

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

28 June 2021 - 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: Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods (Chair), Craig Apsey, James Bromiley [to BG20/135], Jean Brown, Lorraine Brown, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Sophie Haagensen, Peter Judge, Emmanuel Kabengele, Daniel Monk, Sally Pelham, Nick Pope, Amy Rice-Thomson [absent BG20/125 – BG20/133], Ava Sjoberg, Gareth Smith, John Taylor, Helen Thorne, Professor Andrew Wathey, Dr Jeya Wilson, Simon Yellowley.

Apologies: Adam Dunlop, Professor Peter Francis, Professor Jon Reast, Claudia Shaw.

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

In attendance: Helen Bower [BG20/129], Professor Christine Broughan, Jane Embley, Professor Steven Kyffin, Professor Tom Lawson, Professor George Marston, Daniel Monnery, Simon Newitt, Professor Gill Nicholls [Next Steps for NSS], Lucy Winskell.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

Introduction [Oral Report]

The Chair informed the Board of the sad news that Professor Andrew Wathey, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, had decided to retire from the University with effect from 1 May 2022. The Vice-Chancellor responded that it had been a great privilege to lead the University over the last 13 years. **The Board noted its initial appreciation of Professor Wathey's outstanding leadership of the transformation of the University, which was now strongly placed to address the challenges and opportunities of the future.**

Governance Effectiveness Review Progress Report [BG20/122]

The Board of Governors noted the approach to implementing the recommendations and suggestions of the Governance Effectiveness Review that would be taken by the Task and Finish Group established by the Board.

Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG20/123]

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 2020/21 Academic Year had concluded as planned, and focus was now on planning for 2021/22, which was expected to include on-campus learning with no formal social distancing. The Government's HE reform programme was beginning to emerge with a number of consultations anticipated. A strong set of new senior appointments had recently been made. **The Board noted the report.**

Planning and Budget 2021/22 [BG20/124]

The Board considered the proposed budget for 2021/22 following endorsement by Employment and Finance Committee on 7 June 2021. The proposed budget and plan for 2021/22 provided a sound financial basis for continued investment, with some growth in income but (in view of the challenging operating environment) with this at a more conservative level than was targeted before the pandemic. **The Board approved the proposed budget for 2021/22.**

University Strategy 2018-23 Update and Performance Report [BG20/125]

The Board considered the performance of the University Strategy KPIs and Business Outcomes as 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 Board noted the update.**

Energising our Knowledge Exchange Strategy [BG20/126 and Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered a presentation on the University's Knowledge Exchange (KE) Strategy, supported by background information, that had been discussed at Strategic Performance Committee on 14 June. KE had grown but had not yet reached the levels targeted in the University Strategy (KPI8 and four Business Outcomes), so that an enhancement of emphasis and drive was now required with KE activity planned at scale. The strong contribution of KE to both teaching and research was emphasised; the required step change in capability would need to be supported by the agility and flexibility to respond quickly to opportunities. **The Board noted the presentation, and that a successful KE strategy would establish productive relationships with business that could support recruitment through enhanced employability, and maintain a cadre of advocates for the University in the business community.**

Next Steps for NSS [Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered a presentation on developments to improve teaching quality and address proposed new OfS regulatory framework requirements on quality processes and academic standards, which would be addressed by the new Continuous Programme Performance Review (CPPR) process. **The Board noted that the required resources to support the CPPR process were in place and would be convened and led by Heads of Department.**

Subject Step Change Review: Nursing [BG20/127]

The Board of Governors considered the conclusions of the subject 'step change' review of Nursing, that had been discussed by Strategic Performance Committee on 14 June. It covered four disciplines within Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions including CPD provision, and aimed to achieve provision at a scale amongst the largest providers of education and all academic staff being research active at quality. **The Board welcomed the report and noted that the step change framework enabled effective tracking and assessment of activity to ensure that the anticipated benefits were being delivered.**

Future of London and Amsterdam Campus [BG20/128 and Presentation]

The Board considered the current status and future development plans for the London and Amsterdam campuses. Positive discussions both internally and with the partner in London indicated a commitment to develop a business plan and contract extension to lead development to 2030 and beyond. The Amsterdam portfolio would move to distinctive programmes designed for a European market, particularly exploiting the opportunities of the global city of Amsterdam, its cultural richness and spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. **The Board noted the report.**

Student Recruitment Update June 2021 [BG20/129 and Presentation]

The Board of Governors considered the student recruitment position for 2021/22. The position was generally positive but with significant uncertainties around the impact of Centre-Assessed Grades and volatile international recruitment. Planning for confirmation and clearing was at an advanced stage. **The Board noted the update.**

Students' Union President's Report [BG20/130]

The Board of Governors considered the Students' Union President's Report. **The Board noted the Report, reiterated its thanks to Emmanuel Kabengele and Claudia Shaw and wished them all the best for the future, and confirmed its continuing support for and commitment to the Black Leaders Project.**

Monthly Finance Report Period 10 2020/21 [BG20/131]

The Board of Governors considered the University's financial position and performance at Period 10 (31 May 2021); both the overall financial position and the cash position for 2020/21 were positive compared to budget. There continued to be no current requirement for the University to report an event to the OfS around short term threats to financial viability or cessation or suspension (actual or planned) of HE delivery. **The Board noted the report and that the position for 2020/21 was favourable to budget.**

Internal and External Audit Contracts [BG20/132]

The Board of Governors considered the results of the tender exercises for both the University's audit contracts via the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) framework agreement. The evaluation panels assessed the tenders based on both quality and price and recommended the re-appointment of KPMG as the University's external auditors with effect for the audit of the 2021/22 financial statements for an initial three-year term and PwC as the University's internal auditors with effect from 1 August 2021 for an initial three-year term. The 23 June 2021 special Audit Committee meeting agreed with these proposals and recommended that the Board of Governors approved the appointments. **The Board approved the appointments as recommended.**

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report: Q3 2020/21 [BG20/133]

The Board of Governors considered an update on the period February to April 2021. Health and Safety compliance and effectiveness was in line with the Health and Safety Policy and there were no concerns relating to accidents, incidents or near misses. **The Board noted the report.**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020 [BG20/134]

The Board of Governors considered the 2020 Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Report ahead of its publication; it highlighted a wide range of advances and achievements in the field of EDI, and confirmed that progress had been maintained even in the difficult context of 2020. **The Board commended the report and noted that EDI would remain a key issue going forward.**

Unacceptable Behaviours [BG20/135]

The Board of Governors considered an update on the Unacceptable Behaviours project. Staff and student policies had been developed together to ensure consistency but had been tailored for their specific audiences. The new reporting toolkit was live now but would be formally launched in September for the start of the 2021/22 session. **The Board commended the report and project, and noted that the approach was aligned with the code of conduct, disciplinary policy and safeguarding policy.**

Student Protection Plan* [BG20/136]

The Board of Governors noted the update to the Student Protection Plan.

Georgina Bailes
Secretary to the Board of Governors
July 2021