

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

2 October 2023 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West and via Microsoft Teams  
(including videolink)

### UNCONFIRMED 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 Roberta Blackman-Woods (Chair), Dr Birju Bartoli, Liv Bird, Dr Laura Brown, Helen Fairfoul, Dr Stuart Fancey, Katherine Fawcett, Peter Judge, Hassan Kajee, Mark Larsen, Professor Andy Long, Professor Libby Orme, Sally Pelham, Nerius Shah, Helen Thorne, Ian Wilkin.

Apologies James Bromiley, Sophie Haagensen, Professor Louise Bracken, Professor Tom Lawson, Professor James McLaughlin, Professor George Marston.

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

In attendance: Helen Bower [Student Recruitment], Dr Guy Brown, Rob Carthy [Student Recruitment], Simon Corbett, Jane Embley, John McKenna [Student Recruitment], Dan Monnery, Simon Newitt, Professor Jon Reast, N Sweby [BG23/03], Peter Thomas, Professor Graham Wynn [to BG23/03].

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

#### Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG23/01]

The Board of Governors considered an update on international, national, regional and local sector and policy developments and their implications for Northumbria. 2023 league tables rankings had been very positive (see BG23/08 below) and the University had been shortlisted in the THE awards for Outstanding Services to Students for work on supporting nursing students, and Knowledge Exchange/Transfer Initiative of the Year as part of the Northern Accelerator. Senior colleagues would be attending both Labour and Conservative Party conferences, and Northumbria would participate in panel discussions at both; visits from the Secretary of State for Education and the Shadow Secretary of State were expected during 2023/24. 2023/24 would also see the finalisation and implementation of the new University Strategy, and significant campus developments. **The Board noted the report,**

#### Student Recruitment [Presentation]

**The Board noted the position on student recruitment for 2023/24 and the work in progress to address its implications.**

#### NSS and TEF 2023 [Presentation]

The Board considered the 2023 NSS and TEF results following consideration by Strategic Performance Committee on 28 September 2023. There had been continued improvement in NSS scores; areas where there were further improvements to be made would be supported through a refreshed Continuous Programme Performance Review process. The provisional outcome of the TEF was silver however the rating for Student Outcomes was under appeal which would delay the official announcement. **The Board commended the continuing improvement in NSS results, and noted that the positivity rating for freedom of speech was in line with the OfS benchmark.**

#### Governor Recruitment Update [Oral Report]

**The Board noted progress on the current recruitment process.**

#### Students' Union Report [BG23/02]

The Board of Governors considered the report of the Students' Union Sabbatical Team. Welcome Week had been successful and joint work was in progress with the SUs of other Northeast Universities to support students in dealing with cost of living issues. **The Board noted the report and commended the Sabbatical Team Charter.**

### **Students Union Review of Culture** [BG23/03]

The Board of Governors considered the Students' Union (NSU) report on the final actions for its governance review. The outcomes of the review had been reported to Board of Governors on 24 April 2023. An external review of the culture of the Students' Union to provide additional assurance regarding the culture of the organisation in relation to its values and staff willingness to raise concerns had resulted in generally positive conclusions about the Students' Union as a workplace, and made some recommendations around embedding expected behaviours and how to challenge inappropriate behaviour. **The Board noted that the SU's governance arrangements were now clear and unambiguous, and a reflection on the values statement of the SU would be undertaken in 2023/24 taking into account the University's Values and Behaviours framework.**

### **Monthly Finance Report Period 12 2022/23** [BG23/04]

The Board of Governors considered the University's financial position and performance at Period 12 (31 July 2023). **The Board noted the report and that the position for 2022/23 was favourable to budget.**

### **University Strategy 2018-24: Update and Performance Report** [BG23/05]

The Board of Governors considered the performance of the University Strategy as at period 12 (31 July 2023). Performance for KPIs was four at green, two at amber and four at red, with data not yet available for one KPI. **The Board noted the report.**

### **Strategic Risk Report** [BG23/06]

The Board of Governors considered the Strategic Risk Report following consideration by Audit Committee on 18 September 2023. There had been two changes to a strategic risk RAG score and three changes to risk likelihood scores; there would be a full review of the Strategic Risk Register and Risk Appetite Statement as part of the introduction of the new University Strategy. **The Board noted the report.**

### **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report Q4 and Annual Report 2022/23** [BG23/07]

The Board of Governors considered Health and Safety Quarterly Report May 2023 to July 2023 and 2022/23 Annual Report, following consideration by Audit Committee on 18 September 2023. In 2022/23 the University won the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents Education and Training Services sector award and was a finalist for the Sir George Earle Trophy presented for most outstanding health and safety performance in the UK. Following discussion of a recent internal audit of Health and Safety at Audit Committee (see BG23/09 below), audit actions were on track to the agreed target dates. **The Board noted the report.**

### **League Tables Summary** [BG23/08]

The Board of Governors considered the League Table Summary following consideration by Strategic Performance Committee on 28 September 2023. The University was ranked in the Top 50 of all of the major UK league tables for the first time; the new Daily Mail league table had made Northumbria its Research University of the Year and Modern University of the Year. There had been some decline in international rankings and work was underway to address this. **The Board commended the performance in UK league tables.**

### **Chair's Report: Audit Committee: 18 September 2023** [BG23/09]

**The Board noted that at its 18 September 2023 meeting the Committee had considered internal audit reports including the Health and Safety report noted at BG23/07 above, and the internal audit programme for 2023/24, which was well-aligned to current and emerging issues of risk or concern. It had also considered the remaining issues affecting the "go live" decision for the latest phase of the ERP system – the Committee extended its congratulations to the University on a successful live payroll run subsequent to its meeting.**

### **Chair's Report: Employment and Finance Committee: 19 September 2023** [BG23/10]

**The Board noted that at its 19 September 2023 meetings the Committee had considered the student recruitment position and its implications already discussed at this meeting, proposals for a people metrics dashboard and how it would be developed across the year and draft revised financial regulations, which would also be considered by Audit Committee before seeking approval in November. The Committee had approved the University's response to the recent USS consultation and had approved long-term extensions to the University's contracts with QAHE for London Campus along with other new and renewed contracts.**

### **Chair's Report: Strategic Performance Committee: 28 September 2023** [Oral Report]

**The Board noted that at its 28 September 2023 meeting the Committee had considered the Student**

**Recruitment, NSS and TEF, University Performance and League Tables items already discussed at this meeting. It had considered how the Committee might approach performance reporting and monitoring under the new Strategy, and potential developments in the role of the Committee (see BG23/13 below).**

**Review of Committees: Scope and Options** [BG23/13]

The Board of Governors considered the scope of the review of Committees that had been agreed by Board of Governors on 26 June 2023, the key issues and the options for addressing them, and the timing of the review process, following consideration by Nominations Committee on 26 September 2023. The main issues to be addressed were clustered around the scope and scale of Employment and Finance Committee's responsibilities, the role of Strategic Performance Committee in assuring delivery of the new Strategy and the role of the Committee more widely, and Northumbria's approach to assurance on academic quality and standards. The review would be led by a Task and Finish Group which would report its conclusions to the 29 April 2024 Board meeting. **The Board noted the report.**

**Appointment of the Chancellor** [BG23/14]

The Board of Governors considered the proposed process to appoint the next Chancellor of the University following endorsement by Nominations Committee on 26 September 2023. The second and final term of office as Chancellor of Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson of Eaglescliffe would end on 31 July 2025. It was proposed that Board delegated this responsibility to Nominations Committee, with the process being managed by a Chancellor Appointment Committee, and with open and transparent engagement with a wide range of stakeholders in the early stages of the process. **The Board noted the role description for the Chancellor and approved the proposed process to appoint the next Chancellor of the University.**

**Appointment of a Third Pro-Chancellor** [BG23/20]

Helen Fairfoul left the meeting for this item.

**The Board of Governors approved the appointment of Helen Fairfoul as a Pro-Chancellor.**

Georgina Bailes  
Secretary to the Board of Governors  
October 2023