NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL
12 JULY 2010

Present: Mrs M O Grant (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor, Mr N Blezard, Ms E Budge (Education Officer), Ms A Georgiou (President, Union Society), Ms J Henderson, Mr R Hull, Mr M I’Anson, Sir Miles Irving, Mr P M Johnson, Mr S Lightley, Dr L Y J Liu, Professor D A C Manning, Mr S Pleydell, Ms K Priestley and Mr I Shott.

In attendance: Professor C P Day, Professor O R Hinton, Professor E Ritchie, Professor A C Stevenson and Professor N G Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Dr J V Hogan (Registrar), Mr R C Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Mrs V S Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources), Mr D J Buck (observer), Mr M Davison (member of Audit Committee), Mr T Delamere (President elect of the Union Society), Ms E Collingham (Education Officer elect of the Union Society) and Miss E M Niven (Administrative Officer).

Mr S Pleydell and Ms K Priestley were not present for item 118(i). Professor E Ritchie was not present for item 122.

MINUTES

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms E Budge (Education Officer) and Ms A Georgiou (President, Union Society) declared an interest in relation to item 131 – Union Society Project – as they were trustees of the Union Society.

113. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Mr David Buck, Mr Mike Davison, Ms Elizabeth Collingham and Mr Tom Delamere to the meeting as observers.

114. RETIRING MEMBERS

The Chairman thanked Ms Emma Budge, Ms Andi Georgiou and Ms Jan Parkinson for their contribution to the work of Council and wished them every success in the future.

115. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 7 June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed.

116. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Received an oral report from the Executive Director of Human Resources on current health and safety issues affecting the University, including performance measures and actions taken.

Noted that Council had previously been informed of an investigation being carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Following discussions between representatives of the
HSE, the Executive Director of Human Resources and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences, this matter had now been resolved.

117. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

Received a business tracking form.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(ii) Science Central Masterplan (Minute 96, 7.6.2010)

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 7 June 2010, had resolved that it should receive an update at its meeting on 12 July on progress in acquiring the necessary adjacent sites in an appropriate manner.

Received:

(i) An oral report on the above from the Vice-Chancellor.

(ii) The regular progress report on Science City from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(iii) A project update report on Science Central by 1NG.
[Tabled at the meeting. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. Uncertainty remained over what would happen to the One North East’s (ONE) stake in the Science Central site following its abolition. The Science Central Advisory Group was due to meet on 13 July and would give this issue and the potential outcomes further consideration. There was also a degree of uncertainty over the likelihood of securing ONE’s contribution to the phase one development of the Science Central site and clarity over this was required.

2. The reports received from 1NG and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, suggested that discussions with the owners of the sites adjacent to the Science Central were progressing well.

3. The report from 1NG also included a recommendation that a decision should be taken in early September regarding the location of the Gateway building. It was now proposed that, failing sufficient clarity regarding the key neighbouring sites, this should be built on the ‘hub’ site, which was the University’s preferred location.

4. The submission of the masterplan for public consultation was to be delayed to allow for the resolution of the adjoining land issues and to enable a revised financial analysis to be agreed.

Resolved that any decisions which were required in relation to Science City/Science Central prior to the next meeting of Council be discussed and approved by the extended Science City Advisory Group on behalf of Council.
118. **CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS**

(i) **Appointment of lay members**

After noting that:

1. The terms of office of five lay members of Council were due to end on 1 August 2010 and there were a further five lay members whose terms of office were due to end on 1 August 2011, four of whom could not be re-appointed.

2. The Chairman proposed that Ms Kate Priestley and Mr Simon Pleydell should each be re-appointed for a period of three years and that Dr Felicity Harvey should be re-appointed for one year. Council was asked to approve the exceptional re-appointment of Mr Colin FitzPatrick for a third term of three years. Mr FitzPatrick was willing to continue to chair Audit Committee but had suggested that a successor should be sought at an early stage in his re-appointment on Council.

3. Ms Jan Parkinson, whose term of appointment was also due to end on 1 August 2010, had indicated that she wished to step down but she hoped to continue to support the University by working with the Executive Director of Human Resources on individual projects.

4. Following the resignation of Ms Lucy Winskell, it was considered desirable to fill one of the two current vacancies on Council with an individual with a legal background. A potential member with the relevant expertise had been identified. This person was an active supporter of the University and a member and regular attendee of Court and the Development and Alumni Relations Council.

5. It was acknowledged that, as recommended by the Council of University Chairs, the University should, in future, advertise all lay member vacancies on Council.

6. The Chairman of Council’s term of appointment was due to end on 31 July 2011 and it was hoped that a successor could be identified prior to the Council Conference on 7 February 2011.

**Resolved that:**

(i) **The following be re-appointed as members of Council from 1 August 2010 until 31 July of the year shown:**

- Mr Colin FitzPatrick (2013)
- Dr Felicity Harvey (2011)
- Mr Simon Pleydell (2013)
- Ms Kate Priestley (2013)

(ii) **Mr Neil Braithwaite be appointed as a member of Council from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2013.**

(ii) **Ethical investments**

Noted that:

1. As discussed at the previous meeting of Council, a working group was to be set up to consider the issue of ethical investments. It was expected that the first meeting of this group would take place during the autumn term.
2. Ms Jacqui Henderson, Deputy Chair of Council, had agreed to chair the working group. Members of Council who were interested in participating in this group were invited to inform the Chairman of Council or Registrar. It was expected that the incoming President of the Union Society would be included amongst the membership.

(iii) Council induction

Noted that:

1. A working group was to be established to consider the induction process for members of Council. If considered desirable, the remit of the working group could be widened to include the induction process for members of Senate.

2. Members of Council who were interested in participating in this working group were invited to inform the Chairman of Council or the Registrar.

(iv) Pensions

Noted that:

1. A meeting of the USS Joint Negotiating Committee had taken place on 7 July. The Chairman of the committee had used his casting vote in favour of the employers' proposals for benefit reforms which meant that they would now be recommended to the USS Trustees. The USS Trustees would consider the proposals at their meeting on 22 July and, if they were approved, a full statutory consultation with USS members would follow.

2. The proposed reforms were considered by the Employers Pension Forum to be the minimum required for the scheme to have a sustainable long-term future. UCU had indicated that they would pursue industrial action in opposition to the changes.

119. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

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

(i) Arthritis Research UK Centre of Excellence

Council offered its congratulations to Professor McCaskie and his team on the award of £2.5m for the establishment of an Arthritis Research UK Centre of Excellence.

(ii) The Emergency Budget

A number of the financial assumptions which the University had made in its budget for 2010/11 had materialised in the Coalition Government's Emergency Budget. Cuts of 25% had been anticipated and the University’s budget would not require any modifications at this stage.

(iii) HEFCE Funding

HEFCE had announced that it would reduce the University's July grant payment by £295k as a result of in-year cuts it had been required to make. This was within expected
parameters and was considered to be manageable. The University also expected its teaching grant for 2010/11 to be reduced by £725k but this had yet to be confirmed.

The University had been informed that the funding it received from HEFCE to support the Great North Museum would be £240k for 2010/11, which represented an increase of 20% on the current year’s grant.

The University’s bid to the HEFCE University Modernisation Fund had been successful and the University would receive £2.6m to fund efficiency measures and to support 176 additional student places.

(iv) Regional Development Agency

It had been confirmed that the Regional Development Agency (RDA), One North East would be abolished by March 2012 at the latest. Much confusion remained over the structures, if any, that would replace ONE. The need for urgent engagement with local and national government figures was emphasised. Members of Council who received any useful information about the structures that would replace the RDAs were asked to inform the Chairman of Council and the Vice-Chancellor.

Resolved that any decisions which were required prior to the meeting of Council on 18 October regarding the University’s potential participation in the organisational structures that would replace the Regional Development Agency, be discussed and agreed by the Chairman of Council, the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Chairs and the Honorary Treasurer on behalf of Council.

(v) Congratulations

Council offered its congratulations to the Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences on their appointments to the boards of 1NG and the Medical Research Council respectively.

120. TWO-YEAR DEGREES

Considered a report from Professor Ella Ritchie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Received an extract from the draft Senate Minutes of 15 June 2010 on Senate’s discussion of this item.

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

After noting that:

1. Document E had been prepared following an initial discussion of the issue of two-year degrees at the Council Conference in February 2010. The document had also been considered by Senate at its meeting on 15 June. Senate had concluded that the University should put itself in a position whereby it would be able to consider new initiatives and modes of delivery.

2. A proposal for two-year degrees had been made by the previous Government and the Coalition Government had yet to express its view on this. The possibility of allowing institutions to award degrees on behalf of another institution had been proposed. The Government had recently announced extra funding for apprenticeships and it was
possible that universities would be expected to facilitate arrangements for those who successfully completed an apprenticeship to undertake a two-year degree.

3. The University had identified some of the organisational and structural changes that would be required in order to implement two-year degrees.

4. The current vacation periods were considered to be important for many students for a variety of reasons and the University was advised to present clearly the range of opportunities and activities available at this time which contributed to the student experience.

Resolved that:

(i) The University continue to keep the issue of two-year degrees and alternative modes of provision under review.

(ii) Council be asked to reconsider the issue of two-year degrees as and when appropriate.

121. UNIVERSITY STATUTES (Minutes 78, 29.3.2010)

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 29 March 2010, considered proposed amendments to the University Statutes and resolved that the proposed changes, including the changes to the Model Statute, be supported in principle subject to further consideration of a number of detailed points made during the meeting and further discussions with UCU, with a view to bringing a final version of the proposed changes to the meeting of Council in July.

Received:

(i) An explanatory document prepared by Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

(ii) Paper from UCU to Senate.

(iii) An extract from the draft Senate Minutes of 15 June 2010 on Senate’s discussion of this item.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents G-J. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Considered proposed amendments to the University Statutes which had been considered by Academic Board, Convocation and Senate and which had been updated following discussion at the meeting of Senate on 15 June.

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

After noting that:

1. Some members of Senate had objected to the proposal to change the ‘powers’ of the statutory bodies to ‘functions’. As a result, further clarification on this point had been sought from the University’s solicitors who had confirmed that the consequences of the change were not significant either way. Therefore the decision had been taken to revert to the original wording.

2. The membership of Senate had been considered by the Working Group on Governance and revisions were proposed which would reduce the size but would also provide for a majority of elected members, as requested by the UCU.
3. Agreement had not yet been reached with the UCU regarding the procedures which would replace the Model Statute (current Statute 57). The section on redundancy had been reworded and now provided details of the types of cases which would need to be referred to Senate for consideration. These included redundancies which would have ‘significant implications for the academic character and mission of the University.’

Resolved that the proposed changes to the University Statutes be approved for submission to Court.

122. EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIOS

Considered recommendations in a report from the Vice-Chancellor which had been approved by Senate at its meeting on 15 June 2010, subject to the agreement of Council.

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

After noting that:

1. Professor Paul Younger’s appointment as Director of NIReS had created a vacancy in Executive Board’s Engagement position.

2. The Engagement portfolio included a number of dimensions and it was proposed that the relationship-building aspects of the portfolio should be combined with the Internationalisation portfolio and allocated to Professor Ella Ritchie, who should be appointed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

3. The above proposal would lead to a vacancy in the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Student Experience position and it was proposed that this should be advertised in September 2010.

4. It was agreed that the sabbatical officers would be consulted and invited to participate in the appointment process. Members of Council who were interested in participating in the selection committee were asked to inform the Chairman of Council or the Registrar.

Resolved that:

(i) Professor Ella Ritchie be appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor from a date to be determined to 31 July 2014.

(ii) A Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Student Experience be appointed to replace Professor Ritchie.

(iii) A joint selection committee be established for the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Student Experience with membership as follows:

The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Three members appointed by Council
Three members appointed by Senate

(iv) Members of Council be invited to submit expressions of interest or nominations of those interested in serving on the joint selection committee to the Chairman of Council or Dr John Hogan by 31 July 2010.
(v) **The Chairman of Council be authorised to appoint three members on the joint selection committee on behalf of Council.**

123. **REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE**

Considered a report from the Working Group on Governance.

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

After noting that:

1. The Working Group had adopted a discursive approach which had resulted in wide-ranging discussions. It had been concluded that the current governance structures were largely appropriate and effective but a number of minor adjustments had been recommended which were designed to improve efficiencies and communications between Senate and Council and their committees.

2. There were a number of issues which remained open for further discussion; the Working Group had recommended points of principle in relation to these but the operational detail needed to be determined by Executive Board.

3. Changes to the membership of Senate were proposed which would meet the UCU’s requirement for a majority of elected members whilst also reducing the total number of members from 42 to 35.

4. Section 7 of the report, which concerned the processes for setting the agenda of Council and Senate, required further consideration by Executive Board. The Working Group recommended that a more transparent process for preparing the agenda should be adopted which allowed for greater input by members of Council and Senate.

5. The report identified the two roles played by lay members of Council, namely the governance role on Council and the support role provide to the Executive through the membership of advisory and special interest groups. The report sought to describe the distinction between these two roles. When attending a sub-committee of Council or Senate lay members were acting in their capacity as a member of the governing body but participation in an advisory or special interest group required them to act as an independent advisor. The reporting line for the advisory groups was clarified as being via Executive Board.

6. In addition to the induction process new Council members were required to complete, the Working Group recommended that a programme of ongoing development for all members of Council should be implemented.

7. Proposed changes had been made to the committee structure in order to reduce the numbers of committees reporting directly to Senate, Council or Executive Board from 22 to 10.

8. A clearer link was to be established between Council and the Development and Alumni Relations Council in order to improve its alignment with the University’s strategic goals.

9. It was proposed that Redundancy Committee should be abolished. The redundancy process was considered to be a management issue and a Redundancy Committee comprised of lay members of Council was considered to be unnecessary. Council would need to be assured, however, that there were appropriate arrangements in place to manage redundancies and the appeals which could follow.
10. Redundancy Committee had helped to bring about cultural changes within the University and improvements in the handling of redundancies had been made. Work would continue outside of the committee to ensure these improvements were embedded across the University. It was important for the redundancy procedures to be thorough from the start. If a member of staff who was being considered for redundancy had a legitimate point to make, procedures should be in place to enable them to do this at the start of the process.

11. New redundancy procedures were being prepared and would be presented to Council in the autumn. The Executive Director of Human Resources was asked to consider the comments raised by members of Council and to address these in the revised procedures.

12. An Internationalisation Committee had been included in the proposed list of committees as a committee of Senate under the heading of Engagement. It was suggested that, given the importance of this committee, it should be positioned as joint committee of Senate and Council. Executive Board was asked to give this suggestion further consideration.

13. The report recommended that the remit of the University’s Ethics Committee should be limited to research ethics and that the overall ethical policy of the University should be the direct responsibility of Council. It was suggested that the University should have a clear mechanism in place for the consideration of ethical issues which affected the whole of the institution. Executive Board was asked to consider how such ethical issues could be identified and raised at the appropriate level. Council would need to maintain oversight of these issues but would not seek to get involved in their day-to-day management. A standing committee for institutional ethical issues was not considered to be appropriate since it could be necessary to call upon the expertise of a variety of individuals depending on the matter under consideration.

15. Suggestions were requested on how best to structure the activities of Council and Senate throughout the year. Thought also needed to be given to the optimal size of the sub-committees.

16. Consideration should be given to conducting a risk assessment of the impact of the changes proposed by the Working Group.

17. The Working Group proposed that rather than being a standing committee, a special interest group should be established to consider estate and sustainability issues. It was considered that sustainability issues should be given greater prominence and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources was requested to give this matter further consideration.

Resolved that:

(i) The recommendations in the report be endorsed and supported, and submitted to Senate for comment.

(ii) Executive Board be asked to give further consideration to comments made by Council and also to any comments subsequently made by Senate.

(iii) Executive Board’s response to the report and to Council and Senate’s comments be submitted to Council in the new academic year.
124. CODE OF PRACTICE FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH (Minute 92(ii), 7.6.2010)

Reported that Council, at its meeting on 7 June 2010, resolved that the Code of Practice be given further consideration and a revised version be presented to Council at a future meeting.

Received a briefing paper from Dr John Hogan.

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

Considered the Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech which had been updated since the last meeting.

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

After noting that:

1. Visiting speakers had been identified as the main risk factor for the University. The 1986 Education Act, which set out the requirement for the University to have a code of practice on freedom of speech, included a definition of who should be covered by the act, which included visiting speakers, but it did not define who could invite these visitors to the institution.

2. Council had asked for the 10 day timescale included in the code of practice to be reconsidered. Following further consideration it was felt that this timescale should be retained as it applied only in relation to events which were considered 'highly controversial' and provided a degree of protection for organisers. In the majority of cases, no notification would be required.

Resolved that the revised Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech be approved.

125. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES – KPIs : SOCIETAL CHALLENGE THEMES

Considered a paper from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board, on the KPI ‘Societal Challenge Themes’.

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

After noting that:

1. The KPI included a target of achieving the participation of 10% of academic staff in one or more of the Societal Challenge Themes. Monitoring the number of staff attending events provided one means of assessing this, and on this basis, it was estimated that the target had been exceeded.

2. Preparations were underway for the launch of the Sustainability Societal Challenge Theme. It was important for each theme to continue to be supported and promoted following the end of the launch year.

3. The University had prepared a high-level public strategy which was organised around the Societal Challenge Themes and it was necessary to have a means of monitoring the success of this strategy. It was suggested that the Key Performance Indicator template was not necessarily the most effective means of doing this and Executive Board was asked to give this further consideration. It was proposed that Council should have a discussion on each of the Societal Challenge Themes at least one a year.
Resolved that Executive Board be asked to give further consideration to the most appropriate means of monitoring the progress and success of the Societal Challenge Themes.

126. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS : ANNUAL SUMMARY 2009-10

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

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

Noted that:

1. The appendix to Document R showed Newcastle’s position on a number of measures in relation to its comparator group.

2. The chart suggested that the University’s position in relation to the percentage of first degree leavers in paid work or study was declining. It was noted that this was partly a consequence of the changes in the local economy as a large proportion of the University’s graduates remained in the area following completion of their studies. The decline was also partly related to the way in which data was presented.

3. The chart was considered to be useful and it was suggested that, where available, results from previous years should be added in order to display trends.

127. HIGHER EDUCATION LEAGUE TABLES

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

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

Noted that:

1. Graduate prospects and entry tariffs had been identified as the two variables which had the greatest influence on an institution’s position in the league tables. The graduate prospects data used to produce the most recent league tables was taken from 2007/08, which was a year in which the University had experienced a decline in the data. Data from 2008/09 had shown an improved result but this would not filter through to the league tables until 2011.

2. The graduate prospects data was based on the results of the Destination of Leavers (DHLE) survey which was conducted by the University each year on behalf of HESA. The last survey had been conducted in part by email rather than by telephone and this may have produced an earlier response which may not have been helpful. This procedure should be reconsidered.

3. It was necessary for the University to decide what position it wished to take in relation to league tables. There were a numbers of strategic fixes which could be implemented which would result in an improvement in a number of measures, but there were risks associated with these. For example, the University could raise the entry requirement for those subjects currently accepting lower tariffs but this could result in a reduction of students from certain groups or make it harder to fill some subjects.

4. It was suggested that the measures proposed in Document S should be implemented and Senate and UTLC should be asked to consider the systemic and strategic fixes and to present their feedback to Council.
5. Where it was possible for data to be presented in a way which could help improve the University’s position, it was agreed that this should be done but the University should not alter its principles in order to respond to the requirements of league tables. The University should, however, seek to influence those who compiled the league tables by identifying more appropriate measures.

128. EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY

Considered a paper from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. Document T presented the headlines from the most recent Employee Opinion Survey, which was conducted during April/May 2010. The in-depth analysis of the results had yet to be completed.

2. The response rate had increased since the last survey from 48% to 54% (almost 3000 staff) which was slightly below the sector norm. The general trends were positive and there had been notable improvements in certain areas.

3. 93% of staff said that the University was a good place to work which was an improvement of 3% on the 2007 result. Comparison of the responses against those from other public sector organisations revealed that the University was rated as an ‘Employer of Choice’.

4. The results of the survey would now be disseminated to all staff and presentations would be made to individual academic and survey units. Heads of Units would be asked to prepare action plans to address any issues which had emerged and would be provided with support in order to do this. Good practice examples of action plans prepared in response to the previous survey would also be circulated.

5. 77% of staff had said they had received a PDR during the past 12 months which was an improvement on the result in the previous survey. The PDR process was to be re-launched in areas where compliance was low.

6. 36% of staff said they had received formal health and safety training in the past 12 months. Most health and safety training was voluntary but manual handing training was mandatory for those whose job involved lifting and carrying.

Resolved that:

(i) The University be congratulated on the areas of the employee opinion survey where the results had improved.

(ii) Following detailed analysis of the results, a further report and an action plan be presented to Council.

129. NEW PROBATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Considered recommendations in a report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of Executive Board, which had been approved by Senate at its meeting on 15 June 2010 subject to the agreement of Council.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document U. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Received an extract from the draft Senate Minutes of 15 June on Senate’s discussion of this item.

(i) The new Probation Policy and Probation Procedures, as outlined in Document U, be approved from 1 September 2010.

(ii) The Executive Director of Human Resources be delegated authority to finalise the detailed wording of the Policy and Procedures following discussion with the campus unions.

(iii) Probation Committee be dissolved from 31 August 2010.

130. QAA INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

Reported that:

(a) Members of Council had previously been sent the final QAA Institutional Audit report, which was available at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/instReports.asp?ukprn=10007799

(b) Senate, at its meeting on 15 June 2010, had considered a report from University Teaching and Learning Committee and had endorsed the action plan (Appendix C) contained therein.

[Note: Appendices A and B were not attached as they had previously been circulated to members and were available at the above link.]

Resolved that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning be congratulated on the successful completion of the QAA Institutional Audit.

131. UNION SOCIETY PROJECT

Considered a report from Executive Board regarding the project for the refurbishment of the Union Society building.

After noting that:

1. The Union Society building was in need of work to ensure it was fit for purpose and also to increase its appeal to the University’s diverse student population.

2. It was proposed to prioritise key services and to provide amenities, such as 24 hour computer facilities, to improve the student experience. It was hoped that ultimately the improvement works would lead to the Union Society becoming less financially dependent on the subvention it was granted by the University.

3. Whilst the work was undertaken, the services provided by the Union Society would relocate to empty premises elsewhere on campus. The need to provide the Union
Society and its staff with support during this time was noted and the University had agreed to facilitate the temporary arrangements.

4. It was intended to close the Union Society following the end of Freshers' Week in 2010 and to reopen in time for Freshers' Week in 2011.

5. An asbestos survey was to be conducted. Should large quantities of asbestos be discovered, this would have implications for the timescale and the University was considering ways in which this risk could be mitigated.

6. The University was providing the Union Society with a grant of up to £8m in order to finance the refurbishment. There were a number of reasons why the project was considered to represent good value for money, including the fact that the improvement of the commercial provision would help to improve the future sustainability of the Union Society. Improving the student experience was an important element of the University’s strategy to protect its fee income and a fit for purpose Union Society would make an important contribution to this. Handling this work as a single project, with the Union Society building closed, would maximise cost effectiveness and the current construction market should ensure good value for money tenders.

Resolved that:

(i) Council approve the award of a grant of up to £8m to the Union Society for the refurbishment of the Union Society building to address structural and mechanical and electrical (M&E) problems in the building and to improve its functionality as a representative, social and learning facility for the University’s students.

(ii) The Executive Director of Finance, in consultation with the Honorary Treasurer, be granted delegated authority to agree the final grant letter to the Union Society on behalf of the University.

132. NORTH EAST ENGLAND STEM CELL INSTITUTE (NESCII)

Considered recommendations in a report from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on behalf of Executive Board, which had been approved by Senate at its meeting on 15 June 2010, subject, where necessary, to the agreement of Council.

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

Resolved that:

(i) Council approve a change in the status of NESCII from an Institute to a Research Centre, with the title ‘NESCII at Newcastle’, for a period of three years from 1 August 2010 with Professor Michael Whitaker as Director for the same period.

(ii) University Research Committee be asked to review ‘NESCII at Newcastle’ in 2012 against a set of KPIs appropriate for comparison with University Research Institutes.

(iii) The press protocol be reviewed as a matter of urgency. In general, the protocol should emphasise the primacy of the University concerned and not NESCII.

(iv) The MoA be reviewed and amended in line with the above recommendations if considered necessary and that the formal NESCII Board be placed in abeyance whilst the MoA was reviewed.
133. **NEW MUSIC BUILDING**

Considered a report from Professor Charles Harvey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor HASS on behalf of Executive Board.

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

*Resolved that the new music building be named ‘The Music Studios’.*

134. **THE EQUALITY ACT**

Received a report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of Executive Board.

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

135. **REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Considered a report from the meeting of Nominations Committee held on 17 May 2010.

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

*Resolved that Professor C P Rodgers be re-appointed as Chairman of the Microbiological Hazards and Genetic Modification Safety Advisory Sub-Committee from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2013.*

136. **MEMBERSHIP OF NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Considered a recommendation from the Chairman of Council that Ms Kate Priestley be re-appointed as a member of Nominations Committee from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2013.

*Resolved that the above recommendation be approved.*

137. **REPORT FROM THE HASS FACULTY APPOINTMENT BOARD**

Reported that, in accordance with agreed procedures, the Chairman of Council, on behalf of Council, had approved recommendations in a report from the HASS Faculty Appointment Board.

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

138. **REPORT FROM FACULTY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEES**

Reported that, in accordance with agreed procedures, the Chairman of Council, on behalf of Council, had approved recommendations in a consolidated report from Faculty Promotions Committees.

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

139. **REPORT FROM THE STATUTORY COMMITTEE ON PROMOTIONS TO PERSONAL PROFESSORSHIPS AND READERSHIPS**

Reported that, in accordance with agreed procedures, the Chairman of Council, on behalf of Council, had approved recommendations in a report from the Statutory Committee on Promotions to Personal Professorships and Readerships.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document FF. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
140. **HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY** (Minute 74, 29.3.2010)

Reported that the Human Resources Strategy had been amended in light of comments made at the meeting of Council on 29 March 2010 and had been approved by the Chairman of Council, Deputy Chairs and Honorary Treasurer on behalf of Council.

141. **APPOINTMENTS TO CHAIRS AND READERSHIPS**

Received a report from Executive Board on appointments to Chairs and Readerships.

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

142. **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 HH. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**RESERVED BUSINESS**

143. **REPORT FROM THE HASS FACULTY APPOINTMENT BOARD**

Considered recommendations in a report from the HASS Faculty Appointment Board which had been approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate.

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

Resolved that the recommendations in Document Y be approved.