

Management in Confidence

HRA Board meeting minutes (Part 1 – Public Session)

Date:	19 January 2022	
Time:	12.30pm – 14.10pm	
Present:	Helen Ainsbury (HA)	Interim Chief Digital Transformation officer
	Ian Cook (IC)	Director of Transformation and Corporate Services
	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:	Charlotte Ferris (CF)	Approvals Officer
In attendance:	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
Observers:	Nicola Burgess	Health Research Authority
	Elizabeth Bohm	Health Research Authority
	Kirsty Edwards	Health Research Authority
	Jim Elliott	Health Research Authority
	Laura Gale	Health Research Authority
	Eve Hart	Health Research Authority
	Christine Holmes (CH)	Department of Health and Social Care
	Naho Yamazaki	Health Research Authority
Apologies:	Gary Walsh (GW)	Interim Deputy Director of Finance
	Julie Waters (JW)	Associate Director, Portfolio Management
Venue:	MS Teams	

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

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2	<p>Conflicts of interest</p> <p>None to note.</p> <p>The Board noted the Annual Declaration for completion by Board Members will be circulated by ST/PG.</p>	
3	<p>Review of minutes from meeting held on 17 November 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>None to note.</p>	
5	<p>Update from Chair</p> <p><u>HRA 10th Anniversary</u> TS congratulated and thanked all who participated in the recent 10-year anniversary celebrations.</p> <p><u>Registration of clinical trials of investigational medicinal products (CTIMPs)</u> TS highlighted the partnership between the HRA and the ISRCTN Registry to register CTIMPs on behalf of sponsors. As from 1st January 2022, all CTIMPs submitted for combined review will be automatically registered on the ISRCTN Registry.</p> <p><u>Combined Review</u> TS highlighted the combined review process with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which is now the way all sponsors/applicants will seek approval for new CTIMPs. TS stated combined review has reduced the timeline from submission to approval from 118 days to 62 days which is a great achievement.</p> <p>TS added it was important to highlight achievements such as the combined review and the registration of CTIMPs as these are fine examples of 'you said, we did'.</p> <p><u>Review of Research Bureaucracy</u> TS advised the Review of Research Bureaucracy (which the HRA fed data into) lead by Professor Adam Tickell, has published its interim findings.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combined Review roll out - Shared commitment on public involvement 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ABPI-NHS confederation senior leaders roundtable - Make it Public - Review of 2021/22 Business Plan - HRA Executive Committee and Board awayday November 2021 - Ten-year anniversary reflection and celebration - HRA's Approach to Change and Innovation workshop Dec 2021 - Ways of working under COVID-19 restrictions - Recruitment of a permanent Chief Digital Transformation Officer <p><u>Combined Review roll out</u> MW confirmed messaging regarding Combined Review continues to be communicated.</p> <p><u>Shared commitment on public involvement</u> MW advised the HRA, in partnership with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) are leading on a cross-sector statement of shared commitment to public involvement in health and care research with the aim to lead to change in the future.</p> <p>The Board discussed communications to stakeholders in general and the importance of reaching out to young researchers.</p> <p><u>Make it Public</u> MW reported 100% of responders who attended the Make it Public Conference found it useful and that the Make it Public Annual Report has been published.</p> <p><u>Recruitment of a permanent Chief Digital Transformation Officer</u> MW confirmed Ian Robinson (IR) will be attending the next HRA Board meeting in March 2022. RC advised he would welcome the opportunity to meet with IR and HA together, during the handover period.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: RC to meet with HA and IR.</p> <p>The Board expressed thanks to HA and acknowledged her help and contribution which has been made during her period as Interim Chief Digital Transformation Officer and wished her well for the future.</p>	HA
7	<p>Performance Report (including Finance Report)</p> <p>The Board received and noted the Performance report – April 2021 to November 2021, which details the performance of the HRA in delivering the organisational strategy.</p> <p>The Board discussed the report, noting that capacity remains a risk but was assured to learn steady progress is being made, and that measures which have been put in place to address this issue have been successful.</p> <p>The Board discussed the 15% reduction in research applications and enquired whether there was any data regarding the decrease in activity, suggesting it would be helpful to provide some contextual information in future reports. JM confirmed a reduction in the number of non-commercial studies but reported a</p>	

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	<p>mixed picture in respect of industry, advising there is much optimism regarding new studies but some pessimism for existing studies.</p> <p>The Board noted the statement 'Applications not approved but taking a long time: None' relating to the Confidentiality Advisory Group (CAG) (page 10) and requested justification for what 'long time' is in future reporting.</p> <p>KW confirmed the recruitment of new Research Ethics Committee (REC) members remained steady and initial concerns that existing members may leave due to the change to virtual meetings, had not materialised. The Board enquired what the breakdown was between Expert, Lay and Lay-Plus members. KW advised the data was not currently available but will investigate for future reporting. CF confirmed new members had recently joined the three REC Committees under her administration, however these have mainly been Lay/Lay-plus members.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Action: Performance Report actions – include further contextual information regarding research activity, justification for 'long time' re CAG studies and provide breakdown between Expert, Lay and Lay-Plus REC Members.</p> <p>The Board confirmed approval for the Performance Report.</p> <p>Finance Report</p> <p>The Board reviewed and approved the Finance report – 8 months to 30 November 2021.</p> <p>The Board noted the forecast position has confirmed an underspend of £2M on all activities which, KW reported, is due to successful procurements which has released efficiencies of £1.2M, pay variances and savings as a result of continued home working.</p> <p>KW confirmed the new, permanent Deputy Director of Finance will commence at the HRA on the 7th March and expressed thanks to Gary Walsh, the current interim Deputy Director of Finance, who will be leaving in February.</p>	KW
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 information regarding what has been delivered so far as this is not apparent on the Gantt chart, for example, the addition of a box to the commentary to detail key achievements would be helpful.</p> <p>To ensure consistent communications, the Board suggested the creation of a single page document with bullets to indicate what has been</p>	

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	<p>achieved/delivered and to highlight the differences between the HRA and the MHRA. MW confirmed a document is already in the process of being prepared to ensure a coordinated approach to key messaging and will be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting.</p>	
9	<p>HRA Strategy 2022-25: Where are we and next steps</p> <p>The Board received and noted the paper, HRA Strategy 2022-25: Where are we and next steps, delivered by MW.</p> <p>MW shared slides of the PowerPoint presentation HRA Strategy 22-25 with the Board, in order to decide the three priority areas. The Board discussed the proposals for the future strategy and in general, agreed this was the right approach.</p> <p>The Board agreed ‘Research with and for everyone (Champion of the people)’, ‘Accelerating UK research in context of life sciences vision’ and ‘Streamline and simplify approvals’ should be the priority areas. The Board stressed the importance of effectively articulating the mission of the HRA and whilst considering the UK Life Sciences agenda, being mindful of NHS and academic agendas also.</p>	
10	<p>Update on HRA Business Plan development</p> <p>The Board noted the HRA Financial Plan will be discussed in Part 2 – Confidential Session of the Board meeting.</p> <p>KW reported discussions continue with Executive Committee on how best to deliver the HRA priorities and confirmed the draft Business Plan will be submitted to the next HRA Board meeting in March.</p>	
11	<p>Summary of 2021.11.09 HRA Audit and Risk Committee</p> <p>The Board received and noted the summary from the HRA Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 09 November 2021.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to learn the HRA Audit and Risk Committee has a new independent member who is a qualified accountant with a background in pharma and research.</p> <p>RC provided feedback from a recent Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) half day event he attended for Audit Committee Chairs.</p> <p>The Board learned that CH from the HRA’s DHSC Sponsor team attended the meeting to discuss risks affecting the wider research sector and the areas of concern for the Science, Research and Evidence Directorate of DHSC.</p>	
12	<p>Feedback from Staff Forum</p> <p>The Board welcomed CF to the meeting.</p>	

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	<p>CF fed back on the last meeting of the Staff Forum which included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Staff Forum would like to recognise that the HRA has been supportive during the pandemic. - There was discussion about new staff groups for Health and Wellbeing and to support individuals with disabilities. It was agreed that the range of initiatives available to staff already (e.g. healthy HRA, apps, people strategy, flexible working, EAP, Mental Health First Aider, EDI work) should be embedded into existing practices. - It was agreed that Forum Management needs improving which was reflected in staff survey results. - There was discussion regarding the role of the Staff Forum in restructures. - It was agreed that the Terms of Reference/Handbook would be reviewed to bring clarity and to undertake some communications to ensure the organisation also understands the informal reps' role and the formal Union role. - There has been work on embedding the forum further into the organisation and there is a workshop at the end of January to make further plans. <p>The Board thanked CF for the update.</p>	
13	<p>Out of session items</p> <p>None to note.</p>	
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>16 March 2022</p>	