Twitter was monitored. Officers agreed to look at how this is currently reviewed for patterns and whether this intelligence could be smarter fed into the official process. Further to this, members asked whether there was a role for Standards in addressing any comments made by Councillors via their social media accounts that breached the code of conduct would be addressed. Officers suggested that there could be consideration given to a section in the Code of Conduct which specifically covers appropriate use of social media.

Resolved /-

1. To note the report.
2. That officers investigate how the current intelligence gathered through social media could be used to look at patterns regarding whistleblowing and ensure alternative routes for reporting concerns.
3. That officers look to including a section in the Code of Conduct which specifically references the appropriate use of social media.

GMSC 19/06 Review of the GMCA Complaints Procedure and Adoption of Police on the Management of Unreasonable Complainants Behaviour

Gwynne Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer for the GMCA introduced a report which provided an opportunity to review the GMCA Complaints Policy and Management of Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy to ensure the inclusion of the Waste & Resources and Fire & Rescue Functions.

Members of the committee felt that such policies were crucial to managing complaints and were keen to ensure that the procedure was adopted across the organisation.

Resolved /-

1. To note the report and revised Complaints Procedure and Management of Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy.

GMSC 19/07 Standards Committee Work Programme

Member of the Committee discussed the proposed work programme and considered the proposed items for future agendas. It was suggested that the Standards Committee should meet once formally per year and have another meeting pencilled in should it be required.

Resolved /-

1. To note the work programme.
2. That the Standards Committee meet ever February/March with an additional meeting (if required) in September/October.

GMSC 19/08 Dates of future meetings

Resolved /-

1. The next meeting of the GMCA Standards Committee is to be confirmed.