

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

24 September 2025 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West

CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

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

Present: Dr S Fancey (Chair), Dr R Blackman-Woods, K Fawcett, Prof A Long, J Thompson, I McCrory [VC Horizon Scanning and SPC25/02]
 Apologies: A Parker
 Secretary: G Bailes and B Lenney (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: Prof L Bracken [to SPC25/02], J Embley [to SPC25/02] M Foalle [to SPC25/02], Prof T Lawson, D Monnery, Prof J Woodward [to SPC25/02], Prof G Wynn

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1. **Declarations of Interest** [Oral Report]
 There were no declarations of interests in any items on the Agenda.

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. Following the ministerial reshuffle, key ministers remained in place, though with some changed reporting lines. The Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor had attended the annual UUK conference in September which included conversations with key ministers. Proposed changes to the REF were announced following feedback, with universities seeking certainty on the rule. Sector information showed that overall Home UG acceptances had increased, particularly at the higher tariff Russell Group institutions, and International recruitment remained challenging. Kent and Greenwich universities were merging to create a 'super university' and while the OfS welcomed the move and suggested more universities may explore similar options as they face economic challenges, it was not something that Northumbria University were considering. The roll out of the one-year pilot of Claude AI to staff and students was in progress, key features included research support, data analysis, writing assistance, curriculum development and language support while ensuring ethical, transparent access with robust data security and copyright compliance. Linda Lightly (Fashion technician) was shortlisted for Outstanding Technician of the Year from the Times Higher Education Awards, Liz Griffiths (Law School) had received a National Teaching Fellowship from Advance HE and seven researchers from various disciplines across the University had been selected for the REF panel. **The Committee noted the update and suggested that it would be useful for Governors to receive further information on the capabilities of Claude AI.**
2. **Strategic Discussion Items**

University Strategy 2024-30 Annual Performance Summary 2024/25[SPC25/01]
 The Committee considered the latest update, as at end of year 2024/25, of the performance of the University's Measures of Success (MoS). The University's relative sector position for Graduate Outcomes (G1) had remained flat in quartile 2, following a small drop in overall percentage of positive outcomes and a marginal decline in sector rank from 50th to 51st. 59% of undergraduate programmes were currently offering 60+ core credits of experiential learning (G1.1), covering 92% of undergraduate students, representing substantial progress toward embedding experiential learning as an essential curriculum element and example of this would be included in the next deep dive on this area. The percentage of students reporting they were 'career ready' was flagged as red as the percentage was behind target and had declined by 1 percentage point versus last year. The main measures for research quality and power would not be known until after REF results were published in 2029. The value of in-year RGCI applications showed significant growth versus 2023/24 but was still slightly below the 2024/25 ambition level and the

	<p>value of in-year RGCI awards showed significant growth on the previous year and was above the 24/25 ambition. NSS had shown absolute improvements for the fourth consecutive year, but the University was still only at or above one of the seven NSS themes. The latest Pulse survey showed an overall engagement percentage of 70.4% compared to 71% in the previous year. Carbon emissions figures were reducing year-on-year but not to levels that gave confidence in achieving the 2030 ambition level. The number of partnerships delivering strategic benefit stood at 12, a reduction from 18 in the previous year, reflecting a deliberate and more rigorous approach to evaluating the strategic nature of external relationships. The Committee noted the report, commended the development of experiential learning and the success in RGCI, and welcomed the report and the level of information included.</p>
3.	<p><u>Performance Monitoring</u></p> <p><u>Student Experience and Learning Outcomes – Q4 and National Student Survey 2025</u> [SPC25/02] The Committee considered the latest Student Experience and Learning Outcomes report for Q4 2024/25, including an update on NSS 2025. Northumbria had achieved its fourth consecutive year of improvement in Overall Positivity scores, with year-on-year improvements in six of seven NSS themes and while there were areas for improvement which would be discussed with each Faculty, the overall message would be one of celebration. Notable gains had been achieved in Academic Support and Organisation and Management, reflecting targeted interventions and strategic investment, the most significant concern was the decline to bottom quartile in Teaching on my Course, which required urgent intervention. Faculty-level analysis revealed specific high-volume programmes driving university-level impact. Northumbria had maintained a solid second quartile position among approximately 130 Times Good University Guide providers despite challenging graduate employment conditions. Achievement of first quartile position for skilled work provided a robust foundation for strategic development and there was strong regional contribution with 70% of graduates remaining in North East employment and 24% of regional highly skilled employment comprising Northumbria graduates. The University would work with the Students' Union on the student representative system and feedback processes, and a periodic review was planned for the 2025/26 academic year. The Committee noted the report, commended the University's position in skilled employment statistics and noted that Graduate Outcomes Survey response rates were continuing to decline nationally.</p> <p><u>Draft Annual Report of Strategic Performance Committee</u> [SPC25/03] The Committee noted its draft annual report, suggested several improvements, and noted that a final version of the report would be presented to the Committee for approval on 3 November 2025, prior to submission to Board of Governors on 27 November 2025.</p> <p><u>Internal Audit Report – Strategic Performance Monitoring*</u> [SPC25/09] The Committee noted the Internal Audit Report on Strategy Performance Monitoring for 2024/25. The audit had identified five findings (2 Medium, 2 Low, 1 Advisory) requiring attention to strengthen governance and operational effectiveness of the eleven Strategic Delivery Plans and confirmed the Strategy team had invested significant effort, developing robust processes, templates and progress reporting measures. The Committee noted the report, thanked the Audit Committee for their referring of the report to the Committee, and noted that the reporting process of the Strategy would be reviewed.</p>

Beth Lenney
Assistant Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee
September 2025