NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL
24 October 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 Liam Dale (Education Officer), 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), Mr Simon Pleydell, Ms Kate Priestley and Mr Ian Shott.

In attendance: Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Chris Day, Professor Charles Harvey, 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).

MINUTES

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

2. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Dr Peter Andras, Professor Vicki Bruce, Mr Jeff McIntosh, Mrs Heidi Mottram, Ms Laura Perry and Mr Liam Dale to their first meeting of Council.

The Vice Chair welcomed Mr Mark I’Anson to his first meeting as Chair of Council.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 11 July 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed.

4. 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:

1. The Fire and Evacuation procedures within the Business School were to be reviewed by the Fire Safety Advisor working with the Estates team to ensure correct evacuation processes were in place.

2. The Emergency Planning Team was activated after an evacuation from several University buildings on 20 September 2011 following a gas leak, which was later discovered to be off campus. The evacuation process was dealt with promptly and communicated to staff effectively.
5. **MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Received a business tracking form.

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

6. **CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

   (i) **Introductory Comments**

       The Chair made some introductory comments, expressing his appreciation of being appointed as Chair at an important period for all universities. He stressed his desire to conduct business in an informal but rigorous manner.

   (ii) **Council Induction Programme**

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

   (iii) **Leadership Foundation Governor Development Programme**

       Reported that the President of the Students’ Union attended the Leadership Foundation Governor Development Programme in London on 1 September 2011, which focussed on the role of student governor. The seminar included a series of workshops and an opportunity to network with colleagues.

   (iv) **Government Policy**

       The Chair had attended a recent CUC meeting where David Willets had spoken. Among other things, the Minister had emphasised the government’s determination to create a market for home undergraduates.

7. **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

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

   (i) **Deaths**

       Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.

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

   (ii) **White Paper**

       The University had made formal responses to the White Paper, the BIS technical consultation and the HEFCE consultation on student numbers, which are available on request.

   (iii) **Pay and Pensions**

       Noted that:

       1. The employers (UCEA) had made a final offer of £150 on all points on the common pay spine. This is in addition to the incremental rises that many staff are likely to
receive. It was understood that UCU members had voted in favour of this proposal although UCU had not yet formally accepted the offer.

2. The UCU position regarding a ‘work to rule’ by members who are in dispute over the changes to pensions arrangements, does not as yet appear to have had any negative impact on students.

(iv) Appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for SAGE

Professor Steve Homans had been appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Science, Agriculture & Engineering from 1 January 2012.

(v) Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2011-12

Newcastle University had been placed in the top 150 of the world’s best universities. It had been ranked in 146th equal position in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2011-12, climbing six places from its position in last year’s survey. It also placed Newcastle equal 56th in Europe.

(vi) Late News

Noted that consideration of the possibility of the University establishing a base in London was to be discussed further by Executive Board.

8. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2011: RESULTS

Received a paper from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Received an extract from the draft Senate Minutes of 4 October 2011 on Senate’s consideration of this item.

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

Noted that:

1. For the first time in 2011, HEFCE had published an institutional-level ‘benchmark’ or target satisfaction score for Question 22. This benchmark had been calculated on the specific mix of students and subject areas at each University. Newcastle’s benchmark of 85% satisfaction meant that we had exceeded our benchmark by 4 points. The University’s KPI for Question 22 was set at 90% for every programme.

2. Assessment and Feedback remained lower than the HEI sector average. Newcastle’s score had improved by 3% on the previous year at 66%, but still remained 2% lower than the sector average.

3. Improvements were being made in IT facilities for students and a plan was in place to extend the Library opening hours for student access.

4. NSS Champions within Schools/Institutes encourage students to take part in the survey.

5. As part of the Council Induction programme, Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, would explain the Key Information Set to Council members and how the NSS would feed into this at her session on 14 November 2011.
6. From 2012 there would be an additional question on the NSS asking to what extent students are satisfied with their Students’ Unions.

9. **AAB+ STRATEGY**

Received a report from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching on behalf of the Executive Board.

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

Received an extract from the draft Senate Minutes of 4 October 2011 on Senate’s consideration of this item.

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

_Documents F and G are ‘commercial in confidence’ and their contents should not be disclosed to any person who is not a member of Council._

Noted that:

1. For 2012 entry each university will be set a ‘core’ quota of home (UK and EU) undergraduate student places for students who could enter with grades below AAB or equivalent. Recruitment of students in excess of the quota would incur a penalty.

2. Whilst the overall quota for Newcastle University for all new undergraduate for 2011 entry was 3863, current estimates of the percentage of students entering Newcastle University with grades AAB or above in 2010 would mean that the University’s ‘core’ quota could be reduced to 1500. All other entrants would be required to enter with AAB or better or equivalent.

3. The University's competitive strategy in response to these changes, which had been agreed at Executive Board, was as follows:

   a) To defend and increase recruitment of students achieving AAB+.
   b) To fill its allocated core quota at the highest standard appropriate to the market for specific subjects.
   c) To specify targets to ensure widening participation targets were met.

4. Each Faculty would be responsible for the appropriate allocation of core quota to individual Schools/subjects, specifically agreeing:

   a) Targets for recruitment/growth at AAB+
   b) Quota for sub-AAB recruitment
   c) Targets to protect and strengthen the WP performance and progress

5. During the summer period of 2011 the University had included AAB in the published offer as standard. Only 28 (16%) of our degrees now publicise grade requirements lower than AAB.

6. An Undergraduate Admissions Monitoring Group would report regularly to Executive Board on the recruitment process.

7. In relation to merit and recruitment incentives, each Faculty had been asked to identify Schools which would benefit from a University Scholarship Scheme and for this to be built into the recruitment strategy. The intention is to build up a portfolio of scholarship and bursary offerings designed to enhance our academic reputation.
10. PROJECT 2012 : PROGRESS REPORT

Received a paper from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources on behalf of the Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Document H is classified as ‘commercial in confidence’ and its contents should not be disclosed to any person who is not a member of Council.

Resolved that:

(i) Student recruitment be added to the Project 2012 Scorecard.

(ii) The Scorecard be presented to Council at every meeting to review the progress made.

(iii) Council would discuss the strategy for improvements to student accommodation at its meeting on 12 December 2011.

(iv) Council members be invited to attend the Undergraduate Open Days on Friday 29 and Saturday 30 June 2012 and Saturday 29 September 2012.

11. REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL PROCESS WORKING GROUP

Considered a report from the Council Process Working Group.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. The recommendations from the Council Process Working Group were made in the spirit of encouraging a culture of openness, transparency and cooperation between Council members and Executive Board.

2. It was agreed that Council should continue to meet six times per year with the continued possibility of one meeting being held jointly with Senate.

3. Council agreed that the pattern of meetings should have no gap of a significantly longer period than two months in the annual cycle of meetings.

4. The use of a ‘Chair’s Circular’ was approved as a device by which unexceptional issues could be circulated between meetings with an invitation to raise any issues with the Chair. It would be assumed that silence from members of Council would mean consent and the Chair would approve the business. The approved business would be recorded formally in the Council minutes.

Resolved that Council approve the recommendations in the report from the Council Process Working Group:

1. Facilitate more informal mechanisms for Council/Executive interaction.

2. Increase awareness of Council’s Role and Responsibilities throughout the University.

3. Continue to make use of Special Interest Groups.
4. The pattern of Council meetings to be altered to allow regular meeting every two months or to tie in with the quarterly management accounts.

5. Introduce mechanisms to allow Council to approve routine business between meetings.

6. Council to be kept up to date on developments within the University by more regular circulation of information between Council meetings.

7. Keep agendas as short as possible to focus on key strategic issues.

8. Continue efforts to allow strategic discussion of key issues at as early a stage as possible.

9. Ensure all papers to Council are timely, as concise as possible and structured to stimulate forward looking discussion.

10. Limit numbers of people in Council meeting room.

11. Adopt a set of principles for Council to base its work on.

12. Ensure a clear record of decisions delegated to the Chair, the decisions duly made, with reports back to the following meeting.

13. Be clear about our expectations of Council members.

12. SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

Considered an oral recommendation from the Chair for the establishment of two new SIGs. One to help update the Vision 2021 Strategy, comprising the chairs of Council Committees and one to develop the Internationalisation Strategy.

Resolved that:

(i) The above recommendation be approved.

(ii) The membership of the SIG for the Internationalisation Strategy would include Mr Robert Hull.

(iii) Any member who was interested in serving on the SIG for the Internationalisation Strategy should inform the Chair or the Registrar.

13. ANNUAL REPORTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Received a report from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

14. ANNUAL REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

Considered the Annual Report of Audit Committee to Council for 2010-11.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted the opinion of Audit Committee that:
On the basis of the information presented to Audit Committee by University management, Internal Audit, PricewaterhouseCoopers and other sources, and the discussion and review of that information with these groups, it is Audit Committee’s opinion that the University’s arrangements for:

• risk management;
• internal control;
• corporate governance;
• economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money); and
• the management and quality assurance of data submitted to HESA and to HEFCE and other funding bodies

are generally adequate and effective and can be relied upon by Council.”

Resolved that, subject to the following amendments, Council approve the Audit Committee Annual Report 2010-11:-

(i) 5.9 – Delete September 2010 and substitute September 2011

(ii) 9.3 – Include Finance Committee in the first sentence.

(iii) Terms of Reference para 4.p – Remove ‘elements of’ from the first sentence.

15. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2010-11

(i) Going Concern

Received a paper from the Executive Director of Finance.

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

Resolved that Council approve the following recommendation from Executive Board that:

“Council confirms that it has reasonable expectation that the University has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis for preparing the accounts.”

(ii) Financial Statements

Considered:

(a) The audited consolidated Financial Statements of the University for the financial year ended 31 July 2011.

(b) The commentary to the accounts.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents N and O. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that Council approve the recommendation of Audit Committee that it approve the audited consolidated Financial Statements of the University for the financial year ended 31 July 2011.
16. **FINANCIAL FORECASTS 2011**

Considered a report from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance on behalf of Executive Board.

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

*Resolved that the Financial Forecasts 2011 be approved and forwarded to HEFCE.*

17. **REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Considered a report from the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 4 October 2011.

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

Noted that while most University spin off companies reported losses in their early years, this was a normal expectation and there was little to no liability to the University.

**Financial Regulations**

*Resolved that Council approve revisions to the Financial Regulations as set out in Appendix II to Document Q.*

Council noted the remaining items within the report.

18. **REPORTS FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Considered reports from the meetings of Audit Committee held on 21 July 2011 and 7 October 2011.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents R and S. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(i) **Risk Management**

Noted that Audit Committee had stressed that where controls were stated as being in place and working effectively, there must be evidence to support this. The University’s risk owners were currently working through this and a progress report would be made to Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 November.

(ii) **Audit Committee’s Terms of Reference**

Reported that the CUC Handbook for Members of Audit Committees stated that ‘to ensure that audit committee effectiveness is maintained and improved, the audit committee and the governing body should review and formally approve the committee’s terms of reference on an annual basis. A robust annual assessment of the audit committee’s responsibilities and its terms of reference should highlight any changes to the institution’s circumstances and any new regulations or leading practices that may affect the committee’s responsibilities.’

Considered amendments to the membership and terms of reference of Audit Committee.

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

*Resolved that the proposed amendments to the membership and terms of reference of Audit Committee be approved subject to the amendment of 4 (p) to delete the words ‘consider elements of’ in the first sentence.*
(iii) Value for Money 2010-11
Considered a report on Value for Money 2010-11, prepared by Dr John Hogan, Registrar.
[Circulated with the Agenda as Document U. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Resolved that future versions of the report should seek to provide more information on Value for Money issues within academic units.

(iv) Science City
Resolved that the recommendation of Audit Committee that, in future, in place of the Science City reports that were currently submitted to every meeting, Council should receive a six monthly update and undertake a strategic discussion of the project on an annual basis be approved.

19. NEWCASTLE SCIENCE CITY
Received an oral update from Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation.

Noted that:
(i) the proposed changes to the company structure and organisation.
(ii) the proposals for academic developments at science central were being prepared and would be brought to Council.

20. SOCIETAL CHALLENGE THEMES – SOCIAL RENEWAL: ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RENEWAL AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR.
Considered a report from Professor Charles Harvey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor HaSS on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document V. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Resolved that Council approve the establishment of the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal from 1 January 2012 for a period of 5 years in the first instance and the appointment of a Director for that same period, subject to the agreement of Senate.

21. NUMed, MALAYSIA
‘Commercial in confidence’ Minute, filed in the Minute Book.

22. FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES : OUTCOME OF RESTRUCTURING
Received a report from Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document Y. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

23. COHERENT CAMPUS
Received a progress report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document Z. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
A Coherent Campus map was tabled at the meeting.

[Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The Coherent Campus initiative was launched in July 2008 following a ‘Think Tank’ workshop hosted by the Vice-Chancellor. The aim was to improve the spaces between buildings to create a sense of place that was welcoming, with well designed, well linked social spaces. The campus aimed to be permeable, pedestrian and cyclist friendly, safe, clean and tidy, visually recognisable, clearly defined and environmentally sustainable.

2. The report outlined the progress that had been made in the first three years against the Action Plan targets and flagged up the priorities for 2011/12 that included the creation of a new Student Forum, revealing the fine south elevation and tower of the Armstrong Building and reconnecting it with the city through views and physically. Ultimately new pedestrian routes and an accessible entrance from the Armstrong Courtyard would link it with the Students’ Union Building and King’s Gate.

24. **HEFCE SINGLE CONVERSATION**

Reported that Audit Committee had considered the Internal Audit Annual report 2010-11 prepared by Mrs Juliet Simpson, Head of Internal Audit, and had resolved that the Report be reported to Council.

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

Received:


[Circulated with the agenda as Documents BB and CC. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

25. **DISPOSALS : HAYMARKET/BARRAS FRONTAGE PROPERTIES**

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

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

Resolved that:

(i) **Council approve the demolition of the Line East Building following the termination of the existing lease with Balfour Beatty.**

(ii) **Council approve the sale of the Bruce Building on the terms reported at the meeting and delegate authority to Ms Clare Rogers, Director of Estates and Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance to execute any agreements necessary to complete the sale of the building.**

26. **NAMING OF INTO BUILDINGS**

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

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

(i) The INTO teaching building be named ‘The INTO Building’.

(ii) The INTO accommodation building located on St Thomas’ Street be named ‘Joseph Cowen Halls’.

(iii) The INTO accommodation blocks situated next to the Music Studios be named ‘Bernicia Halls’.

27. SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2011-12

Received the business schedule for the meetings of Senate and Council 2011-12
[Circulated with the agenda as Document FF. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that any comments on the list of Council items should be sent to Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

28. STATEMENT OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Received Council Statement of Primary Responsibilities.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document GG. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

29. DELEGATION OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

Received Council’s Delegation of Power and Authority document.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document HH. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

30. MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL

Received the membership of Council 2011-12
[Circulated with the agenda as Document JJ. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Reported that the Chair of Council, acting on behalf of Council after consultation with Nominations Committee, had approved the appointment of a new lay member of Council, Mr Jeff McIntosh, with immediate effect to 31 July 2014.

31. PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR SAGE

Reported that, in accordance with agreed procedures, the Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of Senate and the Chair of Council, acting on behalf of Council, had approved the recommendation in the report from the joint Selection Committee for the appointments of a Pro-Vice Chancellor-SAgE.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document KK. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

32. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURE FOR THE AWARD OF ASSOCIATE, VISITING AND GUEST STATUS

Received updated guidelines and procedures approved by Staff Committee and Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document LL. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
33. **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 Chair of Council on behalf of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.

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