NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL

12 December 2011

Present: Mr Mark I’Anson (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy
Vice-Chancellor), Dr Peter Andras, Mr Neil Braithwaite, Professor Vicki Bruce, Mr Mike
Davison, Mr Colin FitzPatrick, Ms Jacqui Henderson, Mr Robert Hull, Mr Peter
Johnson, Mr Jeff McIntosh, Professor David Manning, Mrs Heidi Mottram, Mr Simon
Pallett, Ms Laura Perry (President, Students’ Union) and Mr Paul Walker.

In attendance: Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Oliver Hinton, Professor Tony
Stevenson and Professor Nick Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr John Hogan
(Registrar), Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Mrs Veryan
Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources) and Mrs Sam Taylor
(Administrative Officer).

Dr John Hogan was not present for Minute 39 (v).

M I N U T E S

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Neil Braithwaite declared an interest in relation to Minute 39 (item v) as his firm, Dickinson
Dees Solicitors, was acting for the University in relation to this item.

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 24 October 2011 were approved as a
correct record and signed.

36. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Progress of business : actions carried forward from previous meetings:

Date of meeting: 06.06.11
Item: KPIs : International Profile
Action: Council receive the Internationalisation Strategy at its meeting in
December 2011 and that a further discussion of the appropriateness
of the current targets included in the International Profile KPI should
take place at this meeting.

Responsible: Professor Ella Ritchie
Status: Draft Strategy to Council on 6 February 2012.

Resolved that a report would be presented to the next meeting of Council on the

37. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 11 July 2011, had noted that an external audit of the
University’s Safety arrangements had been conducted and Council would receive the results
of this audit and an action plan at its autumn meeting.
Received:

(i) An oral report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of Executive Board, on current health and safety issues affecting the University, including performance measures and actions taken.

(ii) Results of the external audit of the University’s safety arrangements, and action plan [Circulated with the Agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(iii) A summary accident report from Mrs Veryan Johnston on behalf of Executive Board for the first six months of 2011. [Circulated with the Agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The external audit results were graded on four levels:
   - Level 1 – Basic level of performance
   - Level 2 – Positive action
   - Level 3 – Good practice
   - Level 4 – Best Practice

2. The results of the external audit showed that the University had fully achieved Level 2, had partially achieved Level 3 and was making progress in Level 4 but had considerable work to do to achieve Level 4 across the board. This was an improvement on the position in the 2009 audit.

3. There was no comparative information available for the external audit report.

4. Staff accident numbers were increasing, almost exclusively from accidents involving clerical and ancillary staff. The current increased levels of Slip/Trip/Fall (STF) injuries was eliminating the impact of reductions in manual handling accidents, therefore this needed to be further addressed. In order to better manage the STF accident reduction programme the University Safety Office had set up a working group involving key stakeholders from across the University.

5. After many years of valuable service, Mr Vincent Theobald-Vega would be leaving his role as the University Head of Safety, and the requirements of the role would be reviewed prior to him being replaced.

Resolved that:

(i) The recommendations in Document B be approved.

(ii) The University Safety Office would review whether specific targets could be introduced to the reporting process.

38. CHAIR’S BUSINESS

(i) Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE

This would be the last meeting of Council for Professor Oliver Hinton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor SAgE, who would be stepping down as PVC from 31 December 2011. He would be succeeded by Professor Steve Homans who would take up this post from 1 January 2012. Professor Hinton was thanked for his contribution to Council.
(ii) Council induction programme

The Chair reminded members about forthcoming sessions in the Council induction programme and encouraged attendance.

(iii) Internationalisation Strategy SIG (Minute 12, 24.10.2011)

A SIG for the development of the Internationalisation Strategy had been established and the lay members were Mr Mark l’Anson, Mr Robert Hull and Mr Paul Walker. It would present a report to the next meeting of Council.

39. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report. Highlights of this report were detailed below.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(i) Deaths

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University. The Vice-Chancellor reported a further death, on 2 December 2011, of Xijia Zhang, an exchange student in the School of Modern Languages.

Noted that the protocol following the death of a student had been followed in accordance with the agreed procedure. However, the process would be reviewed in relation to changes in communication methods, specifically social media.

Resolved that Council record its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.

(ii) Biomedical Research Centre

Building work on the new transitional research facility at the former General Hospital site was near completion. It was agreed at the meeting of Council on 26 October 2009 that £1.5m of the costs would be funded from University endowments. Due to current competitive conditions in the building market, the forecast project cost was £3.4m less than the original approval of £14m reducing the call on University endowments to £785k.

The proposed funding source was the George Brown Endowment, an unrestricted fund set up in April 1985 after Senate and Council approved the sale of a collection of anthropological artefacts to the National Museum of Ethnography, Osaka, Japan.

There were currently £934k of unutilised funds and the new centre would seem to fulfil the expectations of Council and Senate.

Resolved that Council approve the expenditure outlined above, subject to the agreement of Senate.

(iii) Launch of the Social Renewal Societal Challenge theme.

A copy of the current version of the launch programme was tabled at the meeting.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that the interviews for the Director of the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal took place on 9 December.
(iv) Late News

(a) Newcastle Science City

The post of Director of Newcastle Science City had been advertised.

(b) Lord Mayor’s Design Awards

The 2011 Lord Mayor’s Design Awards ceremony took place at the Mansion House on Monday 5 December. This event was held every two years and championed the best in architecture and environmental design. The University received four awards:

  New Building:
  Award winner: Newcastle University Business School and Central Link, Downing Plaza
  Two Commended finalists: King’s Gate and the Baddiley-Clark Building

  Sustainability:
  Award winner: Baddiley-Clark Building

(c) London provision

The possible development of limited academic provision in London was still under review and Professor Bayan Sharif had been asked to take further soundings on this matter.

(v) Early Warnings

(a) FOI request for Project Licences

In accordance with the Action Required by the Decision of the First Tier Tribunal of 11 November 2011 the University had been ordered to disclose, no later than 9 December 2011, the information contained in the two licences requested by BUAV subject to the exceptions identified by the Tribunal. In compliance with that order the University had decided that it had no alternative but to act in accordance with the decision of the Tribunal. The Home Office had provided a letter on the morning that the information was released stating that “it could not currently see how it could be in the public interest to prosecute.”

(b) Digital Campus initiative

Executive Board is diarising a Digital Campus initiative which would encompass the findings of the recent KPMG review.

40. EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Received:

(i) An abridged version of the annual effectiveness report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar and approved by Mr Mark I’Anson, Chair of Council
[Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
(ii) A response from Mr Mark I’Anson, Chair of Council.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. In future, each committee of Council would report the outcome of each of its meetings to Council. Council members would retain the right to question any area on which they required further information or disagreed with the decisions taken.

2. Nominations Committee appointed members of Council and others to these committees and undertook succession planning to ensure that each had an appropriate membership of skilled individuals.

3. Any member of Council who was interested in serving on a particular committee should inform the Chair of Council or the Registrar.

4. A new process for strategy creation and review had been introduced. In each case, the University would convene a Special Interest Group (SIG), which would be chaired by the appropriate member of Executive Board (EB) and would include at least one lay member of Council.

5. The Chair of Council undertook an annual PDR of the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar. Members of Council would, in future, be invited to submit comments for consideration as part of the review process.

Resolved that:

(i) In order to enhance the visibility of Council members, it was suggested that a brief summary and photograph of individual members be disseminated via NU Connections.

(ii) Any new member of Council should be featured in the NU Connections communication.

41. STUDENTS’ UNION IMPACT REPORT 2010-11

Received:

(i) A powerpoint presentation from Ms Laura Perry, President of the Students’ Union.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Ms Perry be thanked for her informative presentation.

42. REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of Audit Committee held on 10 November 2011.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

43. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of Audit Committee held on 10 November 2011.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Council 12 December 2011

44. **REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Received an oral report from the Chair of Nominations Committee on the meeting held on 21 November 2011.

After noting that:

1. Council members were encouraged to become more widely involved in the activities of the University, including through membership of Advisory Board and Special Interest Groups.

2. The intention with appointment to Council is to find candidates who were already familiar with the work of the University.

3. The Registrar would prepare an advertorial, to be considered at the next meeting of Nominations Committee, which would assist with the recruitment of future lay members of University bodies, which could ultimately lead to membership of Council.

4. Mr Jeff McIntosh had been appointed as a member of Finance Committee with immediate effect to 31 July 2014.

5. Mr Neil Braithwaite had been appointed as a member of Safety Committee with immediate effect to 31 July 2014.

6. Mr Neil Braithwaite had been appointed as a member of Finance Committee for the same period, subject to Council’s approval of the following change to the Committee’s constitution:

   delete: A lay member appointed by Council
   substitute: Two lay members appointed by Council

*Resolved that Council approve the amendment to the constitution of Finance Committee, as outlined in 6 above.*

45. **REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

Received an oral report from the Chair of Remuneration Committee on the meeting held on 21 November 2011.

Noted that Remuneration Committee did not report information on its assessment of the performance on remuneration of senior staff and the question was raised as to whether it should do.

*Resolved that the Registrar and the Chair of Remuneration Committee should produce a report on the terms of reference of Remuneration Committee and the nature of future reports to Council.*

46. **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES – KPIs : RESEARCH QUALITY AND POWER**

Received a report from Professor Nick Wright Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Noted that:

1. The level of research income per FTE academic had been improving against our peer group.

2. The shortfall in the number of patent applications may be due, in part, to the reorganisation of the Research and Enterprise Service, which was now complete and more closely aligned to the faculties.

47. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY’S PERFORMANCE**

Received a report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Received an extract from the draft Senate Minutes on Senate’s discussion of this item.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The report was a review of the KPIs that supported the University's strategic objectives and included comparative data for other universities that Newcastle University would be measured against.

2. The data would always be 12-18 months old; however, there was still the opportunity to develop effective, forward-looking KPIs.

48. **NEWCASTLE SCIENCE CITY: UPDATE**

Received a report from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that the Regional Growth Fund application had been successful. The application had been approved to the full value requested (£6m) subject to the completion of a due diligence process which would be commissioned by the University.

Resolved that any member who was interested in joining the SIG for Newcastle Science City should contact the Vice-Chancellor.

49. **VISION 2021 : UPDATE**

Received a powerpoint presentation from the Vice-Chancellor.

[A copy of the slides used by the Vice-Chancellor is filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Consideration should be given to the description of the University's international, national and regional profile.

2. A suggestion was made to include Learning and Teaching in the ‘Summary: Excellence with a purpose’ slide.

3. Other universities were now adopting the ‘civic’ university label and therefore we would need to consider how to position ourselves in this area.
4. Further consideration would be given to the KPIs to be developed.

50. **PROJECT 2012 : SCORECARD**

Received the October and November Project 2012 scorecards.

[Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that, with the introduction of the Digital Campus Initiative that Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources would lead, Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching would take over the responsibility for Project 2012 from January 2012.

51. **UNDERGRADUATE RECRUITMENT**

Received an oral update from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of Executive Board.

Received the summary UCAS information report dated 11 December 2011.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Applications were down for Newcastle University, but less than UCAS applications overall.

2. A significant increase in applications was expected prior to the deadline date of 15 January 2012.

3. A suggestion was made that a report that identified the number of places which were available by School/Institute would be beneficial in understanding the application progress.

4. It was too early to identify any issues arising for our efforts to widen participation especially from the North East.

52. **ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY.**

Considered a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. The broad intention was to maintain the total number of rooms, but increase the quality by providing more en-suite rooms and removing rooms without washbasins. It was also intended to reduce the numbers of rooms offered as part of a catering package.

2. A review of the redevelopment of Richardson Road accommodation would be presented to Council as a separate matter.

3. The terms of any agreement within the Private Sector cannot be guaranteed in advance, but Accommodation Services would ensure the Students’ Union was involved in discussions at an early stage to agree principles that could be incorporated into the nominations agreements.
Resolved that Council approve the Accommodation Strategy outlined in Document O.

53. REVIEW OF STUDENT RENTS

Considered a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Council approve the proposed increases in student rents for 2012-13, as outlined in Document P.

54. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY (AHEAD 2012)

Received a copy of the document Ahead 2012.
[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

55. CHAIR’S CIRCULAR

Reported that one of the recommendations from the Council Process Working Group, which was approved by Council at its October meeting, was for the introduction of a ‘Chair’s circular’ by which routine business could be circulated between meetings.

The Chair’s circular of routine business was sent to members on 28 November 2011. No issues on the circular were raised by members and the business was, therefore, deemed to have been approved by Council.
[The approved business and a copy of the circular is filed in the Minute Book.]

Approved business:

(i) Fee for placement year abroad

(ii) Academic Staff Career Pathways

(iii) Policies and Procedures

1. Serious Incident Policy (new)
2. Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure (revised)
3. Data Protection Policy (revised)
4. Freedom of Information Policy (revised)
5. Fairtrade Policy (revised)

The above policies and procedures would now be added to the University’s Policies and Procedures website at: https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/policies/

(iv) Research Structures in the Faculty of HaSS
[1. Establishment of the Newcastle Institute for Creative Arts Practice (NICAP) for a period of five years from 1 January 2012 and the appointment of Professor Eric Cross as Director for the same period. 2. Disestablishment of the Newcastle Institute for the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (NIASSH) from 1 January 2012.]

Items for information:

(v) Effectiveness of Council and Members of Council 2010-11

(vi) INTO LLP
(vii) Annual report from Ethics Committee

(viii) Report from the meeting of the University/Students’ Union Partnership Committee held on 19 October 2011.

(ix) Reported business:

    The Chair of Council, acting on behalf of Council, had approved;

    (a) The appointment of Professor R Lightowlers as Acting Director of the Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences from 1 November 2011 to 31 October 2012.

    (b) The appointment of Mr Nick Swales as a Council-appointed Trustee of the Development Trust from 9 November 2011 to 8 November 2014.