

**Approved Minutes of the Board Extraordinary meeting held at 11:00 on
7 July 2021 (Video Conference)**

Chair:

Rob Behrens CBE, the Ombudsman

Non-Executive members:

Sir Alex Allan KCB

Elisabeth Davies

Linda Farrant

Dean Fathers

Balram Gidoomal CBE

Carolyn Hirst

Mick King

Anu Singh

Executive members

Amanda Amroliwala, Chief Executive

Gill Kilpatrick, Chief Operating Officer

Apologies

In attendance:

Bipon Bhakri, Director of Resources

Faridah Newman, Executive and
Committee Officer (minutes)

Maria Mansfeld, Chief of Staff

Observer:

Jeremy Short, Senior Financial
Accountant

1. Chair's Introduction and Welcome

- 1.1 Rob Behrens introduced all present to the meeting to approve the annual report and accounts for 2020-21.
- 1.2 Amanda Amroliwala wished to place on record her thanks to all of the PHSO staff who had been involved in producing the annual report and accounts.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Feedback from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

- 3.1 Linda Farrant updated the Board on the work of ARAC in relation to the 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts. ARAC had looked in detail at the accounts on 3 June 2021 at the technical walkthrough meeting.
- 3.2 At the meeting of ARAC on 7 July, ARAC had received the National Audit Office (NAO)'s annual completion report following their audit of the resource accounts. The NAO had made one minor recommendation, which the Director of Resources has accepted and which will be implemented and monitored. NAO had indicated that the Comptroller and Auditor General should certify the accounts with an unqualified audit opinion. ARAC members thanked all staff involved for their work in producing a high quality set of accounts.
- 3.3 Gill Kilpatrick informed the Board that she had called an informal meeting of the Finance team to express thanks for the excellent resource accounts. She also thanked Maria Mansfeld for her role as senior responsible officer for the Annual Report.
- 3.4 Rob Behrens thanked all staff involved in the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts.

4. PHSO Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21

- 4.1 Maria Mansfeld presented a paper asking the Board to approve the 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts. She advised the Board that, subject to the Board's approval and certification of the accounts by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we aimed to lay the report before Parliament on 20 July, before recess.
- 4.2 After the report is laid we will share it with other Ombuds and stakeholders. It will be placed on our website and publicised by social media.
- 4.3 Board members made the following points in discussion:
 - The report presents a good narrative of achievements in a difficult year. It reads clearly and sets out our successes and demonstrates that we have maintained momentum despite the pandemic.
 - The Performance report makes it clear that we have taken on board recommendations made by the Public Administration and Constitutional

Affairs Committee. It presents an opportunity to think about pro-active messaging in advance of the next scrutiny hearing.

4.4 The Board agreed the following:

- To delegate authority to Amanda Amroliwala as accountable officer to approve any final adjustments to the resource accounts;
- To approve the PHSO Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21 for publication and laying before Parliament; and
- To authorise the Ombudsman to sign the accounts and the Letter of Representation.

The meeting ended at 11:58