

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

14 December 2020 - via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)

### CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

Contact Susan O'Donnell, [susan.odonnell@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:susan.odonnell@northumbria.ac.uk), Secretary to the Board of Governors, with any queries about these Summary Minutes.

Present: Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods (Chair) Craig Apsey, James Bromiley, Jean Brown, Lorraine Brown, Alasdair Corfield, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Sophie Haagensen, Peter Judge, Emmanuel Kabengele, Sally Pelham, Nick Pope, Amy Rice-Thomson, Claudia Shaw, John Taylor, Helen Thorne, Professor Andrew Wathey, Dr Jeya Wilson, Simon Yellowley.

Apologies: Daniel Monk.

Secretary: Susan F O'Donnell, Richard Elliott (Assistant Secretary).

In attendance: Adam Dunlop, Jane Embley, Professor Peter Francis, Professor Steven Kyffin, Professor George Marston, Daniel Monnery, Simon Newitt, Professor Jon Reast, Lucy Winskell.

### MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

#### **2019/20 Annual Report and Financial Statements** [BG20/54]

The Board of Governors considered the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20, which had been endorsed by Employment and Finance Committee and Audit Committee on 7 and 9 December respectively. Despite the pandemic, the University's operating performance for 2019/20 remained strong, providing headroom for the challenges expected in the 2020/21 financial year. Both the Head of Internal Audit Opinion and the external audit opinion were yet to be confirmed. The Statement on Internal Control included a reference to the cyber incident and included the draft opinion of the Head of Internal Audit provided by EY, which provided reasonable assurance that the University had adequate and effective arrangements to achieve management's objectives over risk management, control and governance, and economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money) arrangements, except in relation to Information System specific controls, and noted that remedial actions were in train. A separate, detailed report on the University's use of the Going Concern basis of accounting was also provided. Members of the Audit Committee (which was quorate at the meeting) reviewed the one potential adjustment to the Accounts relating to actuarial assumptions underpinning the projected pensions deficit and confirmed they were content with the proposed approach of not adjusting the Accounts. **The Board received assurance that the general level of detail in the disclosure narratives was in line with sector norms, which had become more open and transparent in recent years, and expressed its thanks to the Finance team and the Finance Director for the production of a high quality Annual Report and Financial Statements under very challenging circumstances.** The opinion from the Head of Internal Audit and the related remedial actions were noted. **The Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20 subject to production of the print version, confirmation of the Head of Internal Audit opinion and completion of external audit procedures.**

#### **Annual Report of Audit Committee** [BG20/55]

The Board considered the final draft of the Annual Report of Audit Committee, which could not be formally finalised until the Head of Internal Audit opinion noted above was confirmed. The Committee was satisfied that the University had adequate and effective arrangements in place for risk management, governance and control; economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money); and management and quality assurance of data submitted to regulatory and related bodies. **The Board noted the report would be finalised once both the Internal and External Audit Opinions were confirmed.**

#### **Prevent Duty Annual Report 2019/20** [BG20/56]

The Board of Governors considered the annual report 2019/20 on the University's compliance with the Prevent Duty during the period 01 August 2019 - 31 July 2020. OfS had requested specific commentary on student welfare arrangements and Prevent related measures arising from the pandemic. The report confirmed that the University had been compliant. **The Board approved the annual report 2019/20 on the University's compliance with the Prevent Duty during the period 01 August 2019 - 31 July 2020,**

subject to finalisation of one item of data.

**Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2019/20** [BG20/58]

The Board of Governors considered the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report for 2019/20. The key focus for much of the year had been on the response to Covid-19 - a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) audit of Covid security noted City Campus as an exemplar of Covid-19 controls. Health and Safety compliance and effectiveness was in line with the Health and Safety Policy and there were no concerns with regards to fire safety management, accidents, incidents or near misses, with no failures in relation to health and safety compliance. **The Board commended the significant team effort across the entire University, both staff and students, that had contributed to these positive outcomes, and extended its thanks to those involved. The Board noted that ensuring the campus remained Covid-secure depended on ongoing active compliance with the strict arrangements in place, which would continue to reflect Government guidance.**

**Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report Q1 2020/21** [BG20/59]

The Board of Governors considered the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report August - October 2020. Health and Safety compliance and effectiveness was in line with the Health and Safety Policy and there were no concerns relating to accidents, incidents or near misses. A fire safety issue at a leased student accommodation had been reviewed by a Fire Engineer and the Fire Risk Assessor (FRA); this issue was unconnected to building cladding; in consultation with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, it had been confirmed the blocks remained safe to occupy. **The Board noted the report and that Employment and Finance Committee had considered the fire safety issue in some depth and had received assurance that student safety was being prioritised.**

Susan F O'Donnell  
Secretary to the Board of Governors  
February 2021