

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

18 June 2026 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West.

CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

Contact Georgina Lawson georgina.Lawson@northumbria.ac.uk, Secretary to the Board of Governors, with any queries about these Summary Minutes.

Present: H Fairfoul (Chair), Dr B Bartoli [to FR25/68], Dr R Blackman-Woods, K Elborn, M Larsen, Prof A Long [to FR25/75]
 Apologies: A Fellows (Observer)
 Observers: M Udeze
 Secretary: G Lawson, B Lenney (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: H Bower [to Student Recruitment], Dr S Corbett, Prof L Gibson [FR25/69], L Mayfield, D Monnery [FR25/69], J McKenna [Student Recruitment], Dr H Robson [FR25/71], G Russell [FR25/71]

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING	
1	<u>Chair's Introduction</u> The Chair noted that this was Mary Udeze's and Birju Bartoli's last meeting and thanked them both for their contribution during their time on the Committee. The Chair welcomed Keri Elborn to his first meeting of the Committee as a new Member and Independent Governor. <u>Declarations of Interest</u> [Oral Report] There were no declarations of interest in any items on the agenda, however previous declarations in relation to the Pensions update were noted. <u>Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning</u> [Oral Report] The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive provided an update on national, regional and local sector and policy developments and their implications for Northumbria. The sector was operating under sustained financial pressure, with the Education Select Committee's report of 12 May 2026 describing the position facing UK universities as unprecedented and treating major insolvency as a credible possibility, the University was in a strong position having moved early. The immigration and visa landscape represented the most material near-term shift in the operating environment as visa refusal rates had risen significantly sector-wide. Fixed block degree programmes using a three-day timetable had launched for recruitment in May, and the University had agreed memoranda of understanding with Gateshead College and Derwentside College to create progression routes into higher education, aligned with the ambitions of the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority. The University had won two Educate North Awards and had been shortlisted in three categories at the HEIST Awards: Most Effective Use of Social Media for "Clearing Social Media", Best Widening Participations Initiative for "Unlock your Potential" and Best Community/Business Engagement Campaign or Initiative for "Working Well in Healthcare: Transformative Experiential Learning and Simulated Environments". Forthcoming events included the UNEE Spinout Inspire Fund launch and governors were invited to attend the annual SHINE Awards on 19 June. The Committee noted the update.
2	<u>Financial Planning and Improvement</u> <u>Student Recruitment</u> [Presentation] The Committee noted an update on Student Recruitment. <u>Planning and Budget Proposals 2026/27</u> [FR25/65] The Committee noted the Planning and Budget Proposals 2026/27 <u>Pensions Update – Total Reward Approach for Academic Colleagues</u> [FR25/66]

	The Committee noted an update on the Total Reward Approach for Academic Colleagues following consideration by People Committee on 17 June. <u>Finance Monthly Report: P9 2025/26</u> [FR25/68] The Committee noted the financial update for April 2026. <u>Centre for Writing and Publishing Update</u> [FR25/69] The Committee noted an update on the Centre for Writing and Publishing. <u>Quarterly Student Experience and Learning Outcomes (Analysis of Withdrawals)</u> [FR25/71] The Committee considered the Quarterly Student Experience and Learning Outcomes Report for May 2026, including analysis of student withdrawals, following its consideration by Strategic Performance Committee on 8 June, noting that there had been an increase in early withdrawals between September and January, with demographic analysis showing higher withdrawal rates among students from lower entry tariff bands North East students, POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 students, mature students who were twice as likely to withdraw as those aged 20 and under, and BTEC-only entrants who were more than twice as likely to withdraw as A-level-only peers. The top five stated reasons for student-initiated withdrawals were misalignment between the programme and student expectations, misalignment between career aspirations and chosen pathway, health-related issues, academic study difficulties, and financial reasons with health-related issues represented the largest single category at 18% of mentions. The Committee noted the report, noting that Strategic Performance Committee had considered this paper at its 8 June meeting and that the wider question of withdrawals and their implications for the University Strategy would continue to be examined at that Committee. <u>Students' Union Financial Performance P9 2025/26*</u> [FR25/72] The Committee noted the Student's Union Financial Performance Report for April 2026.
3	<u>Capital, Estates and Contracts</u> <u>Contracts Update</u> [FR25/73] The Committee endorsed the two-year extension to the EDF Energy contracts for consideration by Board of Governors on 29 June 2026, noting that both contracts had performed well since commencement in October 2024 and were procured through The Energy Consortium.
4	<u>IT and Digital</u> <u>Digital Masterplan</u> [FR25/74] The Committee noted update on the Digital Masterplan, noting that the Digital Inclusion programme had received independent national recognition, with 18.2 tonnes of IT equipment diverted from landfill, 88 devices redistributed to students and community partners, and an emerging partnership with Northumberland County Council for a Digital Community Hub at the new Berwick Academy and the University had reduced carbon emissions by 63% since 2014/15 and was ranked highest-placed North East university in the People and Planet University League for the fifth consecutive year.
5	<u>Constitutional and Administrative Items</u> <u>Annual Evaluation of Committee Effectiveness</u> [FR25/75] The Committee considered its effectiveness during 2025/26 for onward reporting to the Board of Governors on 29 June 2026. The evaluation maintained compliance with the 2020 CUC HE Code of Governance requirement to scrutinise and evaluate governance performance; responses were received from eight of twelve potential respondents (67%). All responses to the survey questions were either agree or strongly agree across all attributes. Free text responses noted that achieving an appropriate focus on digital and IT matters within the Committee's remit was still work in progress, that the Committee had been supportive, challenging and directive in working with the Executive during the year and that it had felt appropriately collaborative. The Committee noted the report.

Georgina Lawson
Secretary to Finance and Resources Committee
June 2026