Summary

This paper is a summary of the Students’ Union’s current activity. The following areas are covered:

- Vision 2020 Update and Implementation

Recommended Action

Education Quality Committee is asked to

- Note and discuss the report
Introduction

City, University of London Students’ Union (the Union) launched its Vision 2020 Strategic Plan in August 2016. The Union is now almost two years into the plan the Union is a very different organisation when considering our physical setting, our legal status and the way in which we deliver for students.

With a rich history spanning over 100 years, the Union is the primary organisation representing the views of over 19,000 students at City, University of London to the institution and beyond.

With 3 Full-Time Student Officers, a small team of permanent staff and the involvement of student volunteers, the Union is at the heart of activity on campus. The Union delivers a range of services and support for its members, from independent academic advice to supporting our Programme Reps to enhance their course, to promoting the employability and development of students through our Student Activities department. The Union also runs a Shop which sells a range of products, including ethically sourced University branding clothing, merchandise, confectionary and stationary.
Our Vision, Values & Strategy

Our Vision:
“City Students’ Union: A high quality, sector-leading students’ union”.

As a students’ union, we must constantly be striving to be the very best organisation for our membership, no matter which direction they lead us. This means we should always be high quality and at the forefront of our sector.

Our Values:

We are Inclusive. We are Broad-minded. We are Creative. We are City Students’ Union.

At the heart of everything that the Students’ Union does are its values. They give us our identity, guide how we make decisions, and how we conduct ourselves. We are proud that our values are unique, giving us an identity and way of working that is rarely replicated.

We are Inclusive.
We believe that equality is achieved when we are inclusive of all of our members. We are committed to the principles of social justice. We believe that our members should have equality of access and participation in the Students’ Union and our activities. We are committed to the principles of equity, recognising the differences that our members have and giving them the tools to succeed.

We are Broad-minded.
We realise that we do not have all of the answers and we should always be open to change and challenging our way of thinking. We are continually learning, talking and sharing information with our students and stakeholders to ensure that we are making the best decisions and offering the best services for our members.

We are Creative.
We celebrate our history, but we are not constrained by it. We are continually on a journey of self-discovery and self-determination, and we support our students on their own journeys. We are not afraid to take risks, try new things and forge a new path for ourselves, the University, and its students.

Our Strategy:

Our strategy to be a high quality, sector-leading students’ union is simple but bold.

“Through active partnerships and dynamic student representation, we will create connected communities, full of opportunities where students can individually and collectively grow together by 2020”
Priorities, Progress and Key Projects

The strategy sets out five key priorities which are listed below. More information on can be found at www.citystudents.co.uk/about-us/strategy.

Priority One. Experts in the student experience.

'We will understand the needs of our students and the issues affecting them, and will be the recognised experts of the student experience at City, University of London.'

Annual Survey
The Union has launched an annual survey to better assess how the Union is benefiting students and what their views of the Union are. This survey is also a tool for the Union to measure progress of its strategic priorities.

Staff Support
The Union was successful in gaining funding from City for a Wellbeing and Insight Coordinator to improve our research and information gathering from students.

Engaging in National Research
The Union is collaborating with 27 other students’ unions to deliver a ‘Student Lifestyles Survey’ in collaboration with trendance RESEARCH. This survey is separate from our Annual Survey, and rather than looking inwardly at our service delivery looks at the academic and lived experiences of students and how they intersect. The areas of questioning include; extra-curricular activity, housing & transport experiences, the cost of being a student, recruitment & retention, employability, wellbeing and protected topics around experiences of hate crime and sexual harassment.

Priority Two. Developing communities.

'We will create and develop communities at City in which every student feels they belong, feels supported and feels respected.'

Academic Societies
Academic Societies create and develop communities at City in which every student feels they belong, feel supported and feels respected. Those involved in Academic Societies have the opportunity to develop crucial skills required for their future employability, enhance their personal development from learning how to manage teams, planning and delivering activities to networking with external organisations. Extensive Research undertaken by the IFF on behalf of the Department for Education highlights; "There is a link between engaged in extracurricular activities and subsequent graduate level employment". The Union now has at least one Academic Society in every discipline and will be working to further develop these societies over the coming years.
**Community Fund**

In the spirit of co-creation, the Union is going to launch a community building fund pilot in 2018/19. The pilot will start in two schools where the Union will fund a minimum of four community building projects costing up to £500 each. The fund is based on the view that the Union wants students to have more control over creating course and school based communities.

**Diverse Events**

In response to the needs of the student body, the Union continues to improve the diversity of the events it delivers. There has been a continued focus on events not involving alcohol to make them more inclusive. There has also been targeted events such as the International Culture Show, Black History Month Debate and events for students of faith.

**Priority Three. Academic experience impact.**

*‘Every student will be able to identify how the Students’ Union has had an impact on their academic experience at City.’*

**Programme Representative Development**

Programme Reps have continued to be a key priority of the Union. This year has seen a revised training program, increase in the number of representative and new incentives. 2018/19 will see the Union take a leadership role in the election of the Programme Reps to further democratise the system and provide them with a greater level of independence.

**Campaigning and Lobbying**

The Union has taken an active role in campaigning and lobbying the university on a number of key topics including GTA’s and supporting staff and students during the industrial action. Campaigning is a key role for the Union and be a critical friend of City to facilitate the improvement of the overall student experience.

**Academic Impact**

With the change in NSS question, it has provided the Union an opportunity to ensure academic impact is a key priority. The Union has always had a great academic impact; however, this refocusing has led to improve communications and emphasis. This has included the launch and distribution of key information about the Unions academic impact through the website and other communication channels. The Union also rebranded the teaching awards to be called the Academic Impact Awards. The Union received over 400 nominations to recognise staff and students from across the university.

**Priority Four. Students’ next steps.**

*‘We will be a springboard to help students to plan and prepare for their future.’*
Leadership Academy
The Union has delivered a pilot this year for a new Leadership Academy, with funding from Santander, via DARO. The Students’ Union Leadership Academy, run in partnership with City Careers, has encouraged students to attend more than 50 training workshops this year, developing a range of skills linked to key employability competencies. Leadership Award participants took on voluntary positions of responsibility in the Union and in March, participants attended employability training debriefing workshops and learned how to articulate their skills effectively in competency example format. This year, the Leadership award recognised 26 Student Leaders at our Students’ Union Carrot Awards ceremony on Thursday 5th April. In addition the Union also delivered a Leadership Conference allowing students to hear from a number of speakers about leadership.

Recognising Students Achievements
The Union relaunched the Students’ Union Carrot Awards to bring the focus back to recognising student’s achievements. In addition to the leadership award recipients, awards were also given out to societies and other student groups, programme reps and the prestigious Carrot Awards.

Student Group Development
The number of student groups has increased annually and the Union now has well over 100 student groups. The development of those delivering these has also improved with a revised training program, greater support through funding and enhanced opportunities to run events for students. The increased number of groups has allowed more students to take on leadership roles and benefit from these skill development opportunities.

Priority Five. Supporting students.
‘We will support students in their journey at City, University of London.’

Union Advice Service
The Union Advice Service has increase to two full time staff members which has enabled the Union to deliver a service for more students. From 1 October 2017 to 1 March 2018, compared to the same period in the previous year, the Union has had a 76.5% increase in the number of new cases handled and 55.4% increase in the number of face-to-face appointments. The customer satisfaction is also very high with a score of 9.7 out of 10. This Union will continue to grow this service over the coming years.

Study Well
Study Well is the Union led annual program of activities and events that support students during the assessment period. The project is funded by The Saddlers, via DARO, and is supported by key departments from across the university. The main Study Well campaign was launched on 14th May and will run till 8th June. The extremely popular Petting Zoo was well received by students and staff alike, with over 1000 people in attendance throughout the day. Students have also been enjoying activities in the first week of Study Well such as Chill-Outdoors sessions featuring
badminton, swing-ball and chess; power nap facilities; Union Advice Q&A sessions; Relaxation Rooms; Meditation and Listening sessions hosted by the Chaplaincy; Lip and Beard Balm Workshops hosted by Sustainability; free gym classes at CitySport and free breakfast at our Breakfast Club.

**Welcome Week**

Ensuring students transition into university is a key priority for the Union and was a focus of Welcome Week. A number of events were run to encourage community and bring students together, such as our ‘Coffee Shop Crawl’. The Union also ran its largest Freshers Fair to date with over 5000 students attending and having the opportunity to find out more about the services delivered by the university as well as about the students groups they can engage in.