

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

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

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 S Fancey (Chair), Dr R Blackman-Woods, K Fawcett, S Haagensen, Professor A Long, P MacDonald, I McCrory, A Parker
 Apologies: J Thompson
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott and B Lenney (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: Professor T Lawson, Professor G Marston [item 3 presentation], D Monnery, Dr P Steadman [item 3 presentation], G Tideswell [item 3 presentation], Professor G Wynn

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1.	<p><u>Chair's Introduction</u> The Chair welcomed Ita McCrory to her first meeting of the Committee and noted that Graham Wynn was now a regular Committee attendee.</p> <p><u>Vice-Chancellor's Horizon Scanning</u> [Oral Report] The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive provided an update on national, regional and local sector and policy developments and their implications for Northumbria. Recruitment for the beginning of the academic year had gone well in the context of the significant challenges faced by the sector. The impending Universities UK blueprint for universities aligned largely with the University's objectives and would cover tuition fees and teaching funding, and student maintenance. The Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of the Board had attended the Labour Party Conference including a session with Jacqui Smith, Minister for Skills and meetings with Bridget Phillipson, Minister for Women and Equalities and Catherine McKinnell, Labour MP for Newcastle upon Tyne North. The Government had announced a new Growth and Skills Levy which would replace the existing Apprenticeship Levy. Northumbria had been awarded the title of Modern University of the Year 2025 by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide and had risen six places to 43rd in the league table, had improved two places to 34th in the Complete University Guide and by one place in the Daily Mail overall league table. The Guardian League Table ranking had stayed at 38. The Committee noted the update, that progression in the league tables was on a very good trajectory, that the message HE colleagues continued to give at the recent Universities UK and Labour Party Conferences was that financial sustainability across the sector was a serious issue which needed to be addressed and that growing income was a priority in order to fund the commitments outlined in the Strategy.</p>
2.	<p><u>Strategic Discussion Items</u></p> <p><u>University Strategy 2024-30 Annual Performance Summary</u> [SPC24/01] The Committee noted the first and latest update of progress against the University's Strategic Delivery Plans and performance of its Measures of Success. The majority of measures showed good progress towards their 2030 Strategic Ambitions - the pipelines of research applications and awards were progressing well and were above their respective targets for 2023/24, the University's graduate outcomes overall position had remained in quartile two and, from a social mobility perspective, early indications suggested the proportion of UK UGs from POLAR quintiles one and two would increase year on year. Performance in NSS had been solid and some progress had been made in terms of reducing pay gaps and carbon emissions. The Committee noted the update and explored how changes to initiatives within Strategic Delivery Plans would be addressed, particularly where they could not go ahead, including any impact on the achievement of Strategic Ambitions and Measures of Success overall.</p>

	<p>The Committee emphasised the importance of communicating progress on delivery of the Strategy to staff, many of whom were contributing to the underlying work.</p>
<p>3. <u>Student Experience and Learning Outcomes – Q4 and Annual Summary 2023/24 (including NSS 2024)</u> [SPC24/02]</p> <p>The Committee noted the update on Student Experience and Learning, including NSS 2024, which summarised updates considered at the meetings in November 2023, April 2024 and June 2024 and updates on developments during the last quarter. The November 2023 paper included an update on student hardship, improved support for mental health for students and challenges relating to student accommodation in the city. The April 2024 update covered improved year-on-year student attendance in semester one, improvements in retention and withdrawal rates, results of the Student Engagement survey and semester 1 MEQ, and the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework (AAF) metrics. The June 2024 update covered Graduate Outcomes, NSS 2024 response rates and semester two attendance rates. A sector update on Graduate Outcomes showed a predicted rank for Northumbria of 49th (vs 50th the previous year). NSS 2024 showed an overall uplift in sector position and a continuing trend of improvement, Northumbria had improved rank against Times Good University Guide providers in five out of seven themes. Academic Support and Student Voice continued to be areas of concern. The Committee noted the summary and that preparations for NSS 2025 would see a focus on Student Voice and Academic Support including visits to Departments in partnership with the Students' Union.</p> <p><u>Annual Sustainability Report 2023/24 and Environmental Sustainability Policy</u> [SPC24/03]</p> <p>The Committee considered the Annual Sustainability Report 2023/24 and Environmental Sustainability Policy 2024/25. Successes listed in the 2023/24 reports included: ranking 48th in the world for sustainability, examples of impactful research in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, commissioning of air source heat pumps at CLC East, and a successful application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to support further heat pumps for other buildings. The focus for 2024/25 included: energy and carbon reduction, recycling rate, biodiversity, business travel and procurement. The Environmental Sustainability Policy supported performance within league tables including THE Impact League and would be delivered by the Sustainability Management Group. The Committee endorsed the Annual Sustainability Report 2023/24 and the Environmental Sustainability Policy for submission to Board of Governors, noting that a Decarbonisation report would also be provided to a future Committee meeting as part of a Carbon Management Strategy.</p> <p><u>Draft Annual Report of Strategic Performance Committee</u> [SPC24/04]</p> <p>The Committee considered its draft annual report, which summarised how the Committee provided assurance to Board of Governors over its key areas of responsibility in 2023/24. The Committee noted the Report, a final version of the which would be presented to Committee for approval on 26 November 2024 prior to submission to Board of Governors on 28 November 2024.</p>	

Beth Lenney
Assistant Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee
September 2024