

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

29 November 2021 – via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)

### CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

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

Present: Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods (Chair), Craig Apsey [to BG21/47], James Bromiley [absent Vice-Chancellor Recruitment Update and BG21/35], Lorraine Brown, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Sophie Haagensen, Peter Judge, Libby Orme, Sally Pelham, Amy Rice-Thomson, John Taylor, Helen Thorne [to BG21/47], Professor Andrew Wathey, Simon Yellowley.

Apologies: Professor George Marston, Nick Pope, Ava Sjoberg, Gareth Smith.

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

In attendance: Professor Louise Bracken, Dr Guy Brown [BG21/33], Adam Dunlop, Jane Embley, Professor Steven Kyffin, Professor Tom Lawson, Daniel Monnery, Simon Newitt, Emrys Pritchard [BG21/48 and BG21/49], Lucy Winskell, Professor Graham Wynn.

### MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

#### Introduction [Oral Report]

The Chair welcomed Libby Orme to her first Board meeting as Academic Board's nominated Staff Governor. This was also Lorraine Brown's final Board meeting as elected Professional Support Staff Governor; the Board thanked her for her invaluable contribution to its work and to that of Employment and Finance Committee. The Board also noted that on 20 October 2021, Jeya Wilson had tendered her resignation from the Board to relocate to New Zealand after over seven years service to the University.

#### Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG21/31]

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. The impact of the Omicron variant of Covid was not yet known. Consultations on elements of the Government's HE reform programme were now expected around the turn of the year. The implications of the University's REF submission were beginning to emerge, with the critical mass achieved by Northumbria, Newcastle and Durham attracting a visit request from the Business Secretary. **The Board noted the report.**

#### Draft Education Strategy [BG21/32 and presentation]

The Board of Governors considered the University's approach to developing a new Education Strategy. The Strategy would develop and embed a distinctive Northumbria vision of Research-Enriched Education in which education complemented, enhanced and benefitted from research and knowledge exchange. This could allow the University to build a distinctive offer based on breadth of access and strong employability, a substantive role in the regional economy and a research-intensive environment. **The Board commended the holistic and distinctive approach to the Strategy and its detailed development plan.**

#### Review of PGT Provision [BG21/33]

The Board considered proposals to improve both quality and recruitment to Northumbria's PGT programmes. A clear and distinctive PGT pedagogy and consistent programme design principles would be implemented, fully aligned with the Education Strategy. **The Board noted that attractive PGT products and a positive PGT student experience would be key to further progress, and the required cultural shift was still in progress.**

#### Draft Research Strategy [BG21/34 and presentation]

The Board considered the University's approach to developing a new Research Strategy, which built on the significant increases in both quantity and quality of research reflected in the REF2021 submission. The aim for Research would be to establish peaks of excellence based on a high overall level of achievement, and to make a significant contribution to the Regional Strategic Economic Plan. **The Board commended the close alignment between the Education and Research Strategies, and noted that the right culture to**

support the growth of research activity would be essential, with research issues featuring in general academic discourse.

#### **Governance Effectiveness Review – Progress Report** [BG21/35]

**The Board noted progress in implementing the recommendations and suggestions of the Governance Effectiveness Review.**

#### **University Strategy 2018-23 Update and Performance Report** [BG21/36]

The Board considered the performance of the University Strategy as at the end of Period 3 2021/22: performance for KPIs was four at green, two at amber and one at red, with four shown as no current status to reflect reviews being carried out by the new PVCs for Education and Research. 18 Business Outcomes were defined as ‘on-track’, 20 had some issues that were being managed and were ‘off-track’ and 10 had ‘no current status’ while they were under review. Preparatory work and consultation for the next Strategy was being planned. **The Board noted the report and welcomed the start of work on the next Strategy.**

#### **Student Recruitment 2021/22 and 2022/23** [BG21/37 and Presentation]

**The Board noted the position on student recruitment for 2021/22 and 2022/23.**

#### **Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020/21** [BG21/38]

The Board of Governors considered the Annual Report and Financial Statements (ARFS) 2020/21, which had been scrutinised and endorsed from a conformance and compliance perspective by Audit Committee on 8 November and from a performance perspective by Employment and Finance Committee on 15 November. It showed strong financial results in a very challenging year, and a strong cash position. Because some issues relating to London Campus remained outstanding, Board was asked to approve the ARFS subject to a final review of the accounts and the external auditor’s report by Audit Committee. **The Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020/21 subject to a final review of the accounts and the external auditor’s report by Audit Committee.**

#### **Annual Report of Audit Committee** [BG21/39]

The Board considered the Annual Report of Audit Committee 2020/21. The internal audit opinion was unqualified, and that the Committee concluded that the University had adequate and effective arrangements in place for risk management, governance and control, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and management, and quality assurance of data submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Student Loans Company, the OfS and Funding Councils, Research England and other bodies. **The Board approved the Annual Report of Audit Committee 2020/21.**

#### **Prevent Duty Annual Report 2020/21** [BG21/40]

The Board considered the annual report 2020/21 on the University’s compliance with the Prevent Duty during the period 01 August 2020 - 31 July 2021. There had been no Prevent referrals in 2020/21 and no events that were rejected; the report demonstrated sufficient evidence of ongoing engagement with an active implementation of the Prevent Duty. **The Board approved the annual report 2020/21 on the University’s compliance with the Prevent Duty during the period 01 August 2020 - 31 July 2021, and confirmed that throughout the 2020/21 year and up to the date of approval, Northumbria University was able to make the required declaration to OfS.**

#### **Degree Outcomes Statement** [BG21/41]

Board of Governors considered the University’s Degree Outcomes Statement for 2020/21. The proportion of higher first degrees awarded had fallen slightly in 2020/21 following a significant rise for 2019/20 that was mirrored across the sector. The BAME attainment gap had narrowed but others remained stubborn – these would be addressed through the Education Strategy and the Access and Participation Plan. **The Board approved the Degree Outcomes Statement.**

#### **Compliance with OfS Registration Conditions** [BG21/42]

**The Board noted the University’s obligations in relation to its OfS registration as a higher education provider and the University’s ongoing compliance with registration conditions.**

#### **Modern Slavery Statement 2020/21** [BG21/43]

The Board of Governors considered the 2020/21 Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. 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. **The Board approved the 2020/21 Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.**

#### **Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2020/21** [BG21/44]

The Board of Governors considered the Annual Statement on Research Integrity Activity for the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 and the Assurance and Compliance Report on Research Integrity Activity 2021/21, a requirement of the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The public statement provided assurance that Northumbria met the Concordat commitments through leadership, training and policies in 2020/21; areas for further improvement in 2021/22 had been identified. **The Board approved the Annual Statement on Research Integrity Activity for the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.**

**Students' Union President's Report** [BG21/45]

**The Board of Governors noted the report.**

**Monthly Finance Report Period 3 2021/22** [BG21/46]

The Board of Governors considered the University's financial position and performance at Period 3 (31 October 2021). **The Board noted the report and that the position for 2021/22 was favourable to budget.**

**Proceed Metric** [BG21/47]

The Board of Governors considered an update on the development of the OfS Proceed metric. It was constructed from the HESA Completion projection and the Graduate Outcomes survey and was likely to be a key element of the 2022 iteration of TEF and of the revised approach to Access and Participation Plans. **The Board noted the update.**

**Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2020/21** [BG21/48]

The Board of Governors considered the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2020/21. The report was a summary of quarterly reports received by the Board and did not contain any new information. **The Board noted the report.**

**Amendment to Health and Safety Policy** [BG21/49]

The Board of Governors approved an amendment to the Health and Safety Policy and Operating Arrangements for 2021/22 in order to provide clarity about roles and responsibilities for health and safety within the Faculties. **The Board approved the amendment.**

**Chair's Report - Academic 2Board: 28 October 2021** [BG21/50]

**The Board noted that at its 8 October 2021 meeting, Academic Board had considered the development of the Education Strategy and approach to NSS recovery and approved the new Module Evaluation Questionnaire Policy; MEQs were a critical component of CPPR and key to academic staff career development.**

**Chair's Report - Audit Committee: 8 November 2021** [BG21/51]

**The Board noted that at its 8 November 2021 meeting, Audit Committee had primarily considered and endorsed as appropriate the year-end items that had been brought to this Board meeting for approval.**

**Chair's Report - Employment and Finance Committee: 15 November 2021** [BG21/52]

**The Board noted that at its 15 November 2021 meeting, Employment and Finance Committee had considered and endorsed the Annual Report and Financial Statements, considered a range of people issues and approved a framework for the governance of Estates issues.**

**Chair's Report - Strategic Performance Committee: 22 November 2021** [BG21/53]

**The Board noted that at its 22 November 2021 meeting, Strategic Performance Committee had primarily addressed the development of the Education and Research Strategies as considered at this Board meeting.**

Georgina Bailes  
Secretary to the Board of Governors  
December 2021