

Minutes of the Board of IPH

Date of meeting: 21st June 2023 at 4 pm

Present:

Name	Role	Agenda Items attendance	Attendance method
Professor Bernie Hannigan (Chair)	Director	All	MS teams
Mr Martin Higgins (Deputy chair)	Director	From item 4	MS teams
Dr Paul Kavanagh (PK)	Director	All	MS teams

In attendance:

Name	Role	Agenda Items attendance	Attendance method
Ms Suzanne Costello (SC)	CEO	All	MS teams
Ms Sinéad Ward (Co Sec)	Director of Finance & Governance	All	MS teams
Éimear McAnallen	Governance and Compliance Executive	All	MS teams
Prof. Roger O'Sullivan	Director of Ageing Research & Development	Item 4b only	MS teams

Apologies:

Name	Role
Dr Marie Casey	Director
Dr Deirdre Mulholland	Director

Please note the minutes reflect the order in which the agenda items were discussed at the meeting.

1. Chairperson's welcome

Chairperson welcomed members and attendees and invited any comments or revisions on the agenda, no revisions were suggested. Chairperson noted apologies from Dr Casey and Dr Mulholland.

2. Declaration of conflict of Interest

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting & Action Tracker

Chairperson reviewed the open items on the action tracker which were confirmed to be progressing or completed. SW to update the title of the 'Staff Performance and Development Committee' within the Action Tracker.

4. Operational Update

4a. CEO Report and 4b. Operational Progress Reports

SC provided summary of the CEO report and highlighted some key updates:

- IPH Business Plan to be revised due to several upcoming maternity leave arrangements among staff, reducing IPH's capacity for delivery.
- The SpR training on hold as the candidate will be commencing maternity leave.
- The establishment of the Alcohol Research Network has been paused until the recommendations of the Public Health Alcohol Research Group (PHARG) are considered by the Department of Health (ROI) .
- TAG proposal and Tobacco endgame modelling funding application have been placed on hold due to staff capacity issues.
- Plans are in place to employ a Research Officer to support the policy team and address risks identified around staffing levels and capacity. Chairperson proposed that IPH consider notifying the universities of staffing gaps to identify whether secondment opportunities are available.
- The funding bid for a permanent Consultant in Public Health Medicine (CPHM) role has been redrafted to reflect the input from Board on the role requirements and reflecting the new CPHM consultancy contracts.

The application was submitted in May 2023 and awaiting feedback from the Department.

- IPH is presenting, on behalf of the Department of Health, to British and Irish Council Workshop on MUP next week.
- Funding uplift request to the Department reflecting the increased costs attached to compliance with public sector pay rates and pension contributions to be submitted next Wednesday.
- IPH met with the Joint Secretaries of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and raised issues arising for North/South agencies without implementation body status. The Joint Secretaries indicated the potential for a new status to assist with the governance of non-implementation body, cross-border agencies.
- IPH met with the Department of Health (ROI)'s North/South, East West and EU Unit for an update meeting. The IPH website was launched in May 2023 with detailed metrics expected towards the end of the year, initial informal feedback has been positive.
- A discussion was held regarding the approach to the development of a new strategy for IPH, starting in January 2024 including consideration of consultants, dates and venues etc.
- IPH will commission a 'look back review' this year to support development of the new strategy for IPH.
- IPH Sustainability statement will be ready for Board review in September.

Chairperson requested that Departmental requests are highlighted within the IPH Business Plan progress spreadsheet.

4.b Research Strategy – Professor Roger O’Sullivan (R O’S)

Professor R O’S provided an update on IPH’s research strategy outlining:

- the purpose of the research strategy, to advance IPH’s organisational standing as a research performing organisation;
- an overview of documentation required when applying for research performing organisational status with the Health research Board (HRB);
- strategy development was in consultation with an external consultant, IPH senior management team, IPH staff and Chairperson;
- an overview of the objectives of the strategy for IPH;
- the establishment of an external research advisory group;

- the strategy's core focus around using evidence to inform public health policies;
- IPH will ensure ethics review/appraisal for all research projects; and
- application submission will initially be to the HRB and then to the Irish Research Council.

5. Financial Reporting

5a. Update from Audit & Risk committee (ARC)

MH provided an update from the ARC meeting of 21st June 2023:

- ARC reviewed IPH's financial position at the end of May 2023 against budgets and all variances. ARC noted an underspend on payroll budget due to the delay in filling approved staff vacancies, and its impact on the risk register and deliverables of unfilled posts.
- ARC discussed the internal governance audit plan to benchmark IPH against the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and confirmed its approval of the proposed audit plan.

6. Risk

6a. Agree a pathway to update current risk policy to a risk framework and a revised risk appetite

Chairperson led the discussion around the IPH Risk Register. MH outlined that the appropriate oversight role of Board and ARC with the management of the Risk Register is under review.

SW outlined that some changes to the Risk Register have been implemented following consultation with ARC and how a new risk policy/framework would allow for an enhanced approach to the Risk Register.

SW to come back to Board and ARC at a joint discussion later in the year (December meeting) on designing the new risk framework and initiate a Board discussion on risk appetite.

MH outlined the importance of a robust risk management system with agreement from the Board on SW's approach to this policy update.

SC provided an update on the current pension arrangements and IPH's request to join the public sector Single Pension Scheme (ROI) to address the risk identified to this matter.

7. Governance and Compliance

7a. Approval of the Staff Performance and Development Committee Terms of Reference.

The Board approved the proposed Terms of Reference for the new Committee noting that all staff matters will be led by the CEO reporting to the Board.. Chairperson and MH discussed whether ARC should have oversight of HR policies and proposed that policies are run by ARC from a risk management position and then on to Board for approval. Existing ARC Terms of Reference are to be reviewed to determine whether they allow for this.

7b. Update on Expression of Interest (Eoi) for new Board directors

The Board reviewed the Eoi booklet and were provided with an update on the skills being sought in this public call for Board Directors. The Board approved the Eoi document with Chairperson's amendments to be included in the final version.

7c. Board handbook

The Board were provided with an update on the progress and current version of the draft 'Board Member's Handbook'. SW noted that some areas need to be reviewed against company law and specific Departmental oversight and suggested that these amendments be returned for final Board approval in the autumn.

8. Strategy

8a. Strategy planning (process & time scales)

Strategy planning to commence in January 2024, IPH to contact the Board to confirm a draft schedule.

The Board approved the proposal to hold the January Board meeting in person to support the strategy development session.

9. AOB

N/A

9. Date of next meeting: 7th December 2023

The Chairperson proposed that the meeting scheduled for 28th September 2023 be cancelled. Any matters for review / approval will be provided to members via email. Members agreed to this approach.

Bernie Hannigan

Approved by Prof Bernie Hannigan
Chairperson
02/08/2023