

## STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

26 November 2024 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West

### 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 S Fancey (Chair), Dr R Blackman-Woods, K Fawcett, Prof A Long, I McCrory, A Parker [to SPC24/11], J Thompson.  
 Apologies: Prof T Lawson.  
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott and B Lenney (Assistant Secretary).  
 In attendance: M Foalle [SPC24/10], J Hall [SPC24/10], J McKenna [SPC24/11], D Monnery, T Urwin [SPC24/10], L Wilson [SPC24/10], Prof G Wynn.

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

##### 1. Chair's Introduction

The Chair welcomed Committee members and attendees to the meeting.

##### 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. The Government's recent Budget announcement and subsequent Ministerial statement had seen a 3.1% increase to tuition fees and maintenance loans from August 2025. No changes had been made to maintenance grants or the parental income threshold. Capped foundation year fees for classroom-based subjects would also be implemented from August 2025 however, foundation routes would be maintained into all Northumbria programmes. Employer NI contributions had increased, with a reduction to the threshold at which employers were required to pay NI on employee earnings. The net impact of these changes should be broadly neutral in financial terms. The OfS had published its report on the financial sustainability of the sector, reviewing actual student recruitment numbers against submitted institutional forecasts. The findings concluded that the sector predictions had been optimistic however, it was noted that the impact assessment had not taken post 2023/24 cost-saving measures into consideration. The first phase of staff engagement on the proposed changes to the academic structure had concluded and feedback regarding Faculty names and subject groupings had been taken into consideration. The University had recently received accreditation as a Living Wage Employer. **The Committee noted the update.**

##### 2. Strategic Discussion Items

##### University Strategy 2024-30 Strategic Ambition Deep Dive: Powering an Inclusive Economy [SPC24/10]

The Committee considered the performance deep dive into the Powering an Inclusive Economy Strategic Ambition which covered its Measures of Success, current performance and the 2023 trajectory, and its relation to the Strategic Delivery Plans. The Ambition would be driven by the development of a new framework for programme Quality assurance, Enhancement and Development (QED) which would embed transformative experiential learning and build strong employer partnerships in every undergraduate programme. The national skills landscape was evolving, with the development of a new Industrial Strategy and the establishment of Skills England. Northumbria was building from a strong position of Graduate Outcomes in skilled work and further study and an Experiential Learning Project was in its first phase. **The Committee thanked the presenters and the wider team for the rich and comprehensive Deep**

	<p><b>Dive presentation, noted the progression of several streams of ongoing work in relation to the ‘Powering an Inclusive Economy’ Strategic Ambition, and provided suggestions of additional content for future Strategic Ambition reports.</b></p> <p><b><u>Academic Subject Plans 2025/26 to 2027/28</u></b> [SPC24/11]  The Committee considered the UG and PGT Academic Subject Plans for the next three years. Following a consultative and collaborative process with Faculty Leadership Teams and Faculty Portfolio Groups, the institution now had a complete plan, utilising consistent methodology underpinned by external demand and portfolio insight intelligence. Further work was being undertaken to ensure plans for non-standard delivery were also complete by the end of the calendar year and subject plan programme withdrawals would be considered carefully using module structures, recruitment trend data and other evidence to inform decision making and ensure a comprehensive curriculum. <b>The Committee noted the update, commending its rigour and welcoming the direction of travel, and noted that detailed portfolio rationalisation had been carried out behind every subject area and would be followed up for new programmes.</b></p>
3.	<p><b><u>Student Experience and Learning Outcomes – Q1</u></b> [SPC24/12]  The Committee considered an update on Student Experience and Learning Outcomes, providing an overview of ongoing initiatives, performance metrics, and recent developments, along with reporting of key data sets from the 2023/24 academic year. Campus Services had launched several wellbeing schemes and a structured Welcome Week and streamlined support services had successfully reduced queues and improved campus orientation and student engagement. Semester One data for 2024/25 showed improved attendance rates, indicating a consistent four-year upward trend and the 24/7 Ask4Help service had seen notable improvements in response times and satisfaction. A significant volume of timetable change requests had been observed and an ongoing investigation by the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee sought to understand and mitigate the causes of these requests. Recent adjustments to academic regulations aimed at providing repeat opportunities for students had increased the number of students repeating studies and Longitudinal Education Outcomes data reflected an upward trend in employment outcomes. <b>Thanked the Students’ Union for their integral support for much of the work reported, including with ‘Just Play’ and other Sport initiatives.</b></p> <p><b><u>Annual League Table Summary</u></b> [SPC24/13]  The Committee considered the Annual League Table summary. Northumbria had held its highest position to date in the Times Good University Guide 2025 and had reached its highest ever position in the Complete University Guide. An upward trend had been seen in all league tables over the previous three years reflecting a consistent improvement of performance, particularly in NSS. <b>The Committee noted the Annual League Table Summary.</b></p> <p><b><u>Strategic Partnerships</u></b> [SPC24/14]  The Committee considered the report on University Strategic Partnerships and Relationships. Since the update provided to the Committee in May 2024, work had been ongoing to strengthen the leadership and management of key partnerships as well as the day-to-day operations and management. The Relationship Management Operational Group (RMOG) had met regularly, and the University Strategy Measures of Success had been finalised. New and existing relationships were assessed on an ongoing basis to ensure they made a significant contribution to the University’s Strategic Ambitions. <b>The Committee noted the update, commending the level of detail and assurance, and provided suggestions to improve future iterations of the report.</b></p> <p><b><u>Annual Report of Strategic Performance Committee</u></b> [SPC24/15]  The Committee considered its annual report, which summarised how the Committee provided assurance to Board of Governors over its key areas of responsibility in 2023/24. <b>The Committee approved the report for submission to Board of Governors on 28 November 2024.</b></p>