NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL

7 April 2008

Present: Mrs M O Grant (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor, Dr E G N Cross, Professor M Goodfellow, Ms J Henderson, Mr C J Hilton, Mr M I’Anson, Sir Miles Irving, Mr P M Johnson, Mr S Lightley, Professor J N Marshall, Mr M J McDonnell (President, Union Society), Ms J Parkinson, Mr S Pleydell, Mr B A Potter (Education Officer) and Mr A M Wilton.

In attendance: Professor G J Docherty (acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HASS)), Professor C P Day, Professor O R Hinton, Professor T F Page, Professor E Ritchie and Professor A C Stevenson (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr J V Hogan (Registrar) and Miss E M Niven (Administrative Officer).

M I N U T E S

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

With reference to Minute 66(iii), Sir Miles Irving declared an interest as Chair of NHS Innovations North.

62. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Medical Sciences) to his first meeting of Council.

63. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 11 February 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed.

64. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Capital Development
(Minute 49, 11.2.2008)

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 11 February 2008, had recommended that the University develop a communications strategy regarding the various capital developments that would be taking place on campus over the next few years.

Received:

(i) A report from Ms A E Coxhead, Head of Marketing and Publicity.
[Circulated with the Agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
(ii) A copy of a brochure entitled ‘Creating a campus for the future’.
    [Circulated with the Agenda. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(b) Progress of business

Received, for information, a business tracking form.
    [Circulated with the Agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(c) Singapore

Reported that Mr M I’Anson had agreed to take over as Chairman of NUIB. Mr I’Anson had recently undertaken a second visit to Singapore, in order to gain a more detailed understanding of the vision behind the initiative. There were a number of governance matters to overcome and it was also necessary to establish greater clarity in a number of areas. Mr I’Anson would be addressing these issues during the forthcoming months and would provide Council with an update at its meeting on 19 May 2008.

65. CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS

(i) CUC Handbook for Members of Audit Committees in Higher Education Institutions

Reported that the CUC had recently published a Handbook for Members of Audit Committees in Higher Education Institutions. As a first step, Audit Committee would be invited to review the publication and its implications for developing the University’s practices. The Handbook was available on the HEFCE website at www.hefce.ac.uk

(ii) Council Conference 2009

Reported that the meeting on 9 February 2009 would also be a Council Conference. Members were requested to note this in their diaries.

66. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.
    [Circulated with the Agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(i) Death

Reported the death, on 1 April 2008, of Ms S Watson, a stage 3 BA Hons Psychology student.

Resolved that Council record its deep regret and sympathy for Ms Watson’s relatives.

(ii) International Student Barometer - Autumn Survey 2007

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University had just received the ‘Autumn Wave (2007)’ results of the International Student Barometer. These were overwhelmingly positive and extremely encouraging as the University had been working hard to improve
the experience of international students. In addition to the Schools and Faculties, it was also important to recognise the efforts made by the Central Services.

 Whilst areas of concern were few, further thought and development was required to improve the provision of a multi-cultural learning experience and to help international students make friends with UK students and members of the local community. The Union Society was also seeking to include the provision of a social space for INTO students in its capital plan.

 It was necessary to give further consideration to the experience of international students off campus. The Faculty of HaSS had already taken some action in this area by introducing a community involvement programme for international students, in conjunction with Northumbria University and the City Council. It was considered necessary to raise awareness within the wider community of the benefits that international students could bring to the city. This would be an issue to which Council would return in future.

 Council expressed its support for the efforts made to improve the experience of international students and congratulations were extended to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) and her colleagues for the positive results.

(iii) Commercialisation Strategy

 As a significant proportion of the University’s research was conducted in collaboration with the NHS, it would be important for the University to take this into account when developing its intellectual property policy.

 It had been agreed that an internal property assessment should take place. It was possible that this would be conducted in partnership with Durham University and the NHS. The assessment might be conducted in-house or by using a third party.

(iv) Pay Bargaining

 It was noted that the budget for 2007-08 and the proposed budget for 2008-09 would include provision to meet the full costs of the national pay award.

67. THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
(Minute 47(v), 11.2.2008)

 Reported that:

(a) The Vice-Chancellor had organised a “Think Tank” event on teaching on 1 February 2008 to begin the process of identifying specific practical measures to work towards the idea of parity of esteem between teaching and research at the University.

(b) The actions arising out of that meeting had been discussed by Senate, Executive Board and the Heads of School/Directors of University Research Institutes Forum. This list was now being brought to Council as the next stage of the consultation process.
(c) As a consequence of these discussions, a job summary document for the role of Head of School had been prepared, that sought to clarify, in a brief paper, what was expected of Heads of School.

(d) As a further consequence of these discussions, and subsequent to discussion of the above at Senate, a job summary document had also been prepared for the role of Director of Type II Research Institute.

Received:

(i) A list of the actions arising out of the ‘Think Tank’ meeting, which had been updated following discussion at Senate.

(ii) A job summary document for the role of Head of School, which had also been updated following discussion at Senate.

(iii) An extract from the draft Senate Minutes of 4 March 2008 on Senate’s discussion of this item.

(iv) A job summary document for the role of Director of Type II Research Institute.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Documents E - H. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Considered the job summary for Head of School and the job summary for Director of Type II Research Institute.

After noting that:

1. The two job summary documents had now been considered by a number of bodies and various amendments had been made as a result. The documents sought to clarify what was already stated in the job descriptions for both posts.

2. A motion had been passed at the recent NUS Conference which recommended that more action should be taken at national level to raise the issue of parity of esteem between teaching and research. It has also been suggested that this issue should be included in future league tables.

3. The clarity and focus that the documents provided was welcomed.

4. References to engagement in the Head of School’s job description had now been strengthened.

Resolved that the job summary for Head of School and the job summary for Director of Type II Research Institute be approved, subject to any comments from Senate on the latter.
68. HEALTH AND SAFETY

(i) Current health and safety issues

Received an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for safety on current health and safety issues affecting the University, including performance measures and actions taken.

Noted that:

1. No major incidents had occurred since the previous meeting.

2. The resignation from Council of The Hon James Ramsbotham had left a vacancy on Safety Committee, which Sir Miles Irving had agreed to fill.

Resolved that Council express its thanks to Sir Miles for agreeing to serve as Council’s representative on Safety Committee.

(ii) Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act

Received:

(a) An oral report from Professor T F Page, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, on the implications of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act.

(b) A briefing document summarising guidance on the above legislation provided at a recent seminar delivered by Eversheds.

[Briefing document tabled at the meeting. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Council was the prime body for ensuring that health and safety legislation was firmly embedded across the University.

2. A breach under the new legislation would be considered a criminal act and would be investigated by the Police rather than the Health and Safety Executive.

3. No significant changes to the University’s existing arrangement were considered necessary in order to meet the requirements of the new legislation. It would be necessary to remind staff that they had a duty to inform the Safety Office if they were aware of any breaches in health and safety legislation.

4. Induction arrangements would be reviewed in light of the new legislation.

5. It was suggested that staff should be provided with three or four suitable examples to illustrate the relevance of the new legislation to the University’s activities.

6. Whilst the Union Society received support from the University on health and safety matters, it was considered an independent body and would be
independently liable under the Act. It was suggested that at a future meeting, the University/Union Partnership Committee should consider the impact of the new legislation on the Union Society’s activities.

7. It was suggested that a few minor editorial changes should be made to the briefing report before it was circulated more widely.

Resolved that:

(i) Professor Page be asked to clarify the impact of the new legislation on sporting activities with the Head of Safety.

(ii) Professor Page and the Head of Safety be asked to write to all members of staff to make them aware of their responsibilities under the act. (Members of Council should also be provided with copies of this correspondence.)

(iii) The Institute of Director’s booklet entitled ‘Leading Health and Safety at Work’ should be circulated to all members of Council.

69. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Received a Report from the meeting of Finance Committee held on 12 March 2008. [Circulated with the Agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

70. UNIVERSITY SAFETY STRATEGY

(Minute 45(i), 11.2.2008)

Considered the draft University Safety Strategy, which had been endorsed by Safety Committee and Executive Board.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. The strategy was a high level document which was supported by a series of more detailed procedures, as listed on page 3. The document sought to explain the health and safety roles and responsibilities of various sections within the University.

2. The annual health and safety report would be submitted to Council in July. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the structure of the report, to ensure that it provided the Council with an appropriate level of detail. It was also suggested that it should be submitted as a report from Executive Board.

Resolved that the draft University Safety Strategy be approved with immediate effect.

71. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) : FINANCIAL HEALTH AND ESTATES

Reported that it was proposed to ask Council to consider, in detail, one or two KPIs at each meeting, following approval of the overall framework by Council at its October meeting.
Considered a paper from Professor A C Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) on the KPIs, ‘Financial Health’ and ‘Estates’.
[Circulated with the Agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The Financial Health KPI was based on the following four indicators: income, income diversification, investment, and stability/sustainability. The University’s performance in these four areas over the past year had resulted in an improved aggregated assessment in comparison with the previous year.

2. In terms of income diversification, HEFCE grant income represented 36.4% of total University income, which was in line with that of other universities in the Russell Group.

3. The aggregated assessment of the Estates KPI had remained at Amber-Green. A number of concerns remained over the functional suitability of the estate.

4. A commitment had been made recently to invest in and sustain the long-term maintenance of the estate.

5. The ‘green’ agenda was becoming increasingly important both regionally and nationally and was also of great interest to students. In future, it would be important to ensure that new developments incorporated sustainable features.

6. It was necessary to give some consideration to improving the campus as a coherent space. The Vice-Chancellor had recently raised this issue with the Estate Support Service.

7. Consideration was being given to the role of public art on campus.

8. It was important to ensure prospective students obtained a good impression of the University estate. In addition to the narrative that was to be placed on hoardings across campus, the organisers of open days should be encouraged to emphasise the benefits that would be obtained as a result of the building work.

72. MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL

Reported that, due to work commitments, The Hon James Ramsbotham had resigned from Council with immediate effect.

73. MEMBERS OF SENATE ELECTED TO SERVE ON COUNCIL

Reported that the following had been elected by their colleagues on Senate to serve on Council from 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2011:

Professor M F Cross
Dr L Y J Liu
74. **DATES OF MEETINGS 2008-09**

Reported that Council would meet on the following dates in 2008-09:

- 2 pm  20 October 2008
- 2 pm  8 December 2008
- 11 am  9 February 2009 (Council Conference)
- 2 pm  30 March 2009
- 2 pm  18 May 2009
- **3.00 pm**  13 July 2009 (followed by dinner)

75. **REPORTED BUSINESS**

Received a report of action taken in accordance with agreed procedures, approved where necessary by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and/or the Chairman of Council on behalf of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairmen.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

[Note: Regarding item 2 in Document M, appointment of tribunal, it was noted that a tribunal would no longer be necessary.]