

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING**23 November 2020 - via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)****CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES****Contact Susan O'Donnell, 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 [absent BG20/36], Jean Brown, Lorraine Brown, Alasdair Corfield, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Sophie Haagensen, Peter Judge, Emmanuel Kabengele, Daniel Monk, Sally Pelham [absent BG20/31 and BG20/36], Amy Rice-Thomson [absent BG20/32, BG20/33 and BG20/36], Claudia Shaw, John Taylor [absent BG20/38 – BG20/40], Helen Thorne, Professor Andrew Wathey, Dr Jeya Wilson, Simon Yellowley.

Apologies: Nick Pope.

Observer: Aaron Porter (AdvanceHE).

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

In attendance: Adam Dunlop, Jane Embley [absent BG20/30, BG20/31 and BG20/37 – BG20/40], Professor Peter Francis [absent BG20/30 and BG20/31], Professor Steven Kyffin [absent BG20/30, BG20/31 and BG20/36], Professor Tom Lawson [BG20/31], Professor George Marston, Daniel Monnery, Simon Newitt, Professor Jon Reast, Niall Sweby [BG20/33], Lucy Winskell.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING**Declarations of Governors' Interests** [Oral Report]

Professor Andrew Wathey declared that he was Chair of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment, which has national oversight of Degree Outcomes Statements (see BG20/34). Professor Wathey took no part in that item.

Governance Effectiveness Review [BG20/26]

The Board of Governors noted an update on the Governance Effectiveness Review that was now in progress.

Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG20/27]

The Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive provided an update on national, regional and local developments in the Covid-19 pandemic and the implications for Northumbria, noting that joint working with Newcastle University and the City Council remained strong. There was broad student satisfaction with how the October outbreak had been handled and with the support provided by the University. Wider Government HE policy developments were proceeding more slowly. **The Board noted the report and requested that the full analysis of the recent student Pulse survey be circulated when it was complete.**

University Strategy 2018-23 Update and Performance Report [BG20/28]

The Board of Governors considered an update on performance against the KPIs in the University Strategy 2018-23 as at Period 3 2020/21, with predicted status at the end of 2020/21. Predicted year end status was for five KPIs to be 'green', three to be 'amber' and one to be 'red', with two targets yet to be set. **The Board noted the update, and requested a more in depth discussion of Research and Knowledge Exchange activity at a future Board meeting.**

Student Recruitment Update November 2020 [BG20/29 and Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered the student recruitment position for 2020/21 and the emerging picture for 2021/22. The position for 2020/21 continued to be positive and within budget tolerances; for 2021/22 UCAS applications reflected some delays in state schools supporting their students given the Covid situation, and required continued focus. Other recruitment streams remained strong. **The Board noted the update.**

International Strategy [BG20/30 and Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered the draft Northumbria International Strategy 2020-23, which sought to significantly increase Northumbria's global reputation for academic excellence as a research rich, business focused, and professional University with a focus on core areas of disciplinary strength. Critical actions to be

delivered in order to ensure most impact for the University in the coming three years were identified, which included work to diversify target markets, supported by the right market intelligence. **The Board noted the report and presentation, commended how the feedback from the Away Day had been used to strengthen the Strategy and how well the Strategy incorporated research strengths and student experience issues. The Board emphasised both the importance of, and the challenges associated with, the research required to obtain the necessary market intelligence. An International Advisory Group would support the implementation of the Strategy, guide the optimisation of the TNE position and keep the longer-term strategic discussion “live” post Covid. The Board approved the Northumbria International Strategy 2020-23.**

REF Update [BG20/31]

The Board of Governors considered the latest estimate of the quality profile of outputs for REF 2021 submission. It was anticipated that Northumbria’s REF 2021 submission would be at increased volume and quality. **The Board noted the update, that it would be valuable to communicate actively and confidently with staff and students to build a sense of excitement in the time before the results would be available, and that the REF Communications Group would lead this work.**

Strategic Risk Register Update [BG20/36]

The Board considered a proposed revision to Strategic Risk (SRR011) on IT infrastructure, including influencing factors, current controls, scoring and future controls. Other risks were also considered; it was emphasised that risks were not isolated from each other and would interact both in potential impacts and also in the benefits of mitigation actions. **The Board requested that the scope of SRR011 be broadened to include wider digital landscape and data security considerations as well as IT infrastructure, ahead of approval of the final version.**

Students’ Union President’s Report [BG20/32]

The Board of Governors considered the Students’ Union President’s Report, including that Northumbria Connected (previously the Corona Community) now had 1,600 members, and Wellbeing Week, from 2 to 6 November, had focused on mental health and mentoring and linked to the new male mental health campaign. **The Board noted the Report and thanked the Students’ Union for its continuing work to support students.**

Students’ Union Amendment to Memorandum and Articles of Association [BG20/33]

The Board of Governors considered a proposed amendment to the Memorandum and Articles of the Students’ Union, required to accommodate the sixth sabbatical post of Vice-President Sport. **The Board approved the amendment.**

Degree Outcomes Statement [BG20/34]

The Board of Governors considered the University’s draft Degree Outcomes Statement for 2019/20. The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment required institutions to publish a Degree Outcomes Statement analysing their institutional degree classification profile and articulating the results of an internal institutional review. As a result of this review, changes to the University’s Assessment Regulations (particularly around how degrees are classified) had been approved for new students in academic year 2020/21. **The Board approved the Degree Outcomes Statement for 2019/20, subject to some required changes, and requested sight of the final document before publication, either by circulation or at the 14 December Board meeting.**

Compliance with OfS Registration Conditions [BG20/35]

The Board of Governors considered the University’s obligations in relation to its OfS registration as a higher education provider, the OfS approach to regulation and monitoring, and the role of the Board of Governors in overseeing the University’s registration. The OfS had made temporary changes to the regulatory approach during the pandemic with the aim of reducing the burden on universities; there were no current risks to compliance. **The Board noted the update.**

CUC HE Code of Governance 2020 [BG20/37]

The Board considered the Higher Education Code of Governance published by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) in September 2020 along with an initial assessment of the University’s compliance with the elements of the Code. The assessment of the various ways in which Northumbria currently demonstrated compliance with the Code’s key “elements” showed a broadly compliant picture, with some areas of improvement noted. **The Board noted the report and the preliminary assessment of compliance and that the requirements of the Code would be considered in greater depth as part of the response to the Governance Effectiveness Review.**

Modern Slavery Statement 2019/20 [BG20/38]

The Board considered the 2019/20 Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for subsequent publication on the University's website. Work would continue throughout the coming year to ensure as far as possible that the University's procurement practices mitigated the likelihood of modern slavery in its supply chains, recognising that work in this area contributed to addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 8.7). **The Board noted the report and approved the Modern Slavery Statement 2019/20.**

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2019/20 [BG20/39]

Board of Governors considered the draft Annual Statement on Research Integrity, which was a requirement of the updated and revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity launched by UUK in October 2019. The Annual Accountability Return to OfS had been suspended this year because of the ongoing impacts of Covid-19, nevertheless, it remained good practice to produce the Statement, which provided assurance that Northumbria met the Concordat commitments through leadership, training and policies in 2019/20. **The Board approved the Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2019/20.**

Monthly Finance Report Period 3 2020/21 [BG20/40]

The Board of Governors considered the University's financial position and performance at Period 3 (31 October 2020); both the overall financial position and the cash position for 2020/21 were positive compared to budget. There continued to be no current requirement for the University to report an event to the OfS around short term threats to financial viability or cessation or suspension (actual or planned) of HE delivery. **The Board noted the report, that the position for 2020/21 was favourable to budget, and commended the format of the information and the value of the accompanying narrative.**

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