Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE 8 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:	Dr S Fancey (Chair), R Blackman-Woods, K Fawcett, Prof A Long, I McCrory, A Parker,
Apologies:	J Thompson
Secretary:	G Lawson and B Lenney (Assistant Secretary)
In attendance:	Prof J Atkinson [to SPC25/31], H Bower [minutes 25.061 – 25.062], Prof L Bracken [to SPC25/31], Prof G Howatson [to SPC25/31], D Monnery, Dr H Robson, G Russell [SPC25/33], Prof M Bailie-Smith [to SPC25/31], Je Taylor [to SPC25/31]

	MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING
1.	**Chair's Introduction** The Chair noted that this was I McCrory's final meeting of the Committee and thanked Ita for her contributions to the Committee during her time as a Member. **Declarations of Interest** [Oral Report] The were no declarations of interest. **Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning** [Oral Report] The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive provided an update on national, regional and local developments and their potential implications for Northumbria. It appeared likely that there would be reduction in the Teachers' Pension Scheme employer contribution rate though this was not yet confirmed. Following recent strike action, all students eligible for compensation had been contacted. UCU continued to campaign and had recently passed a motion of no confidence in the Board and issued a censure to the University which carried no legal force but was intended to apply reputational pressure. The University would be hosting a further social mobility round table in Westminister in early July which would include regional MPs and key organisations such as Sutton Trust. The University had put processes in place to meet the requirements of new OfS Condition E10 (Subcontractual Arrangements), which applied to new arrangements from 31 March and would apply to existing arrangements from 30 June. In May the University had launched fixed block degrees using a three-day-per-week timetable. Governors were invited to attend the EDI Conference on 10 June and the Shine Awards on 19 June. **The Committee noted the update.**
2.	**Strategic Discussion Items** **University Strategy 2024-30 Deep Dive: Driving Social Mobility** [SPC25/31] The Committee considered the deep dive presentation into the Creating New Knowledge Strategic Ambition, covering progress against measures of success, current challenges, and mitigating actions. The deep dive reported progress against four interrelated areas: improving research quality and staff outputs for REF2029, developing a vibrant and inclusive research culture, increasing external research and related funding (RGCI), and growing the postgraduate researcher community. The number of staff with significant responsibility for research was growing strongly. New faculty and school-level dashboards were being introduced for the first time to give local leaders visibility of their funding pipeline alongside their strategic ambitions, enabling more targeted conversations about the required mix of applications. PGR applications and enrolments were growing. **The Committee noted the report and thanked the team for a candid and informative deep dive, noting that the research culture programme was**

	landing with varying degrees of consistency across the institution, and that identifying meaningful leading indicators was important given the University's long-term research ambitions. The Faculty of Health and Wellbeing was regarded as an exemplar of research culture in practice, and the Committee requested that the next iteration of the report included how that was operating in practice and could be used as a model. The Committee commended the PVC R&KE on the work being carried out to improve quality of outputs and case studies and welcomed the progress made on PGR attrition.
3.	**Performance Monitoring** **Student Recruitment Update** [SPC25/32] **The Committee noted and update on Student Recruitment.** **Student Experience and Learning Outcomes – Q3 2025/26 (including Analysis of Withdrawals)** [SPC25/33] The Committee considered an update on Student Experience and Learning Outcomes, providing an overview of ongoing initiatives, performance metrics, and recent developments, along with reporting of key data sets from the 2025/26 academic year and an analysis of student withdrawals. Student attendance had continued the trend of improvement in 2025/26 for the fourth successive year. **The Committee noted the report.** **Annual Quality and Standards Report 2024/25** [SPC25/34] The Committee considered the Annual Quality and Standards Report for 2024/25, following endorsement by Academic Board on 21 May 2026 and prior to consideration by Board of Governors on 29 June 2026. The report provided an overview of key activities relating to the Office for Students Quality and Standards (B) Conditions, with the Board of Governors required under OfS Condition E3 to ensure the University's compliance with all conditions of registration. The Continuous Programme Performance Review (CPPR) process for 2024/25 had identified cross-cutting strengths in staff-student relationships and NSS outcomes, alongside challenges in assessment feedback consistency, variability in graduate outcomes, and rising AI-related academic misconduct. A Curriculum Excellence Framework (CEF) had been approved in principle by Education Committee in March 2026, with CEF Principles, Graduate Attributes, Students as Partners Principles and Universal Design for Learning approved, with CEF to gradually phase out the Programme Framework for Northumbria Awards. **The Committee noted the report and endorsed the Annual Quality and Standards Report for 2024/25 for consideration by the Board of Governors on 29 June 2026.** **University Strategic Partnerships and Relationships** [SPC25/35] The Committee considered the update on strategic relationships at the University. The paper presented a list of 21 institutional relationships deemed to be of strategic benefit, defined as those with either a signed legal agreement or MOU with agreed shared objectives, or judged to make a significant contribution to at least two of the following: delivery of education, graduate employability, social mobility, research and knowledge exchange, other forms of income generation, or reputational benefit. A Strategic Relationships Group had been established, chaired by the PVC External Affairs, to coordinate a whole-University approach to strategic relationships, supported by a cross-university operational group of colleagues working externally. **The Committee noted the report.**
4.	**Constitutional/Other Business** **Committee Annual Evaluation of Effectiveness 2025/26** [SPC25/36] The Committee considered its annual evaluation of effectiveness for 2025/26. The evaluation followed the same form as for 2024/25, maintaining compliance with the 2020 CUC HE Code of Governance requirement for governing bodies to scrutinise and evaluate governance performance. Responses were received from nine of twelve potential respondents (75%), comprising six Committee or Co-opted Members and three Members of University Executive, with all responses either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Committee demonstrated each attribute surveyed. Two free text comments were received, noting the Committee's effectiveness in providing analysis and challenge on delivery of the University strategy beyond what would be possible for the Board, and highlighting the value of the deep dive format. **The Committee noted the report noting that the Governance Effectiveness Review had highlighted the importance of the Strategic Performance Committee and thanked the Secretariat for their support in running the Committee**.

Georgina Lawson
Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee
June 2026