PRESENT: Mgr John Devine (in the Chair), Mr Charles Mills (Vice-Chair), Dr John Bennett, Dr Wendy Bignold, Sr Dr Mary Charles-Murray, Fr Chris McCoy, Dr Arthur Naylor, Mr John Norbury, Professor Gerald Pillay, Professor Nick Rees, Professor Hilary Russell, Mrs Diane Shaw, Mrs Maggie Swinson, Professor Ian Vandewalle, Revd Peter Winn, HH Judge Graham Wood QC (16 members)

By invitation: Mr Graham Donelan (Clerk to Council), Mr Derrick Dykins (minute secretary)

No Conflicts of Interest were reported.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, Rt Revd Paul Bayes (Bishop of Liverpool), Mrs Jane Beever (member designate), Ms Kira Cox (Students’ Union President), Mr Mike Gilbertson, Dr Simon Hulme, Cllr Nick Small and Sr Margaret Walsh SND.

2. **Nominations Committee**

Members had received the report of the Nominations Committee which had met on 16th March 2017. The Chair reminded members that his final term of office came to an end on 31st July 2017 and that the Clerk had written to all members on his behalf inviting nominations to take on the role of Chair and Pro Chancellor from 1st August 2017. The only nominee was Revd Peter Winn, nominated by four separate people and the Nominations Committee believed that Revd Winn was a very suitable nominee.

The Chair asked Revd Winn to leave the meeting whilst his nomination was discussed. In a formal vote, Council unanimously **ELECTED** Revd Peter Winn as the Chair and Pro Chancellor of University Council for an initial three-year period from 1st August 2017 to 31st July 2020.

Council considered nominations to replace Dr Chubb with immediate effect and Professor Russell with effect from 31st July 2017 and **APPROVED**

- Mrs Jane Beever to become a member of University Council with immediate effect for an initial period ending 31st July 2020
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- Dr Joan McClelland to become a member of University Council with effect from 1st August 2017 for an initial period ending 31st July 2020

The following were APPROVED as Chairs of Committees with effect from 1st August 2017

- Mr Charles Mills, Audit Committee
- Sr Mary-Charles Murray, Council Standing Committee on Health & Safety
- Mrs Maggie Swinson, Staffing Committee

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2016 were APPROVED as a correct record.

4. Matter Arising from those minutes

(i) Vice-Chancellor’s Notes to Council (actum 4)

Mr Donelan noted that due to the forthcoming General Election, the publication of the TEF would now be postponed until after the Election.

(ii) Prevent Duty (actum 5d)

Mr Donelan reported that HEFCE had responded to the University’s Prevent Duty Annual Compliance Report requesting additional measures and evidence to demonstrate greater engagement with the Duty. He advised that he was working through the necessary measures to be taken.

(iii) Honorary Degrees Committee (actum 5e)

Mr Donelan gave an update on the Honorary Degrees to be awarded in July 2017. Archbishop John Sentamu was no longer able to attend. However, the four Honorary Doctorates to be awarded were as follows:- actor David Suchet and author Salley Vickers; both to receive the Doctorate of Letters (honoris causa) and former principal of Notre Dame College Sr Maura O’Carroll; and the President of the Catholic University of Lille, Pierre Giorgini, both to receive the Doctorate of Education (honoris causa).

5. Vice-Chancellor’s Notes to Council

The Vice-Chancellor drew members’ attention to his comments concerning the 15k Challenge and the inclusion of Carmel College in the Network of Hope, which would be in addition to the two colleges currently in the Network. Carmel College
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has the potential to be the largest in the Network and could provide significant numbers of students for the University, particularly in areas where student recruitment is a challenge for the University. Fr McCoy said that the College has an excellent reputation and recruits from a wide area, with approximately 2,000 students. Council supported the addition of Carmel College to the Network of Hope.

The Vice-Chancellor also noted the challenges currently being faced by St Mary’s College, Blackburn following the Lancashire Area Review of post-compulsory provision. The University had been in discussions with the College and government officials about the support that the University could give which would mean a much closer working relationship, something akin to the College becoming an affiliate college of the University, whilst retaining its independence. As there might be a need for prompt action if the this option were approved by the government body, the Vice-Chancellor said he would then convene a meeting with the Chairs of Council and of Audit and Finance & General Purposes Committees, in order to ensure that any risk to the University is considered and mitigated against. Council supported this way forward.

Mr Norbury queried the impact of the Students’ Union boycott of the NSS. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that participation in the survey was down slightly for the same period last year but that only four courses were currently below the required 50% participation rate. He acknowledged that this could have repercussions for league tables but on a positive note was able to report that in the recently published Complete University Guide the University had jumped 25 places to be ranked 58th in the UK and fourth in the North West.

6. Clerk’s Report

All matters pertaining to Clerk’s business were covered under Matters Arising, above.

7. Senate

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2017. At that meeting, a number of guidelines and policy documents had been recommended for approval which Council members had received.

Mr Donelan presented the following four policies which related specifically to compliance and legal requirements:

(i) Recruitment and Admissions Policy
(ii) Fitness to Practise Policy
(iii) Criminal Convictions Policy
(iv) Reasonable Adjustments Policy
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Professor Pillay presented the following documents, which related to quality assurance structures and processes, some of which fed into the new Annual Provider Review report. All were designed to improve further the curriculum and student experience:

(v) Departmental Review Guidelines
(vi) Making Modifications to Programmes
(vii) Collaborative Provision Handbook
(viii) Programme Approval Process

He noted that the Departmental Review document, was not an external requirement, but was considered best practice to ensure the currency of the curriculum; the Collaborative Provision Handbook described the University’s policy and due diligence process, and had been updated to allow certain variations on the University’s usual model for partnerships.

Council APPROVED all eight documents, (i) to (viii).

8. **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2017, which were presented by Mr John Norbury as Chair. He drew members’ attention to the current financial year, and a prospective fine currently estimated at £337k which had arisen following an audit of the capital grant the University had received for the EDEN building in 2009/10 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The alleged anomalies related to the procurement process; the University did not have such expertise in-house at that time and had hired an external company to undertake this element of the project. Given the minor infringements of ERDF policy, the fine (25% of actual spend) looks disproportionate and it is expected that this will be reduced substantially after the University has made its representations to the ERDF.

Mr Norbury noted that the predicted surplus remained at £2.5m, with the possibility of it increasing to £3m by year-end. Given the actual reduction in grant funding from HEFCE of 4.4% the predicted surplus is very positive. He noted that details on possible deficit payments to the Greater Manchester Pension Fund were still not available.

Dr Naylor asked whether student applications for 2017-18 suggested a similar funding scenario for next year, particularly given the drift in applications towards Russell Group universities. The Vice-Chancellor advised that recruitment looked stable with similar numbers as the current year.

9. **Audit and Risk Management**

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2017, which were presented by the Chair, Revd Peter Winn. He noted the reserved item
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concerning the process for the appointment of internal and external auditors when the current contracts expire shortly. Members had also received two policies which had been recommended by Audit Committee for approval:

(i) Information Security Policy
(ii) Information Management Policy

Council APPROVED both policies.

10. **Staffing Committee**

Members had received the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 9th March 2017 which were presented by Mrs Swinson in the absence of the Chair. The Vice-Chancellor noted that pay negotiations were ongoing, and that there was currently a wide disparity between the offer being made through collective bargaining, and the unions’ requested increase. Mrs Swinson highlighted ongoing work on the Athena Swan award, and recommended all Council members to undertake the online training, the details of which the Clerk would send out to members.

11. **Council Standing Committee on Health and Safety**

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2017. Mr Mills, the Chair, said that there were no significant issues to report. He commended the University’s mental health provision, and noted that the recent internal audit in this area was very positive.

12. **Students’ Union**

Members had received the Report. Ms Cox had sent her apologies as she had been elected to attend the NUS National Conference. It was noted that this year’s elections for sabbatical officers had taken place in March, with the following appointments succeeding current officers when they leave their posts:

- Jack Johnson (President)
- Vanessa Ospina (VP Welfare & Community)
- Feidhelm Doolin (VP Education)
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Dates of future meetings

All meetings begin at 4pm:

- Tuesday 3rd October 2017
- Tuesday 28th November 2017
- Thursday 19th April 2018
- Tuesday 10th July 2018
- Thursday 11th October 2018
- Tuesday 27th November 2018