

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

24 March 2022 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West and 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: C Apsey (Chair), Dr R Blackman-Woods, E Collier, K Fawcett, S Haagensen, H Thorne, Professor A Wathey, S Yellowley.
Apologies: A Sjoberg.
Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary).
In attendance: A Coates, A Dunlop, Professor T Lawson, D Monnery [to SPC21/30], S Newitt, C Stogden, Professor G Wynn [SPC21/29 and SPC 21/30].

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

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| 1. | <p><u>Introduction</u>
<u>Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning</u> [Oral Report]
The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive presented on sector wide matters and the implications of these for the University. Consultation documents for the Government's HE reform programme had now been published and the consultations would run until 6 May; the overall approach of the Secretary of State indicated a genuine opportunity to influence the outcome. Proposals for the Lifelong Loan Entitlement were still being developed; the approach to foundation years would be significant for Northumbria and many other institutions, and required some refinement. The likely continued rise in inflation meant that the tuition fee freeze would have a greater impact than first thought. UUK guidance on the crisis in Ukraine was being followed. The Committee noted the update.</p> |
| 2. | <p><u>Strategic Discussion Items</u>
<u>University Strategy Extension</u> [SPC21/26]
The Committee considered the approach to extending the University Strategy, in particular the prioritisation of Business Outcomes and initiatives to achieve them, as well as changes to KPIs. It was proposed to prioritise the 27 (of 48) Business Outcomes (BOs) that would make the most progress towards the Vision including a number of new BOs supporting the Education Strategy, and focus on the specific initiatives that would deliver them. KPIs had been reviewed to assess the impact of Covid or other changes in the external environment and developments in internal thinking. The Committee commended the clear illustration of the relationship between the ambitions of the Strategy, the priority BOs and the initiatives that would deliver them and noted that dependencies between BOs and initiatives would be mapped as part of the next phase of work. The highest priorities for the additional year of this Strategy would be content of both teaching and research and the student experience; the potential branding value of fleshing out the concept of "challenger institution" to highlight Northumbria's post-REF status as a research-intensive modern university was emphasised. The Committee endorsed for submission to Board of Governors on 25 April 2022 the approach to extending the University Strategy, in particular the prioritisation of Business Outcomes and initiatives to achieve them, and changes to KPIs.</p> <p><u>University Strategy 2018-23 Update and Performance Report</u> [SPC21/27]
The Committee considered the performance of the University Strategy as at the end of Period 7 2021/22. Performance for KPIs was four at green, one at amber and six at red; 23 Business Outcomes were defined as 'on-track', 14 had some issues that were being managed and were 'off-track' and 11 had 'no current status' while they were under review. The Committee noted the report.</p> <p><u>Subject Step Change Reviews – progress report</u> [SPC21/28]
The Committee considered an update on progress in implementing Business Outcome 27 which commits each subject to have a clear, ambitious development path to grow the quality of Research and Education</p> |

	<p>commensurate with Northumbria’s reputation. Since the previous meeting of the Committee, the reviews of Education and Social Work had been completed; the speed of delivery of the review programme had been deliberately slowed to enable fuller challenge of the status quo for the next phase of subjects. The Committee noted the report and noted that NSS ranking was one factor that contributed to the prioritisation of subjects within the programme – subject complexity, known issues and external factors were also taken into account. Integrating feedback from students into subject reviews was a major piece of work in the Education Strategy delivery plan, being undertaken jointly with the Students’ Union. Updates on previously reviewed subjects would be included in future reports.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Performance Monitoring</u> <u>Departmental Roadshow Summary Report 2021</u> [SPC21/29] The Committee considered the purpose, structure and key findings of the series of education-related, departmental “roadshow” events held over October and November 2021 covering the entire University, which helped to inform the development of the new Education Strategy and preparations for NSS and TEF in 2022. Each department was provided with an overview of key education metrics, mapping the entire student lifecycle, at subject level relevant to their department; presentations delivered by the Students’ Union focussed on Student Voice and Community, with discussions centred around SSPC, Course Reps and student-led academic societies. The Committee noted the report and that an update on the uptake of student programme representative roles would be brought to a future meeting.</p> <p><u>Student Experience and Learning Outcomes – Q2 2021/22</u> [SPC21/30] The Committee considered developments relating to Student Experience and Learning Outcomes since the November 2021 meeting. Following the implementation of a new module evaluation questionnaire (MEQ), positive responses for module Overall Satisfaction had increased. The proportion of first-degree students achieving a Good Award had declined slightly but was close to the sector trendline and was well-placed given the likelihood of grade inflation reappearing as a regulatory concern; the continuation rate had improved. Module panels established under CPPR were investigating module failure rates and taking immediate action where these were unacceptably high. The Committee noted the report and that module panels considered numerical data and feedback from external examiners and student-staff committees, but that qualitative comments were only shared with individual staff. The overall publication threshold for NSS 2022 had been reached.</p> <p><u>Student Recruitment 2021/22 and 2022/23</u> [SPC21/20 and Presentation] The Committee received an update on student recruitment for semesters 1 and 2 2021/22 and plans for 2022/23. Focus for undergraduate recruitment was now on conversion of applications to acceptances; international recruitment continued to show the potential for strong growth at both UG and PG levels and was being managed at subject level to avoid any distortion of programmes. The Committee noted the update and that resources to manage strategic recruitment partnerships more actively were being scoped, and work was being planned to reinforce the brand position outside the North East. There were already sufficient Home undergraduate applications to achieve the target recruitment level.</p>

Richard Elliott
Assistant Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee
March 2022