

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

26 April 2021 - via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)

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 Roberta Blackman-Woods (Chair), James Bromiley, Jean Brown, Lorraine Brown, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Sophie Haagenzen, Peter Judge, Emmanuel Kabengele, Daniel Monk, Sally Pelham, Nick Pope, Amy Rice-Thomson, Claudia Shaw, John Taylor, Helen Thorne, Professor Andrew Wathey, Dr Jeya Wilson [to BG20/97], Simon Yellowley.

Apologies: Craig Apsey.

Secretary: Georgina Bailes, Richard Elliott (Assistant Secretary).

In attendance: Adam Dunlop, Jane Embley, Professor Peter Francis, Professor Steven Kyffin, Professor Tom Lawson, Professor George Marston, Daniel Monnery, Simon Newitt, Emrys Pritchard [BG20/105], Professor Jon Reast, Lucy Winskell.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

Recruitment of Co-opted Board Committee Members - Update [Oral Report]

The Board of Governors noted an update on the recruitment of Coopted members for Audit Committee and Employment and Finance Committee.

Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG20/97]

The Board of Governors considered an update on national, regional and local developments in the Covid-19 pandemic and the implications for Northumbria, and other key sector and policy developments. There would be no further return of students until at least 17 May, with associated impacts on mental and educational wellbeing; required adjustments to the assessment period and associated support to students had been made and communicated. Planning for 2021/22 was taking a range of potential scenarios into account. The Government's HE reform programme was beginning to launch through consultation exercises, based on the Prime Minister's statements of last year. **The Board noted that relatively few students were expected to return post 17 May because teaching would have concluded by then, but that some student activities were planned for campus across the summer as well as open days.**

Governance Effectiveness Review Outcome [BG20/98]

The Board of Governors considered the final report of the Governance Effectiveness Review carried out by AdvanceHE. Overall, the review found effective governance at Northumbria University, with evidence of high standards, and opportunities where Northumbria is well positioned to take advantage of areas for further development to be considered by the Board. The recommendations of the Report were intended to give Northumbria the opportunity to move from good to excellent and should be considered in that context – all were already recognised by the Board as issues for attention. It was proposed to establish a Task and Finish Group to manage the detailed consideration and implementation of the recommendations; the Task and Finish Group would report to Nominations Committee and Board in June 2021 and September/October 2021, at which point its further operation would be considered. **The Board welcomed the Report and approved the establishment of the Task and Finish Group, its membership and its terms of reference.**

University Strategy 2018-23 Update and Performance Report [BG20/99]

The Board of Governors considered an update on performance against the KPIs in the University Strategy 2018-23 as at Period 8 2020/21, with predicted status at the end of 2020/21. Predicted year end status was for four KPIs to be 'green', three to be 'amber' and four to be 'red'. Detailed analyses of KPI8 (alongside RGCI and KE activity) and KPIs 4,5 and 6 would be brought to Board via Strategic Performance Committee in June. **The Board noted the update.**

London and Amsterdam Campus Update [Oral Report]

The Board of Governors noted an update on the current status and future development plans for the London and Amsterdam campuses following discussion at a Strategic Performance Committee workshop on 12 April 2021. A more detailed report would be brought to the 28 June meeting.

Student Recruitment Update April 2021 [BG20/100 and Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered the student recruitment position for 2020/21 and the emerging picture for 2021/22. For 2021/22, Home undergraduate recruitment via UCAS had recovered to expected levels and was slightly ahead of 2020/21 as was Home postgraduate recruitment, although EU applications were down. International applications were ahead of the 2019/20 position and other recruitment streams remained strong. Preparations for confirmation and clearing were in progress **The Board noted the update.**

Students' Union President's Report and Impact Statement 2020 [BG20/101]

The Board of Governors considered the Students' Union President's Report - the Students' Union building had now reopened with outdoor seating and table service and the wide range of Covid activities and support to students was continuing. The Sabbatical Officer elections had resulted in five new Sabbatical Officers being elected and the VP Postgraduate being re-elected; a formal announcement of the result would be made to the Board in due course. **The Board noted the Report and that an induction programme for the new President and the other nominated Student Governor was being developed with input from the current incumbents. The Board congratulated the Students' Union for winning the Employer Engagement Award – University Sector at the Educate North Awards and for maintaining such a high level of support to the student community throughout the continuing difficult circumstances.**

Strategic Risk Register Update [BG20/102]

The Board of Governors considered a full update of the Strategic Risk Register. No current risk ratings had increased since the last update to the Board in October 2020; there were seven risks currently rated as Red and five as Amber. Current and future controls had been updated and reviewed for slippage, with a large number of future controls delayed due to the interruption caused by Covid-19 and the reordering of priorities in light of the pandemic **The Board approved the updated Strategic Risk Register.**

Covid-19: OfS Redress [BG20/103]

The Board of Governors considered the University's review of provision in line with OfS guidance. Northumbria had carried out the required review and would now communicate with all students to highlight the approach to ensuring how any outstanding learning opportunities and teaching redress would be delivered. **The Board noted the report and that the Students' Union and Trade Unions would be consulted in the next two weeks. Redress programmes would as far as possible occur when students would normally expect to be back in Newcastle and when academic staff would normally expect to be back on campus.**

Sustainability Annual Report 2019/20 [BG20/104]

The Board of Governors considered the Sustainability Annual Report for 2019/20. The University Strategy committed to supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to achieving an 'enhanced reputation for sustainability'. Northumbria was ranked 27th in the world for sustainability (Times Higher Impact League) and carbon emissions had been reduced by over 50% in the past five years. **The Board commended the report and noted that there was much to celebrate and publicise in a way that brought achievements to life for marketing and recruitment purposes.**

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report: Q2 2020/21 [BG20/105]

The Board of Governors considered an update on the period November 2020 to January 2021. 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. Discussions on the required remediations were in progress. During an audit in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences by the University's external Medical Physics Expert in December 2020, procedural gaps were identified; there had been no chance of any harm occurring to any research participant. **The Board noted the report.**

Monthly Finance Report Period 8 2020/21 [BG20/106]

The Board of Governors considered the University's financial position and performance at Period 8 (31 March 2021); 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 and that the position for 2020/21 was favourable to budget.**

Georgina Bailes
Secretary to the Board of Governors
May 2021