NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL
28 March 2011

Present: Mrs M O Grant (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor, Professor E Ritchie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Mr N Blezard, Mr N E Braithwaite, Ms E Collingham (Education Officer), Professor M F Cross, Mr M Davison, Mr T Delamere (President, Students' Union), Mr J C FitzPatrick, Dr F Harvey, 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 D Pallett, Professor D Parker, Mr S Pleydell, Ms K Priestley, Mr I Shott and Mr P Walker.

In attendance: Professor S Cholerton, Professor C P Day, Professor C Harvey, Professor O R Hinton, 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), Dr A G Young (Faculty Head of Administration, SAgE) and Miss E M Niven (Administrative Officer).

Mrs L Braiden (Director, Marketing and Communications Directorate) attended for item 87. Ms J Henderson was not present for item 89.

M I N U T E S

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Neil Braithwaite declared an interest in relation to item 96 as his firm, Dickinson Dees, would act for the University in relation to the purchase of the Science Central land.

81. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Walker to his first meeting of Council.

82. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 7 February 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed.

The Minutes of the joint meeting of Senate and Council held on 7 February 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed.

83. 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. 14 students had been in Japan undertaking placements at the time of the earthquake and tsunami. All had now returned home safely. It was agreed that staff in the School of Modern Languages, the Insurance team and the International Office should be thanked for the efforts in bringing about the students' prompt return.
2. The University had met recently with representatives from the Health and Safety Executive in an effort to improve engagement. The meeting was considered to have been useful.

84. **MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**Progress of business**

Received a business tracking form.

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

85. **CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

(i) **Financial Memorandum**

As noted in item 100 below, HEFCE had recently issued a document entitled ‘Principles supporting the Relationship between Institutional Governing Bodies and the Higher Education Funding Council for England’ which emphasised the importance of the Financial Memorandum. Members of Council were advised that copies of the full Financial Memorandum could be obtained from the Governance Office.

(ii) **CUC Plenary Meeting**

The Chair and the Chair Designate would both be attending the CUC Plenary Meeting in London in April.

(iii) **Council Information**

As there was soon to be a new Chair of Council it was considered to be an appropriate time to review the paperwork and other information presented to Council. It was proposed that a working group should be established to do this, chaired by Mr Robert Hull. The Chair of Council and the Chair-designate should also be members and there should be a representative from the academic members of Council. Members who were interested in participating in this working group were invited to contact Mr Hull.

86. **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

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

(i) **Enterprise Zone**

The Government had launched a process for Local Enterprise Partnerships to host ten new enterprise zones. Expressions of interest in establishing an enterprise zone had to be submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government by the end of April. It was thought that this would occur before the board of the Local Enterprise Partnership had been formally constituted.

(ii) **Science Central Site**

One North East (ONE) had confirmed that it had been granted formal approval by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills to sell its share of the Science Central site to the University and the City Council jointly. A valuation of the land had been completed and the University was to meet with representatives from ONE and the City Council in the near future to discuss the outcome of the valuation.
(iii) **Student Visa Regime Consultation**

The Government had announced the outcome of its consultation on the student visa regime. The changes that were to be implemented demonstrated a softening of the proposals contained in the original consultation document and this was welcomed.

(iv) **Project 2012**

The Vice-Chancellor had initiated a project, coordinated by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning and Resources, to ensure that all academic units were prepared for the first intake of students subject to the new fee regime. The project would also consider how the University could be clearer about its engagement activities and included a capital plan which was intended to make significant improvements to the campus environment prior to September 2012.

(v) **Response to Recent International Events**

Following the recent earthquakes in New Zealand and Japan, the Vice-Chancellor had made it known that the University was willing to offer assistance to Christchurch and Sendai Universities in the form of student or staff placements.

(vi) **Pay and Pensions**

The University and College Union (UCU) had called for two days of industrial action on 22 and 24 March. The strike on 22 March was in relation to proposed changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). A ballot of UCU members at the University had produced a result of 152 in favour of strike action with 151 against. The University had challenged the result of the ballot on a technicality and, as a result, the strike at Newcastle had been cancelled.

The strike on 24 March was in relation to pay. The result of this ballot had been nationally aggregated which had produced a slim majority in favour of strike action. Around 200 members of staff had declared that they had taken strike action.

It was unclear how the pension issue would be resolved since the proposed changes required the approval of the Joint Negotiating Committee, which included the UCU. The UCU representatives had not attended the recent meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee. It had been intended to implement the changes from 1 April but it was unlikely that they would be approved prior to this date. The USS and the Employers’ Forum were in the process of taking legal advice.

87. **TUITION FEES** (Minute 53, 7.2.2011)

[Confidential Minute – filed in the Minute Book.]

88. **REVISED FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL FORECASTS** (Minute 31(ii), 13.12.2010)

[Confidential Minute – filed in the Minute Book.]

89. **REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Considered a report from the meeting of Nominations Committee held on 14 February 2011. [Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

(i) **Procedure for the appointment or re-appointment of lay officers**
Resolved that the amendments to the procedure for the appointment or re-appointment of lay officers be approved.

(ii) Lay members of Council

Resolved that Ms Jacqui Henderson be re-appointed as a lay member of Council from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2014.

Council noted the remaining item in the report.

90. REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL INDUCTION WORKING GROUP

Considered a report from the Council Induction Working Group.

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

After noting that:

1. The report recommended a more prolonged induction period than had been followed in the past and also provided a format for a series of ongoing development sessions in which all Council members could participate.

2. It was noted that ‘Internationalisation’ should be added as an additional area to be covered during the session with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

3. It was suggested that for lay members in particular, being able to complete the induction programme in a shorter period was beneficial. It was highlighted that the proposed programme offered a small number of brief sessions which would be completed by March in the first year of a new member’s term of office. In addition to this there were optional sessions which would be extended over a longer period of time. These sessions would be run each year and would be open to all members of Council.

4. In addition to the sessions offered, regular, ongoing contact with University staff was helpful for keeping lay members informed. It was suggested that this should be available to all lay members in addition to the induction programme.

5. It was suggested that Council members should take advantage of the sessions offered to them to ensure they were appropriately equipped to understand the information presented at Council meetings.

Resolved that Council approve the revised induction programme for members of Council as set out in the Appendix to Document J.

91. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES – KPIs : FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Considered a paper from Mr Richard Dale, Executive Director of Finance, on the KPI ‘Financial and Environmental Sustainability’.

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

Noted that:

1. The University was consistently exceeding the target for surplus which was set at 2%. The forecast for 2010/11 at 5.7% was ahead of the peer group average of 2.9%. It was
suggested that, since the target was frequently exceeded, consideration should be given to reviewing its appropriateness.

2. The measure used for the infrastructure investment KPI would be based on the insurance replacement value in future as this was considered to be more appropriate than the percentage of income measure currently used.

3. The University’s performance in relation to the research contribution KPI had fallen below that of its peer group due to the University’s higher dependency on charity funded research which had declined in recent years.

4. The target set for carbon reduction was in line with the HEFCE target for the sector. It was a particularly challenging target which would prove difficult to achieve.

92. **FINE ART REFURBISHMENT : BUSINESS CASE**

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

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

**Resolved that Council approve up to £3.4m to develop and refurbish the Fine Art building, to be funded from Headroom, Long-Term Maintenance and HASS Faculty reserves.**

93. **HEADLEASE SCHEME FOR SHIELDFIELD : BUSINESS CASE**

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

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

After noting that:

1. Questions were raised as to whether there was sufficient demand for the type of accommodation to be provided at the rents proposed. It was confirmed that, based on current levels of demand, en-suite accommodation was desirable and in short supply. The City Council was currently implementing its strategy for Houses of Multiple Occupation which would further reduce available accommodation in the private sector.

2. It was confirmed that there was no initial outlay by the University. Once built, the University would take over the management of the properties and the rents paid by the students would cover the University’s payments to the owners. The University would be responsible for managing the risks, the main risk being room vacancies.

**Resolved that Council approve the proposal that the University enter into a five year contract for provision of student accommodation with Danieli Holdings Limited.**

94. **REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Received a report from the meeting of Finance Committee held on 9 March 2011.

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

**Resolved that the University should be congratulated on having achieved a strong financial position.**
95. CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

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

After noting that:

1. The plan had been written in a format that would be acceptable to HEFCE. HEFCE’s approval of the plan would allow the University to access its Capital Investment Fund (CIF).

2. The targets set in the paper were challenging and were reliant on the Government decarbonising the country’s energy supply.

3. The plan did not currently include a target for scope 3 emission, namely those indirect emissions that occurred as a consequence of the University’s activities but which it did not own or control, such as staff and student commuting. The carbon impact of these activities was largely unquantified but the University intended to improve the data relating to scope 3 emissions so that a target could be included in future plans, as required by HEFCE.

4. It was suggested that plans should be put in place to encourage students to assist the University in achieving its carbon management targets. It was noted that campaigns had been run to encourage students to switch off lights and electrical appliances when not in use but these had to be run on an annual basis for each new cohort of students. Also, once students moved into private accommodation, the University’s ability to influence their behaviour was reduced.

5. The University’s credibility in terms of its sustainability agenda would be under threat if it failed to deliver on the targets it set itself. It was suggested that both the University’s sustainability and carbon management aims should be viewed in the context of an estates plan as this was the best way to bring about results.

6. The University had given some consideration to installing renewable sources of heat but this was a complex area which did not always result in the carbon savings that were expected.

Resolved that Council approve the University’s Carbon Management Plan 2011.

96. NEWCASTLE SCIENCE CITY

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 P. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Considered a report from Professor Nick Wright on behalf of Executive Board.

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

After noting that:

1. Document P had been produced as part of the University’s communications campaign on Science City.
2. As noted under Minute 86, item (ii), One North East (ONE) had been granted permission to sell its share of the Science Central land and a valuation of the site had recently been completed. A meeting would take place in the near future between representatives from ONE the City Council and the University to discuss the outcome of the valuation.

3. It was the intention to put ownership of the land in the hands of a limited liability partnership after the land had been jointly purchased by the University and the City Council. It was agreed that authority should be granted to the Executive Director of Finance to put in place the necessary arrangements to establish this partnership.

Resolved that:

(i) Council note the latest progress with the Newcastle Science City programme.

(ii) The University exercise its options under the partnership agreement with One North East and Newcastle City Council to jointly purchase (with the City Council) One North East’s share of the land.

(iii) Delegated authority be granted to the Chair of Council, in consultation with the Deputy Chairs and the Treasurer, to agree the final terms and conditions for the exercise of the University’s option.

(iv) The Executive Director of Finance or the Director of Estates be authorised to execute any legal agreements required to complete the above transaction.

97. MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL

Reported that:

(a) The Chair of Council, acting on behalf of Council, had approved the appointment of Mr Paul Walker as a lay member of Council with immediate effect to 31 July 2013.

(b) Dr Peter Andras and Professor Vicki Bruce had been elected by their colleagues on Senate to serve on Council for three years from 1 August 2011 in place of Professor Máire Cross and Dr Lana Liu whose term of appointment would end on 31 July 2011.

98. NAMING OF NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL BUILDING

Considered a recommendation from Professor Charles Harvey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor HASS on behalf of Executive Board, that the Newcastle University Business School building be named ‘The Newcastle University Business School Building’.

Resolved that the above recommendation be approved.

99. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY REQUEST : CHARITABLE TRUSTS

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

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

Resolved that the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) be given concurrence authority to manage applications from Newcastle University for philanthropic benefactions to all charitable trusts and foundations, the largest and most frequently approached of which were listed in Appendix 1 to Document R.
100. **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HEFCE AND GOVERNING BODIES**

Received a paper from HEFCE.

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

Noted Audit Committee would consider the document entitled ‘Principles supporting the Relationship between Institutional Governing Bodies and the Higher Education Funding Council for England’ at a future meeting.

101. **STATUTE CHANGES** (Minute 121, 12.7.2010)

Reported that the Privy Council had approved the amendments to the University Statutes, subject to the following minor change recommended by the Privy Council advisers:

3.(2) The object of the University is, for the public benefit, to promote advance education, learning and research.

102. **DATES OF MEETINGS 2011-12**

Reported that:

(a) Council would meet on the following dates in 2011-12:

- 2 pm Monday, 24 October 2011
- 1.30 pm Monday, 12 December
- 10.30 am Monday, 6 February 2012 (all day meeting and conference)
- 2 pm Monday, 26 March
- 2 pm Monday, 28 May
- 3 pm Monday, 9 July (followed by dinner)

(b) The following provisional dates had been identified for meetings of Council up to the end of 2012:

- 2 pm Monday, 22 October 2012
- 2 pm Monday, 10 December 2012

103. **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 Chair of Council on behalf of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.

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