

Management in Confidence

HRA Board meeting minutes (Part 1 – Public Session)

Date:	22 September 2021	
Time:	12.45pm – 2.10pm	
Present:	Richard Cooper (RC)	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
	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 (KW)	Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance
Staff Forum Representative:	Juliana Araujo (JA)	Approvals Specialist
In attendance:	Helen Ainsbury (HA)	Interim Chief Digital Transformation officer
	Tony Calland (TC)	Chair, Confidentiality Advisory Group
	Natasha Dunkley (ND)	Head of Confidentiality Advice Service
	Jonathan Fennelly-Barnwell (JFB)	Deputy Director Approvals Service
	Penelope Gregory (PG)	PA to Deputy Chief Executive (minutes)
	Katherine Guerin (KG)	Deputy Director Corporate Services
	Becky Purvis (BP)	Deputy Director Policy & Partnerships
	Stephen Tebbutt (ST)	Head of Corporate Governance & Risk
	Ann Tunley (AT)	Head of Approvals Support
	Gary Walsh (GW)	Acting Deputy Director of Finance
	Julie Waters (JW)	Associate Director, Portfolio Management
Observers:	Simon Davies	HRA
	Claire Luu	HRA
	Eirini Tampa	HRA
	Naho Yamazaki	HRA
Apologies:	Ian Cook (IC)	Director of Transformation & Corporate Services
Venue:	MS Teams	

No.	Record of discussion	Action owner
1	<p>Welcome, introduction and apologies</p> <p>TS welcomed all to the Part 1, public session of the HRA Board meeting.</p>	

Management in Confidence

No.	Record of discussion	Action owner
2	<p>Conflicts of interest</p> <p>The Board noted Neelam Patel has been appointed to the external advisory board for Innovation Centre in Digital Molecular Technologies. The Board however agreed this was not a conflict.</p>	
3	<p>Review of minutes from meeting held on 21 July 2021</p> <p>The Board reviewed and accepted the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record of events.</p>	
4	<p>Review of actions from previous meeting / matters arising</p> <p><u>Board seminar to consider user led design.</u> Seminar initially planned for November but has subsequently been scheduled to January 2022 due to the proposed combined Executive Committee / HRA Board session in November. The Board discussed the benefits of user led design in general and agreed it would be useful if this subject could be included in the combined session in November.</p> <p><u>Statement from TS/RC to encourage new staff forum members</u> RC confirmed he had attended a recent staff session regarding the Staff Forum and although the meeting had not been particularly well attended, he was hopeful more potential representatives will come forward. The Board was encouraged to learn whilst there remain three/four current vacancies on the forum, progress continues to be made.</p> <p>JA reported the Staff Forum plans to adopt a more 'uniformed approach' as due to the increased number of home-based workers, it was no longer necessary to attach staff forum representatives to particular HRA offices.</p>	
5	<p>Update from Chair</p> <p><u>HRA Sponsor</u> TS confirmed Lord Bethell has been replaced in the Cabinet reshuffle by Lord Syed Kamall as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Innovation at the Department of Health and Social Care.</p> <p><u>Comprehensive Spending Review</u> TS advised the outcome of the spending review was awaited and should be made prior to the next Board meeting.</p> <p><u>November Board meeting</u> TS confirmed the November Board is scheduled to be a face to face meeting but the requirement to attend in person will not be imposed in the event members do not feel comfortable at that time.</p>	
6	<p>Update from the Chief Executive</p> <p>The Board received and discussed the update provided by MW which focussed on a number of areas including:</p>	

Management in Confidence

No.	Record of discussion	Action owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good Clinical Trials Collaborative draft guidance - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Independent review of research bureaucracy call for evidence - Science and Technology Select Committee Call for Evidence: Reproducibility and research integrity - Combined Review roll out - Make It Public Conference - Strategy and purpose development - Ten-year anniversary planning - Proposal for an in-person Executive Committee and Board Awayday 16/17 November - Update on business contingency <p><u>Combined Review roll out</u> MW confirmed the final deployment of the technical solution needed to support the combined review service has been completed. The Board agreed this was a fantastic achievement which will enable the combined review service to be the single route into both the HRA and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for clinical trials of interventional medicinal products (CTIMPS) from January 2022 onwards.</p> <p><u>Public Involvement</u> MW highlighted the success of the round table discussion to develop a cross-sector statement of shared commitment to public involvement in health and care research, hosted by the HRA in partnership with the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR).</p> <p><u>Make it Public</u> MW advised the first annual report on transparency is due to be published in November which will coincide with the Make it Public Conference which is taking place on the 3rd and 4th of the same month.</p> <p><u>Combined Executive Committee / November Board session</u> The Board discussed and agreed plans for the proposed combined Executive Committee and HRA Board session in November. The Board agreed the workshop should include the business plan, long term vision, user led design and the outcome of the spending review. The Board further agreed lateral flow tests should be taken prior to attending the event in November. Action: NM/RC to assist with development of plans re combined session/workshop.</p> <p>The Board discussed the road map and the importance of creating the right impression with stakeholders and agreed the narrative should demonstrate the HRA continues to move at pace. Action: MW/JT to develop narrative.</p> <p>The Board thanked MW for the update.</p>	<p>NM/RC</p> <p>MW/JT</p>
7	Performance Report	

Management in Confidence

No.	Record of discussion	Action owner
	<p>The Board received and noted the Performance report – April 2021 to 31 July 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 but noted a downward trend, although this was still higher than the benchmark.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to note 100% of standard process Clinical Trial Investigational Medical Product (CTIMP) applications met 60 days statutory timelines for ethics review. The Board noted the performance was not as strong in respect of the Combined Review but acknowledged mitigations have been put in place to address this.</p> <p>The Board noted staff capacity for June / July was 78% and agreed this remained an area of concern. The Board acknowledged recruitment to vacancies continues to be an issue for many organisations, therefore it was important to highlight and sufficiently articulate the benefits of working for the HRA in all future recruitment processes.</p> <p>The Board confirmed approval for the Performance Report.</p> <p>Finance Report</p> <p>The Board reviewed and approved the Finance report – 4 months to 31 July 2021.</p> <p>The Board welcomed the new HRA Commercial Team, Claire Luu and Eirini Tampa to the organisation.</p>	
8	<p>Portfolio Delivery Report</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 discussed the report and agreed the dashboard would benefit from the inclusion of interim milestones to further illustrate the transformation journey and highlight benefits.</p>	
9	<p>Research Ethics Committee (REC) Annual Report</p> <p>The Board received and noted the REC Annual Report which provides a summary of the membership, activity and performance of RECs in England in 2020/21.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to learn there had been an improvement in the recruitment of new REC members on the previous year and further, that 'joiners' outnumbered the REC 'leavers'.</p>	

Management in Confidence

No.	Record of discussion	Action owner
	<p>The Board discussed the decisions provided by the RECs at first review, noting the high percentage of provisional opinions and agreed whilst it is clear the RECs are providing 'added value' and fulfilling the requirement to 'promote research' and 'protect the public' this did equate to considerable rework being undertaken by applicants. The Board discussed whether any actions could be undertaken to increase the number of research applications getting it right first time. JT advised one of the main reasons identified for a provisional opinion at first review is the requirement for changes to the participant information sheet and/or consent form and as such, will be addressed as part of the Ethics Review Programme.</p> <p>The Board discussed the retrospective nature of the report but acknowledged this was a formal report and that communications regarding future plans will be included within the Ethics Review Programme.</p> <p>The Board confirmed approval for the REC Annual Report and congratulated the Approvals Directorate in respect of the work undertaken to achieve the improvement in REC accreditations.</p>	
10	<p>Confidentiality Advice Group (CAG) Annual Report</p> <p>The Board received and noted the first CAG Annual Report which covers the period of 01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.</p> <p>ND advised the past year had been a period of transformation and rebuilding of the Confidentiality Advice Team (CAT) which had affected the performance statistics in certain areas.</p> <p>The Board enquired if there was a particular issue which, if addressed, could improve the review process. TC advised there remains an element of frustration in respect of the number of provisional outcomes which appears to stem from the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) form and available guidance and, whether or not this is sufficiently visible and clarifies the requirements to applicants.</p> <p>The Board discussed the report and was pleased to note the inclusion of a 'look forward' in addition to a review of the past year.</p> <p>The Board confirmed approval for the CAG Annual Report and expressed thanks for the work undertaken during the year.</p>	
11	<p>Freedom of Information / Complaints Annual Reports 2020/21</p> <p>The Board received and noted the Freedom of Information & Complaints annual summary 2020/21 which provides an overview of the Freedom of Information requests, complaints and third-party complaints received in 2020/21.</p> <p>The Board noted the majority of work involved dealing with third party complaints (complaints received which do not relate to HRA service) but was assured to learn an oversight meeting to include the attendance of</p>	

Management in Confidence

No.	Record of discussion	Action owner
	<p>Communications, Chief Executive and the Director of Operations, takes place on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Compliments – The Board was pleased to learn feedback in relation to applicants / stakeholder interaction with HRA staff was very positive at 90%.</p>	
12	<p>Feedback from Staff forum</p> <p>The Board welcomed JA to the meeting.</p> <p>JA fed back on the latest meeting of the Staff Forum which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff forum representatives considering the remit of their roles and how complaints are handled from staff. - Presentation received from Matthew Harris and Tom Lucas (Approvals) regarding the Approvals Officer role and to encourage development. - Update on new ways of working and return to the offices. - Optimise training opportunities for staff with HRA partners. - Improvement of Staff Forum intranet page to enhance visibility. - Ways of rewarding staff - Celebration of HRA ten-year anniversary <p>The Board thanked JA for the update and acknowledged the excellent work of the Staff Forum. RC confirmed all Non-Executive Directors are available to forum and staff members for confidential conversations.</p>	
13	<p>Out of session items</p> <p>The following items were circulated out of session for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update from Chair and Chief Executive – 13th August 2021 	
14	<p>Any other business / agenda items for next meeting</p> <p>None to note.</p>	
15	<p>Questions from members of the public</p> <p>None to note.</p>	
16	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p>17 November 2021</p>	