NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL

28 May 2012

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 Mike Davison, Mr Colin FitzPatrick, Ms Jacqui Henderson, Mr Robert Hull, Mr Peter Johnson, Professor David Manning, Mrs Heidi Mottram, Mr Simon Pallett, Mr Simon Pleydell, Ms Laura Perry (President, Students' Union), and Mr Paul Walker

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

Apologies: Mr Liam Dale (Education Officer), Mr Jeff McIntosh, Professor David Parker, Ms Kate Priestley and Mr Ian Shott.

Noted that Mr Mike Davison, Mr Colin FitzPatrick, Mr Robert Hull and Ms Jacqui Henderson left the meeting for the discussion of item 2.3, Report from Nominations Committee. [Minute 106 refers].

MINUTES

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Vice-Chancellor declared an interest in relation to Item 2.7, Equality and Diversity Annual Monitoring Report [Minute 112, refers] as Co-Chair of the Equality Challenge Unit that is leading on the Athena SWAN initiative nationally.

The following members of Council declared an interest in relation to Item 3.3.2, Newcastle Science Central Development [Minute 117 refers]: Mr Neil Braithwaite as Senior Counsel in Dickinson Dees LLP, the Vice-Chancellor, Mr Paul Walker, Professor Nick Wright and Mr Richard Dale as directors of Newcastle Science Company Ltd, Mrs Heidi Mottram as CEO of Northumbrian Water.

98. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 26 March 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed.

99. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Fundraising [Minute 81, 26.03.2012]

Council, at its meeting on 26 March 2012, requested an update from the Registrar on the half year report on fundraising and the University’s targets. This item was discussed as part of the Vice-Chancellor’s business. [Minute 102].

2. Policy regarding Declarations of Interests and Conflicts of Interest Policy, and the Procedure for the Acceptance of External Appointments held by University Staff [Minute 88, item 1, 26.03.2012]
Noted that this item had been circulated for approval with the Chair’s Circular.

Resolved that Council approve the Declarations of Interests and Conflicts of Interest Policy, and the Procedure for the Acceptance of External Appointments held by University Staff.

3. Ethical Policy and Escalation Process [Minute 89, 26.03.2012]

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

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

Noted that following feedback received from previous meetings of Council, Senate and the Heads of Unit Forum, a shorter formulation of the policy has been completed building on the principles and values outlined in Vision 2021.

Resolved that Council approve the Code of Ethics policy, subject to the approval of Senate at its meeting 12 June 2012.

100 HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

Noted that:

1. Mr Brian McBride has been appointed as Head of Health and Safety from 1 August 2012.

2. The Health and Safety team have been working with the Students’ Union to ensure that the fire escalation procedures are in place and that fire drills have been carried out. This work is now complete.

3. That over the last month there had been a number of bomb threats made against a number of English HEIs. These had been hoaxes. Two had been received by the University and searches had been carried out. No motive had yet been given for these threats.

101 CHAIR’S BUSINESS

1. Council induction programme

The Chair reminded members about forthcoming sessions in the Council Induction Programme and encouraged members to attend.

2. Effectiveness of Council

The Chair reported that in line with guidance from the Committee of University Chairs [CUC] and best practice in corporate governance, a review of the effectiveness of Council and of individual members is conducted annually.

It was noted that the on-line questionnaire will be circulated to members to complete in the coming weeks, and the outcome of the questionnaire will be reported to a future meeting of Council. All members were urged to complete the questionnaire.
3. **Council representative on Senate**

   The Chair made a further request for volunteers from lay members of Council to be the Council representative at the meetings of Senate. The term of office of the current representative, the Deputy Chair of Council, will end on 31 July 2012.

   **Resolved that expressions of interest from members, to be the Council representative at meetings of Senate, should be sent to the Chair directly. (Action: Lay Members of Council).**

102 **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

   Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report. Highlights of this report were discussed below.
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

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. **Fundraising**

   Received the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO): Status Quo Report for the financial year 1 August 2011 to 30 April 2012 from Dr John Hogan, Registrar on behalf of Executive Board.
   [Circulated with the agenda as Document C, Appendix 2. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

3. **Undergraduate recruitment for September 2012**

   Noted that the Government has announced that uncapped recruitment of the highest-achieving students at A-level will be extended to the ABB threshold for 2013-14, while a further 5,000 places will be allocated to institutions charging low fees, through the margin system.

   Council will receive a detailed report at its meeting in July on undergraduate recruitment for September 2012, when a more informed picture will be available.

4. **Director of Newcastle Science Company Ltd.**

   Dr Andrew Young, who heads the management support team for the University’s Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE), will take up the secondment as interim Director of Newcastle Science Company Ltd. on 1 June, with a focus on science-based projects in sustainability, ageing and health, and regenerative medicine.

5. **Director of Public Relations**

   Ms Abi Kelly was appointed as Interim Director of PR and was tasked with reviewing the current team’s activities to ensure it was ‘fit for purpose’ and to look at how a PR function could provide a more coherent approach to corporate positioning.

   The review has been completed and Executive Board, in recognising the need for strategic leadership of the University PR activities, has agreed that the post of Director of PR should be made permanent with Abi Kelly confirmed as the post holder.
6. **Newcastle University Business School**

The Director of the Business School, Professor Ian Clarke, is leaving the University in the summer to take up a position at the University of Edinburgh. The campaign for the recruitment of a successor is underway and in view of the strategic importance of the Business School to the University, the Vice-Chancellor will Chair the Selection Committee, and the Chair of the Advisory Board, Mr Greg Smith, has agreed to be a member of the selection panel.

This will be an opportune time for a new person to take over the Directorship with the move to the new building having been completed successfully and recruitment remaining buoyant.

7. **Return of Assessments**

A recent Internal Audit exercise has been carried out where they examined the arrangements, procedures and controls operated by academic units when collecting and returning student assessments. This is a key element in delivering Project 2012.

The University’s rule for the turnaround time for returning work to students is currently 4 weeks. This is stated in the Student Charter.

The report found that only 2/22 Schools are able to demonstrate that the 4 week turnaround time has been met. The performance of the remaining 20 schools could not be measured / proven due to the lack of suitable documentation. In most cases there is no mechanism in place in Schools for recording that feedback is being given within the stated time period, and therefore the evidence base is missing.

Executive Board has resolved that the promise regarding a 4 week turnaround time must be honoured and there must be an evidence base provided in each School so that there is a record that this is happening.

The Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors have been asked to ensure that this matter is discussed at their Faculty Executive Boards and that their Heads of School understand that this is their responsibility. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching has been asked to produce an action plan in consultation with the faculties, to be presented to Senate, Audit Committee and Council, addressing this issue.

Feedback from the student members confirms that a 4 week turnaround time is acceptable and that this should be good quality feedback, that is timely, informative and given in a supportive way.

8. **Student Attendance Monitoring**

On 24 January the UKBA carried out a compliance visit for Newcastle University’s Tier 4 license. During the visit the UKBA staff stated that there was a requirement for daily attendance monitoring of international students under Tier 4 of their regulations. We should have a “Record of absence / attendance, this may be kept either electronically or manually”. Our current policy is that ‘Academic units should establish attendance monitoring arrangements for all students.’ However for many Schools that attendance monitoring consists of monthly census checks. During their visit the UKBA staff were clear that monthly census checks were not sufficient and that we needed to be able to demonstrate that international students were engaging with their academic programme.
In light of these developments, Executive Board has agreed that we should develop attendance monitoring systems which demonstrate that students are engaging with their programme and the Academic Registrar has established a cross institution working group to explore the best of achieving this. The member of Executive Board who has the responsibility for this is the Registrar.

The official results of the UKBA audit have not yet been received. However, informal feedback has been received from our compliance manager who is reassured that we are taking the issue of attendance monitoring seriously. He has confirmed that our new attendance monitoring policy would make us compliant and has agreed to provide further guidance to the working group in the future.

The University intends to carry out attendance monitoring for all student, not only international students.

The Sabbatical Officers asked for their opposition to biometric monitoring to be noted.

9. International Student Barometer Autumn 2011: Headline Results

Newcastle University participates in the International Student Barometer and the survey is issued to all current international and EU students. This year the University achieved a response rate of 58%, a significant improvement on last year’s response rate of 44% and ahead of the Russell Group and ISB overall averages.

Newcastle University achieved an overall satisfaction score of 91.4%. This score places us 6th out of the 12 participating Russell Group institutions, 17th out of the 55 participating UK institutions and 45th out of the 208 participating world institutions.

Newcastle University ranked first within the Russell Group in three of the four key ISB elements:
- Arrival – 88%
- Learning – 90.2%
- Living – 91.4%

Newcastle also ranked first in a total of 23 specific areas this year, including learning technology, virtual learning, learning spaces, the library and quality lectures, as well as careers advice, employability, registration, visa advice, cost of living and accommodation. Last year Newcastle achieved first place ranking in the Russell Group in just two areas.

10. Two Year Intensive degrees

A Steering Group led by the Head of the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, has considered the issue of two year intensive degrees, as part of its deliberations on the possibility of the University having a presence in London in the future. Consideration was in the context of the possible clientele for such intensive degrees and which Schools would find it appropriate to offer them. The full report has been considered by Executive Board where it was agreed that it is more important to focus on the core business, rather than consider introducing intensive degrees, especially since the marketing information suggests that intensive degrees might not satisfy international expectations on the time needed to obtain a degree.

11. Late News
The HEFCE Assurance review has just been completed and initial feedback has indicated that the outcome is expected to be a good grade. One of the recommendations received is that the University should report to Council on its obligations under Charity Law.

The recent atrocities in Syria have left Syrian students who are studying at the University in a difficult position with financial, accommodation and visa implications. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Registrar have reviewed the impact on each student individually and support is being given where possible.

The Vice-Chancellor presented the “Excellence with a Purpose” brochure and the final draft of the “Vision 2021” brochure, which has been revised following feedback received at the last meeting.

12. EarlyWarnings

Indications following the Comprehensive Spending Review by HM Treasury are that the next Higher Education review may impinge on research funding and be linked to economic growth.

103. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER SUMMARY

Received the Strategic Risk Register Summary from Dr John Hogan, Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The Strategic Risk Register Summary report will be presented by the Registrar to each meeting of Council to ensure that members are regularly updated on any movements within it or any areas of specific concern.

2. The summary report is a way of drawing Council’s attention to areas that may require further action and will enable members to review progress on actions that are being taken to mitigate those risks.

3. The full Risk Register will be received by Council at the meeting in December, as part of the annual cycle for reporting.

104. REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of Remuneration Committee, held on 14 May 2012.

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

105. REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of Audit Committee held on 25 April 2012.

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

106. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Considered the report from Nominations Committee held on 14 May 2012.

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

Noted that following the end of his term of office on Council on 31 July 2012, Mr Ian Shott will continue to be involved with the University in relation to Science City and as a member of the
Industrial Advisory Board in Chemistry. Mr Shott was thanked for the contribution to Council since his appointment on 1 August 2006.

Resolved that:

1. Council approve the re-appointment of Mr Robert Hull as a member of Council from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2015. Under the Statutes, this appointment is by exception taking into account Mr Hull's background and contribution to Council.

2. Mr Colin FitzPatrick be re-appointed as Chair of Audit Committee for one year from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

3. Mr Mike Davison be appointed as Chair of Audit Committee for three years from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2016.

4. Ms Jacqui Henderson be re-appointed as Chair of the University/Students' Union Partnership Committee for 3 years from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2015.

107. PROJECT 2012: SCORECARD

Received the April 2012 Project 2012 scorecard from Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that:

1. The data submitted to HEFCE as part of the student information detailed in the Key Information Set (KIS) has passed the HEFCE requirements.

2. The Student Charter has been revised to comply with the national format, and has been considered by the University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee and Executive Board. This will go to Senate for approval on the 12 June.

108. CAPITAL PROJECTS: ARMSTRONG BUILDING - PHASE 2 BUSINESS CASE

Considered a report from Professor Charles Harvey on behalf of Executive Board, on the Armstrong Building Redevelopment Phase 2 Business Case.

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

Noted that:

1. Council, at its meeting on 26 March 2012 [Minute 93], approved in principle, up to a £25 million spend over eight years to enable the University to proceed with a comprehensive re-development of the Armstrong Building, but not the actual spend at that stage.

2. Phase 1 has been completed and Phase 2 of the building works will commence in July 2012, subject to the approval of Council.

Resolved that:

1. Council approve the capital expenditure to a maximum of £2.99m for Phase 2 of the Armstrong Building redevelopment.

2. Council approve enabling packages including the removal of asbestos, demolitions and the construction of specialist joinery works ahead of the main contract.
109. CAPITAL PROJECTS: FINE ART BUILDING REFURBISHMENT – FINANCIAL UPDATE

Considered a report from Professor Charles Harvey, on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. Council, at its meeting 28 March 2011 [Minute 92], approved up to £3.4m to develop and refurbish the Fine Art building, to be funded from Headroom, Long-Term Maintenance and HASS Faculty reserves.

2. The Faculty reported to the meeting of FMBSG on 30 April that the associated costs had increased and were likely to exceed the agreed contingency. The overall anticipated spend is now £3.63m which includes additional expenditure of £230k.

Resolved that Council approve the additional expenditure of £230k, noting that changes in procedures had been adopted to make sure an overspend is less likely on future projects.

110. ANNUAL OVERVIEW REPORT: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCES REVIEW

Received a report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar, on behalf of Executive Board.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. A core function of ISS is to support and maintain a large number of systems and services that are critical to the day-to-day running of the University. Dependence on IT continues to grow, with a general trend towards a larger number of IT systems, with more users, handling more data. Stability of systems remained an area of strength, with availability of over 98.5% across core systems.

2. The National Student Survey (NSS) results for question 17 (“I have been able to access general IT resources I needed to”) were disappointing in 2011 dropping to 82%, which was a continuation of the decline seen over recent years. However the International Student Barometer (ISB) was exceptionally positive, with Newcastle leading the Russell Group participants (and ranking in the top 10 across all UK participants) in many technology-related areas.

3. A key focus for ISS leading up to the academic year commencing September 2012 is Project 2012 and improvements to support the student experience as part of the Newcastle Offer.

4. A series of workshops has been offered to University staff over the coming months as part of the Digital Campus Programme to enhance the University’s mission in teaching, research and engagement. This will enable staff and students to improve the way they use technology and enhance the skills of individuals, as well as improving the competitive position of the University.

5. The intention is to deliver a University model for IT, providing core and local services to a consistent standard, whilst recognising the requirement for flexible support for research and the need to maintain good local services.

111. ANNUAL OVERVIEW REPORT: PERFORMANCE ON ESTATE SUPPORT SERVICE
Received 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.]

Noted that:

1. The report outlines a positive story of continuous performance improvement.

2. Although there is a net increase in space of 16,229 m², having added five buildings and one site from those figures reported in 2011, this should decrease again by July 2013.

3. Through investment over the past decade, we have addressed our legacy of backlog maintenance and inappropriate space. We have uplifted building condition above our peer group median and continue to invest in functional suitability through new build and refurbishment as well as shedding the poorest space through divestment and demolition.

4. Work on our Coherent Campus initiative continues with current projects including the creation of the Student Forum and transforming King’s Road into a pedestrian-priority shared surface with no through traffic.

5. In 2008/09 the increasing cost of utilities was a major element of estate running costs. Energy consumption was kept to a 0.5% increase in 2008/09, the opening of new buildings during 2009/10 partly resulted in energy consumption increasing by 7.5%. Notwithstanding this increase in energy consumption, improving contract prices saw overall energy costs for the non-residential estate fall from £6.35m to £5.13m.

Resolved that Council would like to include a tour of the Estate prior to one of its future meetings. (Action: Registrar)

112. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Received a report from Professor Vicki Bruce, as Chair of the Diversity Committee.

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

Noted that:

1. The Chair of Diversity Committee clarified that the Athena SWAN (Scientific Women’s Academic Network) system recognises and celebrates good employment practice for women working in science, engineering and technology (SET) within higher education and research.

2. The University was awarded a Bronze award in September 2009. The Institute for Health and Society is the first School or Institute to be awarded a Silver award. Other Schools and Institutes are in the process of developing their submissions to apply for a Silver award.

113. 2011 EQUAL PAY REVIEW

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

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

Noted that:

1. An Equal Pay Review was carried out during 2011 and one of the main aims of the review was to establish whether there are pay inequalities arising because of any protected
characteristics and/or from differing contractual arrangements, and to analyse in more detail the nature of any inequalities.

2. In summary, the review concluded that overall, the University's pay scales and progression systems operate fairly across the different staff groups. Of particular importance is the fact that, at University level, we have no significant gender pay gaps.

3. A future review of the Reward Strategy is planned and will be finalised in consultation with the Trade Unions.

114. UNIVERSITY BUDGET 2012-13

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

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

‘Commercial in confidence’ Minute, filed in the Minute Book.

115. UNIVERSITY 5 YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

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

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

‘Commercial in confidence’ Minute, filed in the Minute Book.

116. OVERVIEW: SCIENCE CITY STRATEGY

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

[Copy of the slides used in the presentation filed in the Minute Book]

Noted that the strategy for Science City had changes over time and our intention was to make this a major part of our contribution to civic engagement.

Resolved that Professor Wright be thanked for an informative presentation.

117. NEWCASTLE SCIENCE CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

‘Commercial in confidence’ Minute, filed in the Minute Book.

118. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE KPI: INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

Received a report Professor Ella Ritchie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that this would be the last report on the International Profile KPI in its current format.

119. INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY
Considered a report Professor Ella Ritchie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Executive Board.

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

Noted that the strategy has been widely considered across the University, including Executive Board, Council, Senate, University Research Council, Internationalisation Executive Group, UTLSEC, Heads of Unit Forum, Senior Officers Group, Faculty Executive Boards and Steering Groups and the Students’ Union.

Resolved that Council approve the Internationalisation Strategy.

120. FACULTY OF SAgE REVIEW [INCLUDING SUSTAINABILITY]

Received a PowerPoint presentation from Professor Steve Homans, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering.

[Copy of the slides used in the presentation filed in the Minute Book]

Resolved that Professor Homans be thanked for an informative presentation.

121. CHAIR’S CIRCULAR

The Chair’s circular of routine business was sent to members on 7 March 2012. No issues on the circular were raised by members and the business was, therefore, deemed to have been approved by Council.

[The approved business and a copy of the circular is filed in the Minute Book.]

Approved business:

1. Declarations of Interest and Conflicts of Interest Policy and the Procedure for the Acceptance of External Appointments held by University Staff. [Minute 88, 26 March 2012].

   The above policy will be added to the University’s Policies and Procedures website at: https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/policies/


   Items for information:


4. Visit Day Programme for the Undergraduate Visit Days.

5. Report from the Fairtrade Steering Group

6. Universities Week 30 April – 7 May 2012

122. FACULTY APPOINTMENT BOARDS

The Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, and the Chair of Council on behalf of Council, have approved the following headship appointments/re-appointments:

1. Headship of the School of Computing Science
Professor Aad van Moorsel is appointed as Head of the School of Computing Science with effect from 1 May 2012 until 31 July 2017.

2. Headship of the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Ms Susan Robson is re-appointed as Head of the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences for a further 2 years until 31 July 2014.

3. Headship of the School of Medical Sciences Education Development

Professor Geoff Hammond's appointment as Head of the School of Medical Sciences Education Development is extended from 31 July 2012 until 30 September 2012.