Minutes of the GMCA Standards Committee Meeting held
Thursday 3 November 2016 at Manchester Town Hall

Present
Geoff Linnell Co-opted Independent Member
Councillor Paul Dennett Salford City Council
Councillor Alex Ganotis Stockport MBC
Councillor Sean Anstee Trafford Council

Also in attendance
Nicole Jackson Independent Person
Steve Hollard Senior Lawyer
Liz Treacy GMCA Monitoring Officer
Susan Ford GMIST Policy Manager
Tom Powell Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management
Helen Smith Internal Auditor
Nicola Ward GMIST Senior Democratic Services Officer

ANNUAL MEETING BUSINESS

GMSC 16/01 Appointment of Chair

Resolved /-
To note the appointment of Geoff Linnell as the Chair of the committee for the period of December 2015 until December 2019.

GMSC 16/02 Membership 2016/17

Resolved /-
To note the committee membership for 2016/17 as detailed below –

Geoff Linnell – Co-opted Independent Member

Cllr Cliff Morris – Bolton Council
Cllr Jean Stretton – Oldham MBC
City Mayor Paul Dennett – Salford CC
Cllr Alex Ganotis – Stockport MBC
Cllr Sean Anstee – Trafford Council
GMSC 16/03 Terms of reference

Resolved /

To note the committee’s terms of reference for 2016/17.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

GMSC 16/04 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the GMCA Standards Committee. Apologies were received from Councillor Jean Stretton and Councillor Cliff Morris.

GMSC 16/05 Declarations of interest

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

GMSC 16/06 Role of the GMCA Standards Committee

Members received a report of Liz Treacy, GMCA Monitoring Officer regarding the role and remit of the GMCA Standards Committee. The report provided a starting point for discussion as to how the role and remit of the committee could potentially change in accordance with changes to the GMCA in April 2017.

Members were also given the opportunity to review the sections of the GMCA constitution in relation to the Code of Conduct and Member Complaints Process.

A member asked whether to Code of Conduct applies to both the GMCA members and the Deputy Portfolio Holders when undertaking business on behalf of the GMCA. The Monitoring Officer explained how currently the Code only applies to members of the GMCA, however post May 2017 if the Mayor delegates a function to Deputy Portfolio Holders then they will be legally carrying out a function of the GMCA and therefore the Code would be applicable to those members. Officers agreed to ensure this is addressed in the refresh of the GMCA Constitution.

Resolved /

1. To note the report and request that officers to ensure that the refresh of the GMCA Constitution includes reference to how the Code of Conduct applies to all elected members acting in the capacity of the GMCA, including Deputy Portfolio members.

GMSC 16/07 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policies

Members received a report of Richard Paver, GMCA Treasurer and Tom Powell, Head of Audit and Risk Management which provided an overview of the GMCA
Whistleblowing Policy and the arrangements for the introduction of an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

The committee were reminded that by virtue of the constitution they have an oversight of the Whistleblowing Policy. Officers are currently working on a refresh and update of the suite of policies relating to anti-fraud and corruption.

In relation to anti-fraud the GMCA’s Standards Committee were also reminded that the GMCA Audit Committee receive regular reports and are able to monitor any incidents.

A member of the Committee asked for clarification in relation to conflicts for members who act in different capacities across a range of GM bodies. The GMCA Monitoring Officer reminded members that at each meeting there is an opportunity to raise any personal or prejudicial interests in relation to items on that agenda.

Members asked whether there was any reference to cyber fraud or the risk of impersonation within the corruption policies. Officers confirmed that these issues would be covered within the Risk Policy. Officers further advised that to date the whistleblowing hotline had received few calls, with those received relating to matters of a Local Authority rather than the GMCA. Members of the Committee were reassured that whistleblowing calls were transparently and effectively triaged to the appropriate organisation.

A member questioned how the requests made to the GMCA under Freedom of Information (FOI) were monitored and reported. Officers confirmed that numbers of requests under FOI had increased over the past year but were low compared to numbers received by local authorities. However, officers agreed that this should be clearly reported and requested that a report should be brought to the next meeting of the GMCA Standards Committee.

Resolved /-

1. To note the report and approve the arrangements for the review of the Whistleblowing Policy and introduction of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.
2. Officers requested to consider the mechanism for monitoring and reporting FOI requests to the GMCA going forward.

GMSC 16/08 Code of Conduct Review

The GMCA Monitoring Officer presented a report which provided an overview of the GMCA’s Code of Conduct and informed the committee that the Code would be reviewed as part of the refresh of the GMCA Constitution.

Members were given a brief update on the transition arrangements to the new GMCA which will see a number of organisations brought together in 2017 including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.
Members asked how the GMCA plan to learn from good practice within other areas when re-freshing their Code of Conduct. Officers reported that the Code will build on previous editions, and reflect good practice from across organisations. The draft will be further reviewed by the GM Chief Legal Officers and ultimately signed off by the GMCA.

Resolved /-

1. To note the report and note that the Code of Conduct for members by updated as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report as part of the revised constitution.

GMSC 16/09 Date of future meetings

Members of the committee discussed the most suitable timescale for the date of the next meeting, and agreed that March/April 2017 would be the most appropriate opportunity for the committee to meet. The agenda should include the outline for a GMCA Standards Committee Work Programme and a review of the Annual Governance Statement.

Members of the committee also agreed that if there were to be any reports to the GMCA in relation to the Standards Committee that Councillor Paul Dennett should be elected to represent the Committee.

Resolved /-

1. GMIST to schedule the next meeting for March/April 2017.
2. GMIST to prepare the agenda for the next meeting to include an outline work programme and a review of the Annual Governance Statement.
3. That Cllr Paul Dennett should represent the GMCA Standards Committee (if required) at a meeting of the GMCA.