NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL

26 October 2009

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

In attendance: Professor C Harvey, Professor O R Hinton, Professor A C Stevenson, Professor E Ritchie 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) and Miss E M Niven (Administrative Officer).

M I N U T E S

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms E Budge (Education Officer, Union Society) and Ms A Georgiou (President, Union Society) declared an interest in relation to item 14, Appendix 3 to Document K – the refurbishment of the Union Society building.

Mr P M Johnson declared an interest in relation to item 15, Report from Finance Committee, Document L, item 1 – Insurance, as he was a non-executive director of Sunderland Marine Mutual Insurance Co. Ltd. which provided insurance cover for the Bernicia, the University’s research ship.

2. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Professor David Manning, Mr Simon Pallett, Professor David Parker, Ms Emma Budge and Ms Andi Georgiou to their first meeting of Council.

3. MINUTES

The Chairman had requested an amendment to the minutes to include the names of each of the retiring members.

Subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 13 July 2009 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. Details of the various forms of support available in areas such as dignity at work, financial support and stress would shortly be circulated to all staff.

2. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) was soon to undertake a routine visit to the University.

3. Council had been informed at previous meetings that the University was in the process of challenging an improvement notice which it had received from the HSE. An industrial tribunal had been scheduled but it had been delayed due to a late response from the HSE.

4. To help ease the pressure of business, it was suggested that the health and safety reports could be presented twice a year rather than on a quarterly basis.

Sir Miles Irving also reported that the Annual Report from Safety Committee was in progress and would be presented to the meeting of Council on 8 February 2010.

5. **MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

   **Progress of business**

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

   **Effectiveness of Council and Members of Council 2008-09**

   Members who had not completed their questionnaire were asked to submit it to the Governance Office.

   **Research and Innovation Strategy**

   There had been a small amendment to the Research and Innovation Strategy following its consideration by Senate on 21 July 2009. The Chairman had approved this amendment and had now signed off the strategy as complete on behalf of Council.

6. **CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS**

   **Effectiveness Review of Council**

   It was the Committee of University Chairs’ recommendation that, not less than every five years, the governing body should undertake ‘a formal and rigorous evaluation of its own effectiveness, and that of its committees, and ensure that a parallel review is undertaken of the senate/academic board and its committees’. The last review was completed in December 2005; the next review should, therefore, be undertaken during 2010. It was necessary to determine how the review was to be conducted and whether external support was required. Some of the key issues would be the size of Council, the working and remit of its sub-committees and the relationship with Executive Board and Senate. Members of Council were invited to submit their views on the review process to the Chairman and a further discussion would take place at the next meeting of Council.
International Association of University Governing Bodies

The Chairman had attended the 3rd meeting of the International Association of University Governing Bodies which had taken place in Vienna in September. Concern over future funding arrangements was a common theme which had emerged from the discussions. Copies of the slides circulated at the meeting could be obtained from the Governance Office.

Committee of University Chairs

The Chairman had recently attended the CUC’s bi-annual meeting at which the subject of pay and pensions had been discussed. It had been considered that the current national pay arrangement might not be sustainable and it had been agreed that there was a need for improved dialogue on this issue via university governing bodies. The issue of the sustainability of the current pension arrangements could prove even more challenging.

HEFCE

The Chairman had recently become a member of a committee established by the HEFCE to review its own effectiveness.

University Challenge

The President of the Union Society informed Council members that heats were to take place for the next series of the BBC’s University Challenge on 2 & 3 November. Academic members were invited to publicise the heats to students within their schools.

Taking the Next Step Brochure

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching & Learning presented Council members with a brochure entitled ‘Taking the Next Step’. The brochure aimed to promote examples of the University’s continuing professional development opportunities, following recent refinement of strategy in this area.

Timing of Council

To help ease the pressure of business in future, the Chairman and the Registrar were to considering reducing the time between the July meeting of Council and the first meeting in the new academic year. Members were invited to submit suggestions of how business could be better managed to the Chairman.

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) Pay negotiations

Received an oral update from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources.

Noted that:

Further meetings of the New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (New JNCHES) were planned for early November. Job security remained a key concern for the unions who were seeking an agreement at a national level. A settlement remained unlikely at this stage.

(iii) Head’s Forum

A recent Heads’ Forum had considered the issue of ‘Compliance, process efficiencies and freeing up academic time’. This discussion had been partly instigated by Audit Committee’s concern over the lack of compliance with administrative procedures identified by the audits of academic and service units. Academics had also highlighted the importance of “prime thinking time (PTT)”. It had been agreed that procedures would be reviewed to ensure that it was possible for academic staff to meet their administrative responsibilities whilst also providing them with sufficient time to focus on their teaching and research activities.

(iv) Committees of Council

At its next meeting, Council would receive a proposal on the future operation of Equity Committee.

(v) Chancellor’s Inauguration

Professor Sir Liam Donaldson’s inauguration would take place on 7 December 2009. It was customary for a new Chancellor to nominate candidates for Honorary Degrees which would be awarded as part of the inauguration ceremony.

Professor Sir Liam Donaldson had submitted his nominations and the following people had accepted the invitation to be awarded the degrees shown:

- Mr Fergus Walsh, BBC’s senior medical correspondent (Doctor of Civil Law)
- Mr Alan Shearer OBE, sportsman (Doctor of Civil Law)
- Ms Karen Davis, President of the Commonwealth Fund (Doctor of Civil Law)
- Lord Darzi, leading academic surgeon and former parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department of Health

(vi) Internationalisation

The Vice-Chancellor had recently returned from a visit to Japan and China. It was noted that the issues which the UK was facing in relation to its ageing population, were shared by the population of Japan, and this presented good collaboration opportunities. Other collaboration prospects had also been identified during a visit to Xiamen University, one of the top 20 institutions in China.
8. **FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Considered reports from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance on behalf of Executive Board and Finance Committee.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Documents D and E. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. The Financial Statements demonstrated that 2008/09 had been a good year for the University. A 7% growth in income had been achieved and the University had good surpluses and strong cash balances.

2. Good results had been achieved in the University’s areas of core activity. The University had achieved a 30% success rate for its research applications, compared with a national average of 20%. International recruitment targets had also been exceeded.

3. The University had performed well in terms of Universities UK’s (UUK) Security Index for 2007/08, and it was now rated in the second quartile and on a rising trend. The bottom three institutions in this index were Leeds Metropolitan, Cumbria and Sunderland.

4. Newcastle’s financial performance compared favourably with other institutions in the Russell Group, being rated in the top quartile for cost control, surplus and cash balances, although it was in the bottom quartile for reserves. The University’s performance in terms of income growth had been poor in the past but this was an area where it had started to improve.

5. The University was ranked third lowest in the Russell Group in terms of pay as a percentage of income. Non-pay as a percentage of income (e.g. travel and expenses, maintenance and utilities) was an area where significant improvements could be made. The University’s poor performance in this area was partly due to its recent investment in its estate, but it needed to make improvements in areas of process and procurement efficiency.

6. The University had lost market share in terms of research income in the early years of the current decade but it was beginning to gain ground once more and it was expected to exceed the market trend during the next academic year.

7. The University’s position in the National Student Survey (NSS) had improved over the last three years. The increase in the tuition fee had contributed significantly to the University’s surplus in 2008/09. International student recruitment and the satisfaction of home students, as represented by the results from the NSS, would be key to the University’s future financial performance.

8. The University’s auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, had identified that the University was ranked sixth in the sector on surpluses but had noted that pensions was an area of high risk. The Retirement Benefit Plan (1971), the University’s local scheme, had recorded a deficit of £15m. Had the University been required to include the proportion of the liability arising from the University Superannuation Scheme (USS), the national scheme, on its balance sheet, it would have produced a large deficit.

9. The University had inherited weak reserves from the 1990s and this would continue to be an issue into the future. Universities UK anticipated a 13.5% reduction in government funding in
real terms over the next three years. The University had based its model on a 12% cut in funding. The HEFCE was expected to introduce more hypothecated funding, reduce capital funds and it was possible that it would reduce the funding it made available for old and historic buildings, which would impact upon the University.

10. Due to the uncertain environment in which the University would be operating during the next few years, it would be important for an effective means of communication to be established with staff and with external stakeholders. Due to the importance of international student recruitment, INTO would remain a critical driver. Shared services would be another area where improvements could be made. Mergers of London-based institutions were to be expected.

11. Cuts in public spending of between 15-20% had been mentioned. It was possible that, following the election, the incoming administration could impose in-year cuts. It was suggested that the University should consider how it would deal with such an eventuality.

12. Due to the strong position of the University’s finances, it was suggested that it could be well placed to make strategic moves which other institutions were unable to undertake at the present time.

13. The possibility of generating efficiencies in areas of non-pay expenditure had been raised but Council had yet to receive details of how this would could be achieved.

14. It was thought that the next 12 months would be particularly difficult and the 15% cut in public funding which had been discussed was considered to be a conservative estimate. A number of the capital projects which Council would be considering later on the agenda required funding to be provided by external bodies and the University needed to be confident that this funding would still be available at a later date.

15. Consideration should be given to holding discussions with the Conservatives given the uncertainty over who was likely to win the forthcoming general election.

16. Carbon reduction was becoming a bigger issue for the HEFCE but it was noted that this did not feature in the financial strategy documents.

17. It was considered to be a good time for the University to invest in its staff due to the strength of its finances. Research staff were responsible for generating a significant source of income for the University and it was suggested that the University should focus new staff on areas where new business could be developed. Consideration could also be giving to inviting successful units from other institutions to join the University.

18. It was proposed that more scenario planning could be conducted to ensure the University was prepared for a pay settlement and RPI which was higher than expected. The cost of living was expected to increase rapidly in the near future and it was important for the University to prepare a range of mitigating actions to deal with various scenarios.

19. Continuing to motivate people to generate income growth would be essential during the current climate and it was suggested that the University should prepare a narrative for staff that would inspire them during the difficult financial times.
20. Investing in equipment to enable staff to compete with other institutions was crucial. It was noted that some staff had been discouraged from submitting certain research applications due to a lack of essential equipment.

21. The capital funding stream provided by the HEFCE would come under pressure. Due to the uncertainty of future public spending priorities, it was suggested that the University should consider approaching the private sector for an alternative source of funding.

22. The target which the University had set itself of achieving an overall satisfaction rating of 90% in all subject areas in the NSS was considered to be one which should be progressed urgently. It was thought that this target was achievable within 5 to 6 academic years and in many cases it was a case of changing the mindset of staff, rather than increasing resources. Strong leadership was required from the Heads of the Academic Units. The results from the NSS had been examined and consideration was to be given to overall structures and processes, such as timetabling, to identify areas where improvements could be made. There were important issues relating to value for money in relation to under-performance in the NSS.

23. Due to the importance of the income from international students, consideration could be given to investing in areas which were attractive to this group of students. There were sensitive issues relating to the proportion of overseas students on certain programmes. It was important to be aware that research students also consulted the teaching performance league tables when considering which university to apply to.

24. Due to the decline in the number of 18 year old home students over the next decade, a failure to provide a good student experience would impact significantly on the University’s financial performance.

25. Collaboration was becoming particularly important for the research councils, for example, this could have advantages in doctoral training. It was important for the University to clearly articulate its views on collaboration with other institutions.

26. An increase in tuition fees might lead to a more market-based system. It was suggested that University should undertake scenario planning for this eventuality.

27. The Financial Strategy was an over-arching document which was not intended to provide a high level of detail. The University was required to prepare a five-year financial forecast for HEFCE and this document presented the best estimate of the University’s future position, based on available information.

**Resolved that:**

(i) Executive Board be asked to give consideration to the comments raised during the above discussion.

(ii) The draft Financial Strategy, as outlined in Document D, be approved.

(iii) The five year financial forecast included in Appendix 1 of Document E be approved.
9. **SOCIETAL CHALLENGE THEMES**

Considered a report from Professor Nick Wright on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the Agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that:

1. 2009/10 was the launch year for the first societal challenge theme – ‘Changing Age’. A brochure had been produced for an internal audience and a number of internal events would take place before Christmas. External events were planned from the start of the New Year and an external brochure was to be prepared. It was important to stress that the launch year represented the beginning of a theme, rather than the end.

2. The theme that was proposed for 2011 was Sustainability, although it might be renamed ‘Sustainability Science’. This proposed area compared well against the criteria that had been established for the Societal Challenge Themes. Whilst it was not an area in which the University had ‘developed and sustained genuine engagement over many years’ pockets of good practice did exist across the University. It was noted that the Institute for Research on Environment and Sustainability (IRES) already had 400 members who were committed to the sustainability theme.

3. The Sustainability Science theme could be used as a means of helping to link a number of the University’s strategies. It would also demonstrate that the University was adopting a strategy of investment which was unusual in the sector. It would help to identify the University’s academic focus areas and also help to distinguish it from its competitors.

4. It was noted that this was an idea on which Council’s approval in principle was being sought. Once this was obtained, Council would receive further details as the theme was developed.

5. It was still necessary to prepare a coherent plan for Science City and the Science Central site and the Sustainability Science theme provided a good opportunity for this. Instead of being used for a range of scientific disciplines, it was proposed that the site could be developed around the single theme of sustainability. This would require the University to fund-raise for the capital investment.

6. Concerns were raised over the possible connection between the theme of sustainability and a building. It was important to be aware of the ethical questions that this would raise. It would be necessary to ensure the vision behind the proposal was clearly communicated and that the scope and direction of the research undertaken was clearly defined.

7. It was necessary to ensure that the possible renaming of the theme as ‘Sustainability Science’ did not reduce the possibility of participation from humanities and social science disciplines. How the University chose to define ‘Sustainability Science’ would require much discussion. It was suggested that a think tank should take place to consider these issues.

8. The University’s proposal would be presented to the Science City Board at a meeting on 10 December 2009.

**Resolved that, subject to any comments from Senate, the following proposals be approved:**
(i) **The University adopt Sustainability as the second societal challenge theme under the leadership of the SAgE Faculty.**

(ii) **The Energy and Environment theme of Newcastle Science City be progressed in the context of Sustainability.**

(iii) **An outline plan be developed for a Sustainability infrastructure and support arrangements on Science Central in conjunction with the overall Estate Strategy.**

(iv) **The University develop an outline plan for the Sustainability theme. This report should be presented at a future meeting of Council to allow further discussion to take place.**

10. **EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL 2008-09**

Received a report prepared by Dr John Hogan, Registrar and approved by the Chairman of Council.

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

After noting that the Chairman was to meet with the Vice-Chancellor to discuss the issues raised in the report and also to consider how to maximise the effectiveness of Council’s sub-committees.

**Resolved that Council would consider the issue of its effectiveness following the Chairman’s meeting with the Vice-Chancellor.**

11. **STATEMENT OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Received Council’s Statement of Primary Responsibilities. This Statement was produced in accordance with the CUC Governance Code of Practice and was agreed by Council in July 2005. It was also published on the University’s governance website.

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

Noted that Council’s Statement of Primary Responsibilities would be reconsidered during the effectiveness review planned for 2010.

12. **HEFCE ‘SINGLE CONVERSATION’**

Considered a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

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

After noting that:

1. A number of the annexes contained within Document J required the formal approval of Council before they could be submitted to HEFCE.

2. It was possible that Item 13, in Annex I could be amended and Council was asked to delegate authority to the Chairman, the Honorary Treasurer and the Deputy Chairmen to sign off the final version once it had been prepared.

3. It was noted that Annex H was dated December 2008 and it was agreed this should be amended.
4. In Annex J – the Vice-Chancellor’s Annual Assurance Return – it was noted that HEFCE had been informed of two fraud cases and confirmation of these cases was required.

[Secretary’s note: One of these was the exclusion of 46 overseas students following an inquiry into fraudulent applications and forged / altered entry qualifications. The second notification was made in September 2008 following an investigation of alleged fraud by an honorary member of University staff during the period 1997-2008. As a result of ongoing legal proceedings, Council had not been notified of this case, although the Chairman of Council and Audit Committee had been informed, as required under the HEFCE Code of Practice.]

5. The Chairman of Audit Committee drew Council’s attention to Annex C to Document J. Testing had taken place throughout the year which had identified that the Internal Audit service was effective and provided good value for money. The number of audit days worked by the Internal Audit service compared favourably with the audit services provided at other institutions. It was suggested that this should provide Council with a satisfactory level of assurance.

Resolved that:

(i) The Single Conversation return Document J be approved, subject to the Chairman, the Honorary Treasurer and the Deputy Chairmen being granted delegated authority to sign off on any final amendments.


(iii) The audited consolidated Financial Statements of Newcastle University for the financial year ended 31 July 2009 be approved. [Annex E to Document J.]

(iv) The Financial Forecasts 2009 be approved and forwarded to HEFCE. [Annex G to Document J.]

(v) The Corporate Planning Statement 2009 be approved and forwarded to HEFCE. [Annex H to Document J.]

The remaining items in the report were noted.

13. ESTATES PROJECTS UPDATE

Considered a report from Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. Document K provided a summary of five capital cases, some of which had previously been considered by Council and others which were being introduced for the first time.

2. The 2007 Capital Plan had included the proposed refurbishment of Henderson Hall but this had proven to be uneconomic and the funding for this project was to be transferred to other residential refurbishments.
3. It had been decided that, as Kensington Terrace and Park Terrace were integrated within the campus, it was important for the University to retain control of these sites. It was proposed that Kensington Terrace should be converted into student residences and that Park Terrace should be demolished and replaced with a new build, which would also provide student residences. The University was engaged in positive discussions with the City Council in relation to its plan for the two sites. It was proposed that the refurbishments would be funded using a bank loan as the rental from the residences would cover the cost of servicing the loans. The University was currently under-provided in VIP accommodation. The new accommodation would also be promoted for conferences and holidays.

4. The refurbishment of the Union Society had been included in the previous capital plan. The plans had since been revised and it was now proposed that up to £8m should be spent on refurbishing the existing accommodation without increasing its footprint. The plans would help to promote the Union Society’s representation role. This would also help to integrate the student support services provided by the Union Society with those provided in King’s Gate. Space would be made available within the Union Society for various activities as well as conference spaces. It was noted that a detailed business project for this project had yet to be prepared.

5. The Translational Research Building was expected to be a key feature of the Campus for Ageing and Vitality. The funding that was to be provided by the ERDF was guaranteed providing the University delivered on agreed outputs.

6. It was noted that Council was being asked to approve projects that would take some of the capital funds available without knowing whether other opportunities would be missed. It was also noted that some of the projects being presented to Council had not been considered by Estates Committee and it was necessary to review the procedures that were in place.

Resolved that:

(i) Council note the allocated and planned use of the HEFCE CIF grants for 2008-11. [Appendix 1 to Document K.]

(ii) Council approve, in principle, the provision of 371 additional student bedrooms and 10 VIP suites through the redevelopment of Kensington Terrace, Park Terrace and Devonshire Terrace. [Appendix 2 to Document K.]

(iii) Council approve, in principle, expenditure of up to £8m 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 and social facility for the University’s students. [Appendix 3 to Document K.]

(iv) Council approve capital expenditure of £14.0m, £4.5m of which would be funded by the University from endowment income and HEFCE research CIF to construct a translational research building on the campus for ageing and vitality. [Appendix 4 to Document K.]

(v) Council approve capital expenditure, in three phases, of £4.0m, to be funded from HEFCE research CIF, for fit out works at the International Centre for Life. [Appendix 5 to Document K.]
14. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Considered a report from Finance Committee. [Circulated with the Agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

After noting that the insurance arrangements which Council was being asked to approve were already in place and, in future, Council should be asked to approve these at its July meeting.

Resolved that:

(i) Council approve the University’s insurance arrangements as presented in Annex A to Document L.

(ii) Council approve the revised Financial Regulations, set out in Annex B to Document L.

The remaining items in the report were noted.

15. REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

Received reports from the meetings of Audit Committee held on 24 July and 9 October 2009. [Circulated with the Agenda as Documents M & N. Copies filed in the Minute Book.]

(i) 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 the terms of reference of Audit Committee, including a minor change to (g). [Circulated with the Agenda as Document O. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that the terms of reference of Audit Committee, as amended, be approved.

(ii) Value for Money 2008-09

Considered a report on Value for Money 2008-09, prepared by Dr John Hogan, Registrar. [Circulated with the Agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. In order to increase the profile of value for money within the University a decision had been taken to revise the membership of the Value for Money Working Group, to
include more senior representation. The Working Group would now report to the Budget Setting Group.

2. A useful debate on value for money had taken place at Audit Committee during which it was suggested that a greater focus should be placed on academic indicators. It was suggested that many academic indicators already had value for money considerations embedded within them and that these could be included in future versions of the Value for Money Annual Report.

3. The decision to choose long term maintenance as the subject of the Internal Audit Value for Money report was welcomed. It was important for this to be considered in the context of the long term benefits that it could bring.

(iii) Expenses and Compliance

Noted that:

1. Audit Committee had been pleased at the prompt action taken by management following receipt of the Internal Audit report on expenses.

2. Audit Committee had encouraged management to take action where rules were not complied with. It was important to ensure that the rules that were in place were reasonable.

The remaining items in the reports were noted.

Council recorded its thanks to Audit Committee for its work.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY: QUARTERLY REPORT

Received a summary accident report for the second quarter of 2008-09.
[Circulated with the Agenda as Document Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Council had been provided with the full Quarterly Accident Report from April-June 2009 which included an extended explanation of accidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

2. The report showed a downward trend in the number of accidents overall but an increase in the number of accidents reported by academic staff. It was suggested that this increase was due to under-reporting in the past and improved communication of how accidents should be reported.

3. Council members were invited to submit their views on how the presentation of the Accident Reports could be improved.
17. **REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE**

Considered a report from Mr Garry Coupland, Assistant Director of Human Resources.

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

After noting that:

1. The arrangements for Redundancy Committee had been improved and it had been possible to conduct a number of meetings by correspondence.
2. Council would receive more details of the proposed changes to the Statutes at a future meeting.

**Resolved that the following be re-appointed as members of Redundancy Committee for a further year, from 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010:**

- **Chairman:** Mr Robert Hull
- **Lay members of Council:** Mr Stephen Lightley, Sir Miles Irving
- **Members nominated by Senate:** Professor Barry Argent, Professor David Manning

The remaining item in the report was noted.

18. **CHARITY COMMISSION GUIDANCE ON RESEARCH IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

(Minute 116, 13.7.2009)

Considered a report from Executive Board.

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

**Resolved that:**

(i) *The Policy Statement on Research and Charitable Purpose contained in Document S be approved.*

(ii) *The amendment to the Delegation of Authority Regulations, as outlined in Document S, be approved.*

(iii) *The amendments to Council’s Delegation of Powers and Authority, as outlined in Document S, be approved.*

19. **KPIs AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

Received a briefing paper from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources.

[Circulated with the Agenda as Document T. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]
Noted that KPIs should be moved higher up the agenda to ensure they were given appropriate consideration.

20. **UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE OF THE INTO JOINT VENTURE** (Minute 101, 18.5.2009)

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

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

Noted that:

1. Conversion rates for INTO students had not been as good as expected. The rates were lower than those at both the University or East Anglia and Exeter University. Action was being taken to address this.

2. The difficult financial climate had led to protracted negotiations over the property developments. The arrangements for Exeter University’s accommodation had recently been agreed and it was expected that Newcastle’s would follow soon.

3. Questions were raised over the quality of the intake onto INTO programmes and the progression of INTO students on degree programmes. INTO had been asked to raise the language entry level for all their programmes.

4. There were a number of factors which explained the non-continuation of ‘good’ students onto degree programmes at Newcastle. The quality of the teaching accommodation provided to INTO students was an issue as most students expected higher quality learning spaces. It was also necessary to convince staff that INTO students were important for the University’s sustainability.

Resolved that Council should continue to be informed of future developments with INTO.

21. **NEWCASTLE SCIENCE CITY** (Minute 123, 13.7.2009)

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

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

22. **FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES RESTRUCTURING : REVIEW** (Minute 112, 14.7.2008)

Received a report from Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences on behalf of Executive Board, on the outcomes of a review of the Medical Sciences restructuring after one year.

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

Noted that:

1. Progress following the restructuring had been good. The main issue which had emerged concerned the School of Dentistry and its future direction.
2. Research staff had been concerned by the extent to which they would be required to supervise undergraduate research projects but, following the restructure, this had turned out to be less of an issue than had been anticipated.

23. **DIVERSITY COMMITTEE**

Reported that Executive Board had approved an amendment to the membership of Diversity Committee, as follows:

delete: A Senior Officer, who is a member of Executive Board (Chairman)

substitute: A Senior Officer, who is a member of Executive Board, or a senior member of the academic staff appointed by Executive Board (Chairman)

24. **MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL**

Received the membership of Council for 2009-10.

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

25. **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 Z. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

RESERVED BUSINESS

26. **RE-APPOINTMENT OF PRO-VICE-CHANCELLORS**

Reported that Senate Standing Order X stated that ‘The Vice-Chancellor may recommend to Senate and Council the re-appointment of an existing Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the period of the re-appointment.’

Considered recommendations in a paper from the Vice-Chancellor.

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

*Resolved that the recommendations in Document X be approved, subject to the agreement of Senate.*