**Key Messages from the Meeting of Council**
**on 19 October 2026**

**Strategic Items**

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| **Next Generation Newcastle Strategic Case** | Council received an update on the Next Generation Newcastle (NGN) transformation programme, outlining the strategic rationale for change and the programme structure. The agreed principal delivery date had been set as 1 August 2028, and critical interdependencies had been mapped at programme level to support the coordinated delivery of key milestones. Council advised that greater emphasis on the student experience should be reflected within the Strategic Planning Framework and encouraged an enhanced focus on colleague wellbeing. Council approved the direction of travel of the proposed case. |
| **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Restructure Project** | Council received a strategic case proposing the transformational restructuring of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS), and noted the proposed implementation approach, timeline and programme of stakeholder engagement activities. Council approved the proposed direction of travel for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences academic vision, the proposed academic unit reorganisation and future school structure, the proposed School names and the recruitment of future Heads of School. |
| **Institutional Key Performance Indicators and Strategy Updates** | Council received an update on institutional key performance indicators (KPIs) and noted that performance against the National Student Survey KPI remained red-rated overall, reflecting continued underperformance against targets despite recent progress. Faculty-level performance against the KPIs would be presented where possible to Council on an annual basis going forward. |
| **National Student Survey 2026** | Council received a summary of the National Student Survey (NSS) results for 2026 and noted there had been improvements in positivity measures across all themes. Assessment and Feedback remained the University's lowest-scoring theme and targeted interventions included the introduction of end-of-module questionnaires, reviewing patterns of assessment, and prioritising student voice. |

**Approvals**

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| **Committee Appointments** | Council approved the following appointments as recommended by Nominations Committee:<br>Max Farrell as a lay member of Honorary Degrees Committee<br>Marta Phillips as a lay member of University Health and Safety Committee |
| **The Chancellorship** | Council endorsed the proposed process for the appointment of a new Chancellor, and approved the appointment of the Chair of Council and Deputy Chair of Council as members of the Chancellorship working group. |
| **External Review of Governance** | Council endorsed the proposed high-level scope for an external governance effectiveness review during the 2026-27 academic year. |
| **Prevent** | Council endorsed the University's Annual Prevent Data return. |
| **Governing Documents** | Council endorsed changes to the University's list of governing documents. |

**Reports**

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| **Vice-Chancellor's Business** | Council received updates on:<br>▪ Student Minds University Mental Health Charter Award<br>▪ New Government and Devolution<br>▪ University Rankings<br>▪ Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) Results<br>▪ Defence Universities Alliance<br>▪ UKRI Strategy and Delivery Plan<br>▪ Signature Strengths<br>▪ Campus Incident |

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| | ▪ Institute of Devolution<br>***Council approved establishment of the Institute of Devolution, in principle, and would receive a further update at a future meeting.*** |
| **Additional reports considered by Council** | ▪ Report from Finance Committee<br>▪ Effectiveness Surveys 2025/26<br>▪ Reports from the meetings of Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee on 23 July and 8 October 2026.<br>▪ Summary of the meeting of Senate on 23 September 2026 |

Heidi Shultz, Executive and Governance Team Manager 20 October 2026