

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

16 June 2020 - via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)

CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

Contact Susan O'Donnell, susan.odonnell@northumbria.ac.uk, Secretary to the Board of Governors, with any queries about these Summary Minutes.

Present: A Alden (Chair), C Apsey, J Brown, S Haagensen, H Thorne, C Sayers, C Shaw, Professor A Wathey (Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive), S Yellowley.
Observer: R Blackman-Woods
Apologies: G Atkinson, S Newitt
Secretary: SF O'Donnell, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)
In attendance: A Dunlop, Professor P Francis, D Monnery.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1. Introduction

Vice Chancellor's Horizon Scanning [Oral Report]

The Committee considered an update from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive on the latest national and sector developments in the Covid-19 crisis. Immediate focus was on maintaining the right level of organisational agility and on recruiting and welcoming students for 2020/21, where potential deferrals remained the greatest risk. The University had exited 'emergency mode' and was working through its normal structures, although senior level capacity remained a challenge. Elements of UUK's proposed sector support package remained under discussion with the Treasury; the student recruitment number allocated for Northumbria was considered reasonable. UUK and DfE had published principles for emerging from lockdown; OfS was working more collaboratively but was very much focused on financial sustainability. A decision on the status of EU students post 2020 was expected shortly; and discussions around the longer-term place of overseas students in the sector funding model were beginning as part of a move to longer-term planning by the Government. The involvement of the Universities in regional economic recovery work for the North East was becoming significant. **The Committee noted that work with Local Government and the NHS in the North East, and in Newcastle in particular, was closer than in many other parts of the UK; regional economic recovery plans placed significant emphasis on the contribution of University research and on the need to reduce the HE participation gap, which was higher in the North East than elsewhere and would continue to negatively impact the economy until addressed.**

2. Strategic Discussion Items

University Strategy 2018-23 revisions and implications for Committee activities during 2020/21 [Presentation]

The Committee considered progress on the review of the University Strategy in the light of Covid-19, noting that the content considered had been shaped by the input of University Executive members following a related workshop on 12 June 2020. The strategic ambitions and objectives of the Strategy remained intact but Business Outcomes would require adjustment and reprioritisation. The University's platform for this adjustment was strong and provided a range of choices on how best to emerge, by 2024/25, in a strong position, having taken the opportunity to accelerate progress in many areas. Northumbria would continue to compete on quality and content as opposed to price; delivery of the Strategy and investment planning would be focused around the four key themes of Content, Place, International and Technology/Digital.

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| | <p>The Committee considered, in greater depth, a number of areas of potential change, including: changes that were intended and should now be made, changes made due to Covid-19 that should be embedded and developed, changes that could now be made in the light of new knowledge and the main new opportunities as the University Strategy moved towards 2025.</p> <p>Areas considered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Academic staff experience ➤ Research ➤ Student experience and taught portfolio ➤ Knowledge exchange ➤ Student recruitment and widening participation ➤ International ➤ Place ➤ Experience of professional services staff ➤ Estates and technology <p>The Committee endorsed the overall approach to the review of the Strategy and the proposed themes. It was suggested that the Strategy would benefit from a definition of quality since that underpinned many of its elements. The focus of investment between the estate, which would need to be maintained to a high standard, and technology needed careful rebalancing in light of revised teaching delivery models and other changes arising from revised working patterns. The work on content digitalisation that had been accelerated to address Covid-19 would provide opportunities further to develop Distance Learning and TransNational Education, seeking to ensure alignment with the rapidly developing needs of particular overseas markets. It was crucial to maintain a balanced and diverse on-campus student body to deliver the most rounded student experience. Online learning could provide opportunities for student engagement in shaping learning that would not be available in a traditional face to face on-campus delivery model. Achieving and maintaining the desired organisational culture remained key to delivering the revised Strategy and should be emphasised in future Board presentations. The Committee made a range of suggestions that would be reflected in the material to be provided for consideration at the special Board of Governors meeting on 25 June 2020.</p> <p>The Committee noted it would formally review performance against the Strategy at its first meeting of the 2020/21 academic year via the end of year University Strategy Performance Report but that a summary of KPI performance would be included in the material at the 25 June meeting of the Board of Governors.</p> |
| <p>3.</p> | <p><u>Other Business</u></p> <p>Given that this meeting was the Committee Chair’s final meeting prior to her final term of office expiring in July 2020, the Chair of the Board, on behalf of the Committee, expressed gratitude for her invaluable contribution to the strategic direction of the University.</p> |

Richard Elliott
Assistant Secretary to Strategic Performance Committee
June 2020