

**STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

14 June 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: C Apsey (Chair), Dr R Blackman-Woods, J Brown, S Haagensen, E Kabengele [absent SPC20/34], H Thorne, Professor A Wathey, S Yellowley.  
 Apologies: A Dunlop, J Embley, Professor P Francis  
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)  
 In attendance: H Bower [SPC20/37], Professor C Broughan [SPC20/36], Professor D Ford [SPC20/34], Professor S Kyffin [SPC20/32], Professor T Lawson, Professor G Marston [SPC20/32], D Monnery, S Newitt.

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

1. **Introduction**  
**Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning** [Oral Report]  
 The Committee considered an update from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive on the latest local, national and sector developments. The 2020/21 Academic Year had concluded as planned; focus was now on planning for 2021/22, with specific Government guidance expected by the end of June, but still significant uncertainties around international recruitment. The confirmation and clearing period was likely to be challenging given the impacts of Centre Assessed Grades and deferrals from the previous year; Northumbria's focus would remain on maintaining quality and accepting marginal growth where that was available. Consultations on elements of the Government's HE reform programme were under way. **The Committee noted the update.**
2. **Strategic Discussion Items**  
**Energising our Knowledge Exchange Strategy** [SPC20/32 and presentation]  
 The Committee considered a presentation on the University's Knowledge Exchange (KE) Strategy. KE should be founded on and integrated with high-quality research and education, and aligned to but not limited to local economic development; activity had grown but had not yet reached the levels targeted in the University Strategy, so that an enhancement of emphasis and drive was now required. A range of challenges to progress had been identified, and potential responses to them determined. It would be vital to build a critical mass of work to enable the required step change in capability, supported by the agility and flexibility to respond quickly to opportunities, with the balance between financial contribution and reputational enhancement maintained. **The Committee noted the presentation and noted that the mindset of the University, including its students, needed an outward-facing focus and active involvement in local, regional and national networks. The perception of KE as separate to research needed to be countered, and its research elements and the benefits it could provide for research should be emphasised internally. The Committee endorsed the approach of focusing initial KE development on areas of activity such as health and energy where the market was mature and the University's reputation strong, but to ensure that the scope for development in arts and humanities was not neglected.**  
  
**KPI Targets Update June 2021** [SPC20/33]  
 The Committee considered an update to the milestone targets for KPI4 (Graduate Employability), KPI5 (Student Satisfaction) and KPI6 (Student continuation). **The Committee noted that the targets represented ambitious stretches, and that data limitations and the interruption of the previous data series for KPI4 made meaningful milestones difficult to establish. The Committee endorsed the proposed milestones for KPIs 5 and 6, and endorsed the milestone for KPI4 for one year only, to be revisited during 2021/22.**

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|    | <p><b><u>Subject Step Change Review: Nursing</u></b> [SPC20/34]</p> <p>The Committee considered the conclusions of the subject 'step change' review of Nursing, which covered four disciplines within Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions including CPD provision. The review aimed to achieve provision at a scale amongst the largest providers of education and <u>and</u> all academic staff being research active at quality, which would require a fundamental change in research intensity and quality, relocation of the Department, improvement in NSS ratings and maintenance of student intake numbers and staff FTE at the current level. The review had formally been in progress since January 2021; developments had been positive but much work remained to be addressed. <b>The Committee noted that the recommendations would be integrated with the Estates Strategy and Masterplan, and with financial planning. The career pathway and research experience of staff prior to considering joining the University made recruitment challenging, and ongoing work was required to support the momentum of research after the PhD stage.</b></p>  |
| 3. | <p><b><u>Performance Monitoring</u></b><br/> <b><u>University Strategy 2018-23 Update and Performance Report</u></b> [SPC20/35]</p> <p>The Committee considered the performance of the University Strategy KPIs and Business Outcomes at period 9 (April 2021) 2020/21. Year-end performance for the KPIs was projected to be four at green, three at amber and four red; 31 Business Outcomes were defined as 'on-track', 13 had some issues that were being managed and were 'off-track' and 4 had been delayed as a result of Covid-19 or the cyber incident. the transformation map showed how the Business Outcomes contributed to the achievement of the University Strategy and gave a RAG-rating for each. <b>The Committee noted that the planned completion date for BO delivery plans would be included in the report to the 11 October Committee meeting.</b></p> <p><b><u>Student Experience and Learning Outcomes</u></b> [SPC20/36]</p> <p>The Committee considered a quarterly update on Student Experience and Learning Outcomes. The latest HESA Continuation PI data released in February 2021 showed that performance on this measure had declined. OfS had published details of a new measure which projects the likelihood of new students finding professional level employment or embarking on further study in the year after they graduate (Proceed); Northumbria's Proceed score ranked 46<sup>th</sup> when small specialist institutions were excluded. Progress continued to be made on the development of the Continuous Programme Performance Review (CPPR) process due to be launched in September 2021. <b>The Committee expressed its concern over the declining retention rates and noted that University Executive would examine the issue in depth.</b></p> <p><b><u>Student Recruitment Update February 2021</u></b> [SPC20/37 and Presentation]</p> <p>The Committee received an update on student recruitment for 2021/22. UK UG and PGT firm acceptances were ahead of 2020/21, but were largely offset by the expected fall in EU recruitment; significant risks and uncertainties around the impact of Centre Assessed Grades and deferrals from 2020/21 remained. The international picture was positive but still very volatile, and recruitment to other key cohorts was progressing well. Planning for confirmation and clearing was at an advanced stage, taking into account a range of potential Covid scenarios, but it seemed likely that the process would be longer and more volatile than in "normal" years. <b>The Committee noted the update.</b></p> |

Richard Elliott  
Assistant Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee  
June 2021