

Mr Chancellor,

As a world-class civic university, a strong and productive partnership with Newcastle City Council is vitally important to us. We have been very fortunate that in Pat Ritchie the City Council has a Chief Executive who actively and wholeheartedly supports this partnership. We are also fortunate that she has forged a close working relationship with our outgoing Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chris Brink, whose office on the fifth floor of the King's Gate building has a breathtaking view of the Civic Centre. I am not sure whether their offices actually make it possible for them to wave to one another across the road, but it is surely a good thing that their acquaintance has passed beyond a version of Alfred Hitchcock's classic film *Rear Window*. Their friendship and collaboration has developed via regular informal early morning meetings, fuelled by quantities of Chris' favourite Red Bush tea, kindly provided by Pat.

Pat Ritchie moved around a lot as a child, attending five different primary schools. She was brought up on a council estate in Galashiels by her mother, a single parent, where she helped to look after her younger brother and sister. She started her working life as a careers adviser in the West End of Newcastle, and went on to become Deputy Chief

Executive of The Wise Group, a prominent employment and training company in Scotland and the North of England. In 2010, she was made Chief Executive of the Government's Homes and Community Agency (or HCA) helping to deliver a major Affordable Homes Programme. In January 2013 she became Chief Executive of Newcastle City Council. Since then, she has delivered a programme of change within the organisation as well as working with local and regional partners to create the conditions for sustained economic growth. She is also lead Chief Executive for Transport in the North East Combined Authority, and plays a role nationally on service reform, co-chairing the independent Service Transformation Challenge Panel in 2014. As part of this, she advised the Government on what needs to happen both locally and nationally to increase the pace and scale of reform.

Pat has extensive experience in economic development, business and skills support. A former Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) at One North East, she led on the Regional Economic Strategy that put science and innovation at its heart and which identified several Centres of Excellence to build on these strengths, including Newcastle Science City. It is here that the excellent working partnership between the City Council and Newcastle University has been critical. The City Council put up the first Science Central building (The Core), and are now planning a

second building. We are nearing completion on our own £59m Urban Sciences Building, and proposals for a new Learning and Teaching Centre are in the pipeline. A successful deal has now been brokered with Legal & General, bringing significant third partner investment from the private sector. The Science Central project is rapidly realising our common vision of creating a North-East innovation hub in science.

Recording the enormous joint effort that went into securing these successes for our City and our region, Chris Brink says: 'Pat and I often confer about the development of Science Central, and we usually come to a similar view on matters serving before the Science City Partnership Board. Pat was an active participant in and a vocal supporter of our pitch to the Treasury for support on what is now the National Centre for Ageing, Science and Innovation, having secured external funding of £20m for this purpose. Pat was the lead negotiator on the regional devolution deal, and as part of that process managed to secure an opportunity for the University to make a pitch for a National Institute for Smart Data Innovation, which led to a further £15m investment. The Expression of Interest for this was drafted jointly by senior academics of the University and senior staff of the City Council'.

The close relationship between Newcastle University and the City Council has also been apparent through Pat's advocacy for Newcastle City Futures, a collaborative project led by Newcastle University

academics that aims to investigate the ways cities and their regions can plan for the long term. Recognizing the areas of similarity between City Futures and her own Newcastle 2020 Initiative, Pat ensured that the Council participated fully in the project workshops, and that even some of the more controversial findings in the resulting Newcastle City Futures 2065 report were heard by the Council. Under Pat's leadership, the City Council has also supported the University in a number of other major projects that are helping with our engagement in Newcastle and beyond. These include the highly successful British Science Festival in 2014 and the ongoing plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary next year of Dr Martin Luther King receiving an honorary degree from Newcastle University.

Pat's colleague for the past decade, Tom Warburton, Director of Investment and Development at Newcastle City Council, pays tribute: 'She is one of the most driven and tenacious people I have ever met. For her, nothing is impossible. It's not over until Mrs Ritchie says it is. Pat does all of this not for the power and the glory. She does it because she firmly believes in improving people's lives. She believes that the public sector, working in partnerships with others, can make a huge difference. We are lucky to have her.' Ewen Weir, Director of Wellbeing, Care and Learning, says 'Pat is supportive, sets a very clear direction of travel but lets you get on with the implementation. She listens. She cares

passionately about people and that shines through.’ On a personal note, Pat is passionate about opera and achieved a long-held wish this year to see opera at Arena di Verona. But according to her husband Brian, to whom she has been married for over 30 years, her real passion is Bruce Springsteen whom she has seen live seven times and ‘she was gutted when she missed him this year in the pub at Dublin by 20 minutes’. Brian and Pat have two children, a son Stuart aged 25 and daughter Alice aged 22. Her husband says that she hates driving and sees it as a necessary evil: she went through three driving instructors before passing at the third attempt, a fact which will go no further than these walls.

In her diffidence towards driving, she has something in common with her former right-hand woman at the City Council, Siân Broadhurst. According to Siân, Pat is ‘a force of nature with a tremendous work ethic, which keeps you on your toes but this is always done in a supportive way. She’s in the office at 7.30am and I’m not sure her working day ever really finishes. Her personal best was 25 meetings in a day. People like working with and for Pat. She is very loyal to her staff, believing firmly in the need to hold people to account but alongside empowering them to deliver. She is at her best when she is out of the office meeting staff and residents. In fact, her biggest strength is that she is ‘normal’ – naturally very warm and gets the best out of people. She’s the kind of person you want to go to the pub with.’

Pat is also 'fiercely Scottish'. She graciously invited Chris Brink to attend the World Cup Rugby hosted in Newcastle, on the occasion when South Africa played Scotland. The two of them first went to watch the crowds gather in the fan zone at Science Central on a massive screen at The Core. They then went to watch the game live courtesy of the City Council, and South Africa rather undiplomatically won! To be fair, according to Chris, the South Africans had the advantage of being much taller.

Of her award this evening, Pat says: 'I am delighted and honoured to receive the award of Honorary Fellowship from the University. I firmly believe that this award recognizes the contribution of colleagues right across the Council; working together with the University to make ours a great city. Newcastle benefits immensely from the contribution the University - its renowned academics and talented students - make to the life of the city in so many ways. Science Central is such a fantastic symbol of our shared vision and ambition for the city - the physical embodiment of a strong and growing civic-university partnership. But, the scope of our partnership goes beyond Science Central - through for example the work of the Digital Civics Team which is transforming the way we think about services to the City Futures Partnership generating projects and initiatives that will shape the city for future generations. On a personal level, I would like to thank Professor Chris Brink and his

fantastic team for their invaluable support and advice to me since taking up my role with the Council.'

Mr Chancellor, for her visionary leadership and tireless commitment to the development of our common cause in developing a bright future for our City and our region, I present to you Pat Ritchie for the award of an Honorary Fellowship.

Helen Berry

10 October 2016