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BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING – 19 November 2018: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The complete version of the unconfirmed minutes [Non-confidential and Confidential] is available to all governors on request, recognising that these are subject to formal confirmation as an accurate record by the Committee at its next meeting. Contact Dr Adam Dawkins, adam.dawkins@northumbria.ac.uk Secretary to the Board of Governors, for any queries about this Executive Summary.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

Chair's Opening Remarks [Oral Report] The Chair thanked Dr Mick Hill, Professor Alison Machin and Christine Sorensen for their significant contribution to Board and Committee business, and for whom this would be their last Board meeting as governors nominated by Academic Board.

Board Committee Terms of Reference and Membership 2018/19 and Board Succession Strategy Overview [BG18/16]

The Board approved: i. the re-appointment of Tom Harrison, Nick Pope and Helen Thorne MBE for second three year-terms of office as independent governors; ii. the terms of reference of Board Committees for 2018/19, subject to the amendments required, and endorsed the governor succession strategy proposals as considered by Nominations Committee, including the resources required for search and recruitment.

Vice-Chancellor's Report [BG18/17]

The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive reported that: Universities UK (UUK) had issued a guidance note for HEIs on a no deal exit outcome; the Augur Committee was unlikely to publish its conclusions until early 2018 (once the Office for National Statistics had reached a position on its treatment of student loans as part of public sector finance); the new Quality Code for Higher Education would be launched on 29 November 2018; the UCU ballot for industrial action on pay did not receive the required mandate from its membership across the majority of HEIs; the consultation on the recommendations of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) in relation to the valuation and sustainability of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) had closed; the increasing prospect of institutional failure and a disorderly exit from within the sector; feedback was invited on how information should be presented to the Board around performance against the new University Strategy 2018-23 business outcomes; the internal consultation on the REF Code of Practice would open in December; the Chair and the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive would be travelling to China and Singapore later this week.

Student Recruitment and Enrolment 2018/19 and Widening Participation and Access Performance [Presentation]

The Board of Governors noted the student recruitment update. Semester 2 applications were showing signs of growth overall particularly in terms of PGT Home/EU and International; 2019/20 applications were down for UG HEFCE and non-HEFCE UG and PGT were down on 2017/18 and 2018/19 positions, with a forecast recovery, as was not unusual to track behind at this time in the cycle. The presentation concluded with positive news on the University's fundraising efforts. The Board noted that the intensification of competition was being felt in terms of the regional Russell Group HEIs which did impact on Northumbria as the higher tariff post-1992 HEI regionally. The Board was keen to understand when the critical juncture was when a different strategy might need to be adopted, and in-year action taken.

Financial Performance P3 2018/19 [BG18/18]

The Board of Governors noted the attached monthly financial performance report to the end of period 3 (31 October 2018). The operating surplus returned at period 3 of 2018/19 was favourable to the forecast; the early in-year assessment of the financial impact of UG student recruitment was positive, but offset by underperformance against budget for Home PGT, RGCI, consultancy and short course income, TNE and residences. Modelling had indicated investment including additional staffing to strengthen REF 2021 planning and the impact of inflation and pension liabilities. **The Board noted that any fundamental re-visiting of the University's financial position based on what is delivered as an outcome of the Augur Committee and other factors including employer pension liabilities, would require a lowering of planned capital**

expenditure in the first instance followed by a range of other disinvestments and efficiencies. A shared definition between the University Executive and the Board (through its committees) of the basis and mechanism for any revisions to the financial plan and the strategic and operating implications arising from it would need to be established.

Student Welfare and Wellbeing Arrangements [Presentation]

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Acting Director of Student Services delivered a presentation on the University's Student Welfare and Wellbeing Arrangements. Key points included student support and wellbeing approached as a continuum at Northumbria based on early, ongoing and proactive support, and should not be regarded solely in terms of reactive interventions. Through its work with Student Minds, a proposal was in place to develop a Mental Health Charter to which universities could subscribe and be accredited; the ambition to develop a Student Welfare and Wellbeing Framework centring on thriving individuals and communities was the ultimate ambition. **The Board noted that the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive's recent signing of the Time to Change pledge was a step forward in demonstrating a commitment to how we think and act about mental health in the workplace. However, levels of reported bullying by staff remained a specific symptom of a welfare and wellbeing concern based on the 2016 Staff Survey. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor would develop a more detailed item on next steps for circulation to the Board, or presentation to its February 2019 meeting.**

Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017/18 [BG18/19]

The Board adopted the 2017/18 Annual Report and Financial Statements on the recommendation of Audit Committee, to be signed by Professor Andrew Wathey in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive and Chris Sayers as Chair of the Board. The management representation letter in relation to the external audit of the Annual Report and Financial Statements would be signed by Professor Andrew Wathey in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive.

Financial Commentary [BG18/20]

The Board of Governors considered the financial commentary which set out material variances between the 2017/18 audited financial statements and the September 2018 forecast.

Audit Committee Annual Report 2017/18 [BG18/21]

The Board of Governors considered and approved the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2017/18, also reported to the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, for onward submission to the Office for Students (OfS).

Annual Provider Review: Student Academic Experience, Outcomes and Standards [BG18/22]

The Board of Governors confirmed that: i. as the governing body of Northumbria, it had received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This includes evidence from the University's periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer or professional review; ii. the methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of Board of Governor's knowledge, robust and appropriate, and the standards of awards for which the University is responsible have been appropriately set and maintained.

Prevent Duty Annual Report 2017/18 [BG18/23]

The Board of Governors considered and approved the Prevent Duty Annual Report 2017/18 and confirmed compliance with having had due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent duty); having provided to the OfS all required information about its implementation of the Prevent duty; has reported to the OfS in a timely way all serious issues related to the Prevent duty and having reviewed, and where necessary, updated its Prevent risk assessment and action plan.

Annual Assurance Return [BG18/24]

The Board of Governors considered and approved the contents of the Annual Assurance Return 2017/18 from Northumbria University to the Office for Students (OfS) for signature by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive as set out in the item.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report 2017/18 [BG18/25]

The Board of Governors noted the annual report on Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report for 2017/18.

Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2017/18 [BG18/26]

The Board of Governors considered and approved the Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2017/18 be approved for publication.

Modern Slavery Statement 2017/18 [BG18/27]

The Board considered and approved the 2017/18 Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking be published on the internet, noting the areas of clarification sought by the Board.

Strategic Risk Register Update [BG18/28]

The Board of Governors noted the status of: [a] the Strategic Risk Deep Dive programme and [b] the review of the Strategic Risks following this exercise and the revised University's Strategic Risk Dashboard showing the University's significant risk areas and subsequent work for its review.

Board of Governors' Meeting: 27 September 2018; [BG18/30/31/32] and **Summary Action List and Matters Arising** [BG18/33] and **Board of Governors Annual Agenda Plan 2018/19** [BG18/41]

The Board of Governors confirmed the Executive Summary, Confidential Minutes and Reserved Business Minutes of the Meeting on 27 September 2018 as an accurate record, and noted the Summary Action List, that there was no Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda, and the annual plan to Q1 of the 2018/19 academic year.

Students' Union President's Report [BG18/34]

The Board of Governors noted the Students' Union President's Report.

Executive Summaries of Meetings: Strategic Performance Committee, Remuneration Academic Board, Audit Committee, Nominations Committee [BG18/35-40]

The Board noted the Executive Summaries of Board Committees across October-November 2018.

Dr Adam Dawkins, Secretary to the Board of Governors, January 2019.
