NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL
22 May 2017

Present: Mr Mark I’Anson (Chair of Council), Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Tony Stevenson (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Mr Neil Braithwaite, Mr Mike Davison, Mr Christopher Duddy (Education Officer, Students’ Union), Mrs Teresa Graham, Professor Tom Joyce, Mr Stephen Lightley, Mr Jeff McIntosh, Mrs Heidi Mottram, Ms Dianne Nelmes, Dr Ole Pedersen, Mr Jack Taylor (President, Students’ Union) and Mr Paul Walker.

In attendance: Professor David Burn, Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Julie Sanders, Professor Nick Wright, Professor Phillip Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Mrs Jenn Allison (Executive Office Manager), Mr Richard Dale (Executive Director of Finance), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Ms Abi Kelly (Executive Director of Corporate Affairs), and Mrs Judith Whitaker (Executive Director of Human Resources).

Apologies: Ms Vicky Wright, Professor Paul Christensen, Dr Jonathan Galloway, Mr Jonathan Glass.

M I N U T E S

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Teresa Graham declared a conflict of interest regarding agenda item 3.6 LED Retrofit Project Business Case. Mrs Graham is Chair of Salix Finance LTD. Salix provides 100% interest-free capital for the public sector to reduce their energy costs by enabling the installation of modern, energy efficient technologies and replacing dated, inefficient technologies. The LED Project will be funded in part by the Salix Finance Revolving Green Fund.

107. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 3 April 2017 were approved as a correct record subject to the amendment of minute 93 noted 2 to read ‘The PGT offer approved by Senate...’ and signed.

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

108. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

District Energy Scheme (Minute 89.12 03.04.17)

Noted that the City Council and Engie had agreed to underwrite jointly the £5.6m funding gap which was not filled through a Government grant. Work is continuing to determine if there is a viable opportunity to proceed. A decision is required by 29 June to ensure that other projects can proceed as planned including the Learning and Teaching and Centre.

109. HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

1. The University had experienced three small fire-related incidents. There had been no injuries as a result. Each incident has been well managed and fully investigated.

2. A full external review of the Occupational Health service had taken place. A full report and action plan are being developed.

110. CHAIR’S BUSINESS

Noted that:

1. Members of Council expressed thanks to the School of Modern Languages for the opportunity to visit the School and the Learning Resource Centre prior to the meeting on 22 May, 2017.

2. The Vice-Chair of Council, Mrs Jacqui Henderson, is retiring 31 July 2017. This had been considered by Nominations Committee at its meeting on 8 May and Members of Council were invited to submit expressions of interest in the role of Vice-Chair to enable an appointment to be made at the next meeting on 10 July 2017. The selection process would depend on the number expressing an interest.

3. There would be a Council dinner following the meeting on 10 July which will be an opportunity to thank both the retiring Chair and Vice-Chair of Council before they retire at the end of July. Members were warmly invited to attend.

111. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor and President’s report. Highlights of this report are discussed below.

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

Noted that:

1. Deaths

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.

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

2. Eland Lodge

Reported that the sale of Eland Lodge, the former Vice-Chancellor’s residence, had been completed.

3. Shaping our Future Vision

Reported that a series of Town Hall events following the joint meeting of Senate and Council have enabled staff and students to contribute to the refresh of the vision and strategy. The next stage of the process will involve engagement with the branch campuses and a series of focus groups.
4. HEFCE Block Grant for 2017/18

The HEFCE Block Grant for 2017/18 has been announced but is under embargo until 9 June 2017, following the completion of the General Election. Funding has increased through some streams and deteriorated in others. Overall there are no significant or unexpected details to note.

5. Published League Tables

The University has improved in two recently published national league tables. The University has risen from 25th to 23rd in the Complete University Guide and from 37th to 30th in the Guardian League Table.

The University has also improved in the Leiden ranking from 114th to 105th worldwide. Medicine is in the top 50 at 46th, Arts and Humanities and Mathematics and Computing Science have also improved.

Resolved that Council record its congratulations to the staff concerned.

6. George Brown Endowment Fund

Reviewed a request to use £225k over a 2½ year period to support the work of Professor Peter Stone, the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace.

Resolved that Council approve the proposal to use £225k from the George Brown Endowment Fund over 2½ years to support the work of Professor Peter Stone.

7. Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources

Reported that Professor Brian Walker, internationally renowned Endocrinologist, will be joining the University on 1 September 2017 to take up post as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources. Professor Walker joins the University from the University of Edinburgh where he is currently the Dean of Research in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and Head of the British Heart Foundation Centre for Cardiovascular Science.

8. General Election Manifestos

Reported the main areas of concern in the political parties’ manifestos as we approach the general election. The Conservative Party is maintaining its commitment to tougher immigration for students and their employment opportunities after graduation. It is also pursuing the requirement for universities to sponsor a state school. The Russell Group had expressed concerns about these commitments.

9. Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences

Reported that Professors David Burn, Derek Mann and newly appointed Brian Walker have joined world-leading scientists elected to the prestigious Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences.

Resolved that Council record its congratulations to Professors Burn, Mann and Walker.
10. Northumbrian Water

Reported that the University had won business/industry collaboration of the Year at the Educate North awards for its partnership with Northumbrian Water for a wide range of collaborative research projects.

Resolved that Council record its congratulations to Mrs Heidi Mottram and the staff concerned the University and Northumbria Water.

112. RISK MANAGEMENT

Received the summary risk register from Dr John Hogan, Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The Societal Challenge Theme risks have been incorporated into the respective Faculty Risk Registers.

2. The pension position nationally is cause for concern as the University’s ability to control the risk is constrained. The USS will consult with the sector and a more information will be provided on the approach.

3. The risk on data had been modified following the recent Internal Audit review and consideration by Executive Board of the increased cyber risks.

Council confirmed that it had received sufficient assurance that the risks facing the University were being managed appropriately.

113. INSTITUTIONAL KPI SUMMARY REPORT

Received the summary KPI report from Professor Tony Stevenson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. There are no changes to the ratings for KPI since the latest version presented to Council in April 2017.

2. The approach to preparing and reviewing KPI will be reconsidered as part of the development of the new strategy.

114. SUMMARY REPORT FROM MEETING OF SENATE, 2 MAY 2017

Received a summary report from the meeting of Senate that took place on 2 May 2017.

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

Noted that: Senators reviewed responses to the questions they submitted regarding the Science and Engineering Excellence (SEE) project. These were addressed as part of the business plan at the meeting of Senate on 2 May 2017. Council were reassured that Senate had conducted a comprehensive review and were supportive of the project.
115. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

Received the International Strategy Progress Report from Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Internationalisation & Engagement, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents F. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Received a PowerPoint presentation from Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Internationalisation & Engagement, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Copies of PowerPoint slides filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The priority for the University is stopping the decline in international student recruitment to avoid additional impact on the financial model. The University values diversity in the student population, international students are a key source of diversity as well as income.

2. A review of the detailed targets for the current recruitment year as well as future ambitions would be useful. The proportion and mix of international students required to achieve financial stability and cohort diversity relative to other Russell Group universities should be included. A plan of what is required to achieve this level of recruitment would be helpful. This information would enable progress to be tracked and areas of concern to be identified.

3. Analysis of international fees shows the University is one of the cheapest in the Russell Group. The international fees for 2018 onwards have been increased to place the University in a more advantageous position. The fee level, relative to competitors, would be reviewed regularly and scholarship schemes are being developed. Low fees can be perceived as low quality. A competitive fee should attract high quality students in greater volumes.

116. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

Received the Engagement Strategy Progress Report from Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Internationalisation & Engagement.

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

Received a PowerPoint presentation from Professor Richard Davies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Internationalisation & Engagement, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Copies of PowerPoint slides filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The Freedom City 2017 programme of events, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Dr Martin Luther King receiving an honorary degree from Newcastle, will include cultural, artistic and public engagement events. The University programme will include an honorary degree ceremony with esteemed individuals who have worked on the three themes highlighted in Dr King’s speech; war, poverty and racism. Freedom City 2017 will create a legacy programme around war, poverty and racism.

2. Engagement with business will improve as the PVC Business and Innovation portfolio develops. This will be further aided by the appointment of a new Director of the Business School. Members of Council will also be able to make connections on behalf of the University if strategic partners are shared.

3. In line with the refresh of the University vision and strategy, the revised engagement strategy will have place-based, international, business and voluntary, community and
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social enterprise strands. This will enable the University to connect with SMEs and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to increase community impact.

4. Engagement and Internationalisation needs to be a core activity for all staff. A mechanism, such as PDR, should enable the University to determine the extent to which individuals are engaging, for instance improving their own web visibility.

117. SCIENCE ENGINEERING & EXCELLENCE PROJECT

Received a comprehensive report submitted to Senate on 2 May 2017, together with an oral report on the Science Engineering & Excellence Project from Professor Phillip Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering, on behalf of Executive Board.

a) Received a report on the Science and Engineering Excellence project from Professor Phillip Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture & Engineering, on behalf of Executive Board.

b) Received a report on the academic rationale for the Science and Engineering Excellence project from Professor Phillip Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture & Engineering, on behalf of Executive Board.

c) Received a response to the questions submitted by Senators on the Science and Engineering Excellence project from Professor Phillip Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture & Engineering, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The substantial amount of time and consideration involved in compiling documents H-K.

2. Having considered the information, Senate voted and approved the project to progress without dissent. Members of Council were reassured that Senate had been thorough and that the responses provided more confidence in the project.

3. Executive Board has considered how improvements to performance monitoring information, including sector comparisons and trend data, can reduce the risk of the circumstances that led to the need for this project emerging without better warnings. This work will form part of the strategy and vision refresh.

4. It would be useful for members of Council to see how success of this project will be measured.

Resolved that Council requested more information on how success of this project will be measured. A set of meaningful targets and KPIs should be made available for the meeting on 10 July 2017.

118. SPORTS FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS CASE

Receive a revised business case for Sports Facilities Development (Cochrane Park/Henderson Hall) from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

1. The business case was approved by Council in July 2016 but has since evolved. Sport England were unable to support the proposal to remove the cricket provision and consequently planning permission would not be granted. An Outdoor Sports Facilities Working Group was established and reviewed the University’s outdoor sports facilities.

2. The project has expanded by 1.6m to include provision of a third artificial turf pitch at the Cochrane Park site (£0.6m), re-instatement of the cricket wicket (£0.1m), an ergo training facility/multi-use space in the pavilion (£0.6m) and sports drainage works to remaining grass pitches (£0.3m).

3. Given the extent of the revisions to this business case, there is a need to ensure a holistic approach to all business cases going forward.

4. The Redhall Drive site should be kept under review to maximise the potential from the asset. Given the proximity of the site to the University’s other outdoor sports facilities, the University should consider it part of one complete site rather than a separate asset.

Resolved that Council approved the amended business case at an increased cost of £5.991m.

119. FARRELL CENTRE BUSINESS CASE

Received a proposal is to establish a flagship University Centre around the archive of world-renowned architect Sir Terry Farrell from Professor Julie Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. Establishing a flagship University Centre around the archive of world-renowned architect Sir Terry Farrell will boost the national and international profile and audience of the city and the University’s architectural work. It will preserve and interpret the Farrell archive as a national resource for research, learning and public engagement.

2. The Farrell archive is a key part of the University archives strategy, building on award winning work and key academically excellent acquisitions.

3. More could be done to maximise the promotion and revenue opportunities that could be realised from high profile collections owned by the University.

Resolved that Council approved the expenditure of £3.475m on the redevelopment of the Claremont building and £464k on improvements to the Team Valley storage facility to provide suitable storage space for archive materials and to facilitate the acquisition of the Sir Terry Farrell Archive.

Resolved that Council agreed that fundraising towards the cost of the project takes place with the minimum target of £1m set by NU Advancement.

120. INNOVATION CENTRES BUSINESS CASE

Received a business case to approve the creation of a National Innovation Centre for Ageing (NICA) and a National Innovation Centre for Data (NICD) from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

1. The Government awarded NICA to Newcastle, overseen by the MRC. The University is working with the MRC to establish the Centre to deliver innovation in ageing and drive economic growth.

2. The Government awarded NICD to Newcastle, to be overseen via EPSRC, to respond to national economic needs and deliver economic prosperity and solutions, promoting innovation from research excellence. The NICD funding and cash flow has not yet been approved.

3. Recognised the University is proceeding at risk. Noted that the development is dependent on final execution of a funding agreement for NICD by EPSRC and the continuing funding support by the MRC.

4. The building project is contingent on both grants being received. A revised business case would be required if either of the grants is withdrawn to ensure the University maximises its footprint on Science Central and the level of investment reflects the opportunities available.

Resolved that Council approved the development of a National Innovation Centre, as the University’s third building on Science Central, at a total capital cost of £50.0m, £35.0m of which will be funded by BEIS via the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and £15.0m from University funds.

Resolved that Council approved investment of £20m over a ten year period for the establishment and operation of the National Innovation Centre for Ageing (NICA) and the National Innovation Centre for Data (NICD), of which £1.1m will be used for capital equipment.

Resolved that Council authorised the PVC Innovation and Business, as chair of the project steering group, and the Executive Director of Finance to execute any agreements required to enable these developments.

121. MAJORIE ROBINSON LIBRARY ROOMS BUSINESS CASE

Received a business case for the refurbishment of the Marjorie Robinson Library Rooms from Dr John Hogan, Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. Council approved the purchase of the building, now known as the Marjorie Robinson Library Rooms, in February 2014. In June 2015, when approval was granted for works to allow occupancy, it was noted that there were significant issues with the mechanical, electrical and plumbing services (MEP) which would need to be addressed.

2. The works will create 180 additional study spaces and office accommodation.

Resolved that Council approved the business case to progress the works to the Marjorie Robinson Library Rooms at a cost of £5.5m to ensure the space is fit to accommodate additional study space and services.
122. LED RETROFIT PROJECT BUSINESS CASE

Received a business case for a University-wide lighting and lighting controls upgrade from Professor Tony Stevenson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Executive Board. [Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. In 2008 The University established a Revolving Green Fund (RGF) with funding from Salix which is used to invest in carbon reduction measures. Salix has agreed to provide £1.2m match funding to enable a University-wide lighting and lighting control upgrade where all non-emergency lighting will be replaced with LED lighting by August 2020.

Resolved that Council approved the LED Retrofit Business Case at a cost of £1.2m (£400k per annum) to deliver energy efficiencies.

123. NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN BIOFILMS

Received a business case for a University bid for a BBSRC and Innovate UK bid to establish a National Centre for Knowledge and Innovation in Biofilms from Professor Phillip Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering, on behalf of Executive Board. [Circulated with the agenda as Document Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Council approved the submission of a University bid to establish a National Centre for Knowledge and Innovation in Biofilms and a commitment of £3.7 if the bid is successful.

Resolved that Chair of Council approved the submission of bid on behalf of Council to meet the submission deadline of 24 May 2017, as agreed at the meeting of Council held on 3 April 2017.

124. REPORT FORM AUDIT, RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

A report was received from the meeting of Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee held on 26 April 2017. [Circulated with the agenda as Document R. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee expressed concerned regarding the University’s preparedness to respond efficiently to large and small scale cyber threats and that systems and processes are not sufficiently robust.

Resolved that Council approved the audit fee for the 2017 year end of £82,175 (including overseas audit fees).

125. CYBER PREPAREDNESS REPORT

Received a response to the Cyber Preparedness Internal Audit report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board. [Circulated with the agenda as Document S. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
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Noted that:

1. The University’s business required a high level of openness to facilitate the creation and sharing of knowledge. Where there is a need for tighter control, for example on corporate data there are additional processes in place.

2. Despite being unaffected by the recent global malware attack, there are known vulnerabilities in this area which are being addressed. The greatest vulnerability is through the behaviours of individuals with access to systems.

3. Council was concerned about the University’s vulnerabilities. It would be necessary to take more actions to reduce the risk of cyber-attacks. The University will need to implement further changes in protocols and processes.

Resolved that Council requested a further update on the University’s approach to cyber-preparedness for the meeting on 10 July 2017.

126. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of Nominations Committee held on 8 May 2017.

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

Noted that:

1. Members of Council will be asked to express an interest in representing Council on the Great North Museum Board, to replace Mr Mark I’Anson who will step down 31 July 2017.

Resolved that

(i) Council approve the re-appointment of the following as members of Council from 1 August 2017 until 31 July 2020:

   Mr Jeff McIntosh
   Mrs Heidi Mottram
   Ms Vicky Wright

(ii) Council approve the appointment of the following as members of Council from 1 August 2017 until 31 July 2020, subject to further discussions with individuals and confirmation of their willingness to serve:

   Sir Mike Rawlins
   Ms Adrienne McFarland
   Ms Claire Morgan

(iii) Council approve the following appointments/re-appointments:

   • Professor Andrew Newman to be re-appointed as Chair of Health and Safety Committee from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.

   • Mrs Jacqui Henderson to be appointed as a Council appointed member of Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.

   • Mr Jeff McIntosh to be re-appointed as a member of Finance Committee from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.
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- Mr Neil Braithwaite to be re-appointed as a member of Health and Safety Committee from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.
- Ms Vicky Wright to be re-appointed and Ms Adrienne McFarland to be appointed as members of Remuneration Committee from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.
- Professor Tom Lennard to be re-appointed as a member of Appeals Panel for Promotions from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.
- Dr Jonathan Galloway, Professor Gwyneth Doherty-Sneddon and Professor Jelena Mann to be appointed as members of Review of Academic Staff Committee from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.

127. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY/STUDENTS’ UNION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of the University/Students’ Union Partnership Committee held on 17 March 2017.

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

Noted that:

1. Reported that NUSU are in a good financial position and expect to be in surplus by the end of the 2016/17 academic year despite changes in student cultures which have presented some challenges.

2. The NUSU Sabbatical Officers for 2016/17 have been exceptional. They are a credit to the student body, NUSU and the University.

128. HEFCE’S ANNUAL PROVIDER REVIEW PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Received the Annual Provider Review Preliminary Assessment provided by HEFCE.

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

129. FEES SCHEDULE

Council approved the fees schedule for 2017-18 which has been endorsed by Executive Board. Senate approved the fees schedule at its meeting on 2 May 2017, subject to the approval of Council.

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

130. FRAUD, CORRUPTION, BRIBERY AND FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Council approved the Fraud, Corruption, Bribery and Financial Misconduct Policy and Procedure in the attached paper by Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board. The Policy has been comprehensively updated but follows the same principles and key processes in the previous document.

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

131. DATES OF MEETING 2017-18

Council will meet on the following dates in 2017-18:

2.00pm – 5.00pm  Monday 16 October 2017
2.00pm – 5.00pm  Monday 11 December 2017
2.00pm – 5.00pm          Monday 19 February 2018
10.30am – 1.00pm         Monday 16 April 2018 (followed by lunch)
1.45pm – 5.00pm          Monday 16 April 2018 (Joint meeting of Council and Senate)
2.00pm – 5.00pm          Monday 11 June 2018
2.00pm – 5.00pm          Monday 16 July 2018 (to be followed by a drinks reception/dinner)

132. CHAIR’S CIRCULAR

The Chair’s circular of routine business was sent to members on 10 May 2017. No issues on the circular were raised by members and the business was, therefore, deemed to have been approved by Council. The approved business will be recorded formally in the Council Minutes and a copy will be filed in the Minute Book.