

Management in Confidence

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

<b>Date:</b>	21 July 2021	
<b>Time:</b>	12.45pm – 2.10pm	
<b>Present:</b>	Ian Cook (IC)	Director of Transformation & Corporate Services
	Richard Cooper (RC)	Non-Executive Director (meeting Chair)
	Professor Andrew George (AG)	Non-Executive Director
	Dr Nicole Mather (NM)	Non-Executive Director
	Dr Janet Messer (JM)	Director of Approvals Service
	Neelam Patel (NP)	Non-Executive Director
	Juliet Tizzard (JT)	Director of Policy & Partnerships
	Professor Sir Terence Stephenson (TS)	Chair
	Professor Matt Westmore (MW)	Chief Executive
	Karen Williams (KWi)	Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance
<b>Staff Forum Representative:</b>	Kathleen Cassidy (KC)	Confidentiality Advisor
<b>In attendance:</b>	Jonathan Fennelly-Barnwell (JFB)	Deputy Director Approvals Service
	Penelope Gregory (PG)	PA to Deputy Chief Executive (minutes)
	Katherine Guerin (KG)	Deputy Director Corporate Services
	Stephen Tebbutt (ST)	Head of Corporate Governance & Risk
	Michelle Ekins (ME) (item 9 only)	Head of Human Resources
<b>Observers:</b>	Esmee Baker	HRA
	Alison Barbuti	HRA
	Elizabeth Bohm	HRA
	Eve Hart	HRA
	Christine Holmes	Department of Health and Social Care
	Naho Yamazaki	HRA
<b>Apologies:</b>	Sylvia Hazard	Deputy Director of Finance
	Kurt Weideling	Chief Digital Transformation Officer
<b>Venue:</b>	MS Teams	

No.	Record of discussion	Action owner
1	<b>Welcome, introduction and apologies</b>  RC welcomed all to the Part 1, public session of the HRA Board meeting.	
2	<b>Conflicts of interest</b>  None to note.	

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3	<p><b>Review of minutes from meeting held on 19 May 2021</b></p> <p>The Board reviewed and accepted the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record of events.</p>	
4	<p><b>Review of actions from previous meeting / matters arising</b></p> <p><u>Name of lead person responsible for individual programmes of work to be included in reports.</u> The Board noted lead person names are included in the Portfolio Dashboard.</p>	
5	<p><b>Update from Chair</b></p> <p><u>Chief Digital Transformation Officer (CDTO)</u> RC advised Kurt Weideling has decided to step down from the role and an interim CDTO will be appointed.</p> <p><u>External Audit Recommendations</u> RC confirmed all audit recommendations are taken seriously however it may be necessary, on occasions, to prioritise actions accordingly.</p> <p><u>HRA Annual Report and Accounts</u> RC confirmed the HRA Annual Report and Accounts have been laid before Parliament and expressed thanks to KWi and team.</p> <p><u>HRA Audit and Risk Committee</u> A new independent member with a formal financial qualification has been appointed to the HRA Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p><u>Stakeholder feedback</u> RC reported feedback received as to whether the HRA is considered an innovative organisation has been varied, therefore additional work regarding how the HRA is perceived may be required.</p>	
6	<p><b>Update from the Chief Executive</b></p> <p>The Board received and discussed the update provided by MW which focussed on a number of areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HM Government Life Sciences Vision and The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery: 2021 to 2022 implementation plan (aka Recover Resilience and Growth).</li> <li>- Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) delivery plan</li> <li>- Developing a combined vision with MHRA</li> <li>- National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Digital business cases approved with HRA involvement</li> <li>- The first meeting of the Volunteer Group</li> <li>- Government Digital Service assessment (via NHSX) and plans for user research</li> </ul> <p><u>Cost savings</u></p>	

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	<p>MW reported the HRA cost saving suggestions have been submitted to the Treasury and currently awaiting a response.</p> <p><u>User-led design</u> The Board discussed user-led design and agreed it would be useful to have a future Board session in this area which could also include some case studies. The Board was pleased to learn of the positive comments made on social media regarding the HRA amendment tool.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Action: Future Board seminar to be arranged re user-led design</b></p> <p>The Board thanked MW for an informative update.</p>	<b>ST</b>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Performance Report</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the Performance report – April 2021 to 31 May 2021, which details the performance of the HRA in delivering the organisational strategy.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to note the high levels of user satisfaction for HRA services.</p> <p>The Board noted staff capacity for April / May was 74% but was encouraged by the improvement in trend to 78% during June. KWi confirmed new processes are being implemented to speed up recruitment and other options are being actively explored. The Board enquired whether consideration has been given to a central resource and/or individual taking responsibility for recruitment. JFB confirmed additional time and capacity has been allocated to the business coordinator role within the Approvals Directorate to assist with approvals recruitment.</p> <p>The Board observed the ethical review of Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medical Product (CTIMP) statutory target has been met in 93% of all cases which falls short of the 100% target, but 99% of standard process CTIMPs met the target. KWi confirmed all applications which did not achieve the target will be reviewed and additional intelligence regarding performance in meeting the CTIMP target will be included in future performance reports.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to note additional information regarding volunteer recruitment had been included within the report. KW highlighted whilst there has been some success in recruiting new Research Ethics Committee (REC) members, further work in this area will continue.</p> <p>The Board confirmed approval for the Performance Report.</p> <p><b>Finance Report</b></p> <p>The Board reviewed and approved the Finance report – 2 months to 31 May 2021.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Communications Strategy</b></p>	

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	<p>The Board received and noted the paper, HRA External Communications Strategy which presents the refreshed HRA external communications strategy together with proposed campaign themes and key messages for 2021-22.</p> <p>EH explained the strategy which supports the organisation's brand, mission, strategy and business plan and sets out how the communications team will focus its strategic resource to deliver maximum benefit. The Board suggested it may be helpful to consider joint venture communications as part of the strategy.</p> <p>The Board confirmed approval for the HRA External Communications Strategy and thanked EH for a well laid out and clear paper.</p>	
9	<p><b>Staff Survey Management Response</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the Staff Survey 2021 – Management Response, introduced by IC.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to note the survey results were in general very positive which contributed to a staff engagement score of 86%. IC advised that workload remains an issue for some members of staff and as such, the Executive team has set a target to reduce to 10% or less those disagreeing with the statements 'my workload is manageable' and 'I am able to achieve a balance between my home life and work life'.</p> <p>The Board enquired whether they may be a small minority of staff who did not complete the survey and/or do not join team meetings who are quietly struggling. IC confirmed work had been undertaken during the pandemic with the Staff Forum and Directors had made themselves available for 1-1 calls with staff who may need additional support, but added he did not get the feeling this was currently an issue.</p> <p>The Board endorsed the approach contained within the Management Response paper.</p>	
10	<p><b>Portfolio Delivery Programme</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the Portfolio Delivery Report which details the progress being made on the major programmes of change within the HRA's portfolio.</p> <p>The Board learned that the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) website development is status red on the portfolio dashboard as currently, different options are being explored to ensure the solution will provide a positive user experience.</p> <p>The Board discussed the importance of ensuring good communications between the Research Systems and the Ethics Review programmes and was assured to learn that regular meetings (chaired by the Director of</p>	

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	Transformation & Corporate Services) between project and programme managers take place and further, that a dependencies log is being created.	
11	<p><b>Update on Data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) projects</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the update paper which focuses on what the HRA is currently doing to improve its services and support others in developing data and AI policy and highlight where the HRA could influence the wider system in the future.</p> <p>The Board discussed who was providing ethics advice in relation to data and AI. EB advised the HRA is currently in discussions with academics in various universities to explore what training may be needed to assist REC members and staff.</p> <p>The Board discussed how a multi-agency advice service might integrate with IRAS and was pleased to learn the HRA is working closely with other regulators and that a single front door approach (IRAS) will be taken.</p> <p>The Board thanked EB for the update.</p>	
12	<p><b>Update on Ethics Review programme</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the update paper which describes the work in the next phase of the Ethics Review Programme and details the changes which have been made and transferred to the business for implementation.</p> <p>The Board noted the Ethics Review Programme has rebranded and is now known publicly as Think Ethics.</p> <p>The Board thanked JT for the update.</p>	
13	<p><b>Feedback from Staff Forum</b></p> <p>The Board welcomed Staff Forum member, Kathleen Cassidy to the meeting.</p> <p>KC advised the next meeting will take place in September and the staff forum is currently seeking to recruit new members.</p> <p><b>Action: TS/RC to draft a statement to encourage staff forum membership.</b></p> <p>IC reported following a suggestion made at the June Staff Forum, volunteering leave has been introduced for staff. This new provision will allow staff to take up to two days paid leave in order to undertake volunteering activities.</p>	TS/RC
14	<p><b>Out of session items</b></p> <p>None to note.</p>	
15	<p><b>Any other business / agenda items for next meeting</b></p>	

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	MW confirmed the Annual Report and Accounts have been laid before Parliament prior to the summer recess and thanked all who had contributed.	
16	<b>Questions from members of the public</b>  None to note.	
17	<b>Date of next meeting:</b>  22 September 2021	