# HRA Board meeting minutes (Part 1 – Public Session)

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| Date: | 20 May 2020 |  |
| Time: | 10.30am – 12.00pm |  |
| Present: | Ian Cook (IC) | Director of Transformation & Corporate Services |
|  | Richard Cooper (RC) | Non-Executive Director |
|  | Graham Clarke (GC) | Non-Executive Director |
|  | Professor Andrew George (AG) | Non-Executive Director |
|  | Dr Nicole Mather (NM) | Non-Executive Director |
|  | Dr Janet Messer (JM) | Director of Approvals Service |
|  | Juliet Tizzard (JT) | Director of Policy |
|  | Professor Sir Terence Stephenson (TS) | Chair |
|  | Karen Williams (KW) | Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance |
| In attendance: | Mary Cubitt (MC) | Research Systems Programme Director |
|  | Jonathan Fennelly-Barnwell (JFB) | Deputy Director Approvals Service |
|  | Penelope Gregory (PG) | PA to Deputy Chief Executive |
|  | Katherine Guerin (KG) | Deputy Director Corporate Services |
|  | Stephen Tebbutt (ST) | Head of Corporate Governance & Risk |
| Observers: | Teresa Allen (TA) | HRA |
|  | Chris Cannaby (CC) | HRA |
|  | Christine Holmes (CH) | Department of Health and Social Care |
|  | Marc Taylor | Independent |
|  | Naho Yamazaki (NY) | HRA |
| Apologies: | None to note |  |
| Venue: | Zoom |  |

| No. | Record of discussion | Action owner |
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|  | Welcome, introduction and apologies  TS welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were noted. The Board however noted TA was attending the meeting in an observational capacity. |  |
|  | Conflicts of interest  AG advised he was involved in the design of a therapeutic COVID study which had received expedited review but clarified he had not been involved during the ethical review process.  GC advised he was on the Board of Catapult Medicines Discovery which had some involvement in running COVID-19 testing laboratories.  The Board noted the declarations however agreed there were no conflicts preventing both individuals from participating fully in the discussion. |  |
|  | Review of minutes from meeting held on 18 March 2020  The Board reviewed and accepted the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record of events without amendment. |  |
|  | Review of actions from previous meeting / matters arising  Action: RC to liaise with Staff Forum representatives to provide feedback to Board at May meeting. Complete – the Board noted the positive feedback RC received from staff forum representatives, particularly in relation to the management response to Covid-19 and subsequent move to homeworking. The Board noted the request for appropriate consultation before any permanent changes are made to working practices and also, that any actions plans are communicated back to all staff and not just via the Staff Forum.  Annual report and accounts 2019/20 delegated authority to Audit & Risk Committee  Under the HRA’s scheme of reservation and delegation, the Board is required to receive and approve the HRA’s Annual Report and Annual Accounts as prepared by the HRA’s Chief Executive & Director of Finance. As the cycle of Board meetings does not fit the sign off period required by HM Treasury for laying the document before Parliament, and to avoid an additional Board meeting, the Board agreed to delegate sign off of the Annual Report & Accounts 2019/20 to the HRA Audit & Risk Committee at its meeting on 4 June 2020.  The subsequent final version of the annual report and accounts will be received at the next HRA Board meeting to note. |  |
|  | Update from Chair  The Board acknowledged 20th May was International Trials Day.  TS reported the NEDs would both welcome and value, additional updates with member(s) of the Senior Leadership Team, particularly during the months when there is no Board meeting.  ***Action: TS to discuss further with ST*** | TS/ST |
|  | Chief Executive update  The Board received and noted the update from TA.  KW advised, following the Covid-19 outbreak, the organisation had risen to the challenge and demonstrated the HRA is able to work in an agile and adaptive way. KW expressed gratitude to both HRA staff and volunteer REC members. The Board noted a message of formal thanks to REC Chairs and members had been issued by TA via video message.  The Board noted very few members of staff had reported absent with confirmed Covid-19 or covid related symptoms. Currently, the main reason for covid related absence is caring responsibilities. |  |
|  | **Directorate update**  The Board received and noted the Directorate update. |  |
|  | **COVID-19 research update**  The Board received and noted the Covid-19 update and accompanying slide deck.  The Board noted since the outbreak of Covid-19, the total number of both new applications and amendments has reduced by approximately 30% and Covid-19 studies accounted for 40% of all new applications. The Board noted approvals staff are successfully managing the workload and ensuring Covid-19 related studies are reviewed via fast track with some studies approved within 24 hours. The Board however noted this is due to the overall reduction in application numbers and the dedication of HRA staff and members and may not be sustainable in usual circumstances.  The Board discussed how some aspects of the emergency ways of working to support Covid-19 related research could be incorporated into HRA wider work in order to streamline study review and enhance proportionality. The Board noted it may be beneficial to engage with funders and other stakeholders such as the University and Charity sectors to understand what the future demand for research may be. The Board noted a working group involving the NIHR, MHRA and HRA was meeting to look at how the organisations can work collaboratively and make changes.  After discussion, the Board agreed there were a number of constructive and positive ideas for consideration, some of which will be debated at the forthcoming Transformation Board with the creation of a Steering Group to take forward the work. NM expressed an interest in working with the Executive in taking forward this workstream. |  |
|  | Performance report – Quarter 4 2019/20 including March 2020 Finance report  The Board reviewed and approved the latest performance report and March finance report.  The Board noted that whilst implementation of the Transparency Strategy has been delayed due to Covid-19, other transparency and public involvement work has been progressing well.  After discussion, the Board agreed future performance reporting may benefit from a redesigned dashboard, in addition to more enhanced performance metrics in relation to ‘submission to approval’ data. |  |
|  | **Corporate Risk Register – Quarter 3 2019/20**  The Board reviewed the register noting the risks were predominately Covid-19 related. The Board acknowledged the register had also been reviewed and discussed at the recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting.  The Board noted the Investment Committee had met at the end of April and agreement was provided to support the outline research system business case, therefore subsequent reductions in research system funded related risks will likely be shown in the Q1 risk register. |  |
|  | **Summary of Audit & Risk Committee meeting**  The Board noted the summary from the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 5 May 2020. |  |
|  | **Out of session items**  None to note. |  |
|  | Any other business / agenda items for next meeting  None to note. |  |
|  | **Questions from members of the public**  None to note. |  |
|  | Date of next meeting:  15 July 2020 |  |