

**COUNCIL MINUTES
MEETING HELD ON 27th NOVEMBER 2020**

Members		Meeting 1 09.10.20	Meeting 2 27.11.20	Meeting 3 12.02.21	Meeting 4 26.03.21	Meeting 5 14.05.21	Meeting 6 023.07.21
Independent Members	Ms Julia Palca (Chair)	✓	✓				
	Professor Sir Paul Curran (President)	✓	✓				
	Ms Kru Desai	✓	✓				
	Dr Paula Franklin	✓	✓				
	Mr Simon Harding-Roots	✓	✓				
	Mr Adrian Haxby	✓	✓				
	Ms Philippa Hird	✓	✓				
	Professor Chris Jenks	✓	✓				
	Mr Thomas Lee-Warren	✓	✓				
	Dr Andrew Mackintosh	✓	✓				
	Ms Jen Tippin	A	✓				
	Mr Ron Zeghibe	✓	✓				
Staff and Student Members	Ms Mary Luckiram	✓	✓				
	Mr Saqlain Riaz	✓	✓				
	Ms Liz Rylatt	✓	✓				
	Professor Debra Salmon	✓	✓				

Key: ✓ In Attendance A Apologies P Part Attendance N/M Not a Member S Sabbatical

In Attendance	Reason and Meeting Section
Professor David Bolton	Deputy President & Provost (DP&P)
Professor Anthony Finkelstein	President-elect
Professor Andrew Jones	Interim Deputy President (IDP)
Dr William Jordan	College Secretary (CS)
Ms Sarah Lawton	Governance Administrator
Professor Zoe Radnor	Vice-President, Strategy and Planning (VP, S&P)
Professor Paolo Volpin	Dean of Cass Business School

MINUTES SECTION A – OPEN FOR PUBLICATION

Part One – Preliminary Items

- 1. Highlighted Items**
Council **agreed** the highlighted items.
- 2. Minutes**
The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2020 were approved.
- 3. Matters Arising**
Council noted the table of actions arising from past meetings.

USS Update

HR Director thanked Council members for comments, and Adrian Haxby for the detailed commentary he provided, for inclusion in City's response to the USS consultation on Technical Provisions for the March 2020 valuation. The consultation concluded on 30th October.

The USS Trustee Board had met earlier in the week to consider the responses. The next stage would hopefully comprise two strands – the first was the second stage of consultation and in the second the Board would refer proposals to the JNC. The final stage, should employers hold firm on a zero rise in contribution rate, posed a risk of industrial action in spring 2021.

By way of general background, the President noted that timing was important in relation to the Board's use of rule 76.1. Should this result in a scheme price going to the JNC soon then the subsequent process should take us to September 2021. UUK has indicated that it would be advantageous if the next stage of consultation included fuller scenarios than had already been considered. More would be known after 11th December – which is a publicly known trigger date for the Board's use of rule 76.1.

4. Conflicts of Interest

The President noted that he was a member of the Board of USS; and had therefore declared an interest in Item 3 (above).

5. Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair

Welcome

The Chair welcomed the President-elect, Professor Anthony Finkelstein, who was in attendance and thanked him for the high level of engagement with City that he had already demonstrated.

Student Mental Health Update

Council received an update on Student Mental Health against the backdrop of Covid-19 and noted that the number of students accessing the service had reduced compared to the same time last year. This meant that the usual waiting lists, for the six standard sessions available to students, had shortened considerably.

Lower uptake of services might, in part, be attributed to a delay in first year students being aware of the services and how to access them, but City generally had a lower take up of mental health services than other institutions, probably because many City students live at home. There was also an historical differential between take up across Schools.

In terms of student support more broadly, over 100 course officers had been trained to handle cases relating to student welfare. This might also account for the lower uptake of the Counselling Services and more data would be available later in the academic year.

Students were providing good feedback about the online services available to them but the SUP believed that they were keen to receive more face-to-face support. The DP&P noted that the face-to-face offering was under constant review and work was underway to scope out what could be provided in term 2. There might be considerable variation in offering across the university and the cultural competency initiative could impact on this. The DP&P noted that a BAME advisor had recently been appointed, on a short-term basis.

A further update would be provided to the March Council meeting. **[Action]**

Chair's Meeting with the SU President and Sabbatical Officers

The SU sabbatical officers had expressed the desire to see more consistent approaches to communications across Schools and programmes, while noting that undergraduate and postgraduate students had different needs and communications should be tailored with that in mind.

The sabbatical officers were also keen for Schools to talk more to their students about issues at an early stage to ensure that any emerging issues were dealt with. The SU had noted its concern about VfM for students but also recognised that this was a national, not a local, issue.

The sabbatical officers had also noted that they were enthusiastic about seeing more cross-School collaboration.

Away Day on February 12th, 2021

A venue would be sought to enable the Away Day to be held as a socially distanced face-to-face gathering if this was permitted under government legislation in force on 12th February.

The key topic would be looking at the future for City, its vision and desired destination.

The President-elect noted that he would like to focus on the process by which a strategy refresh might be undertaken; and also consider how Council and the Executive might work even better as a team.

New Council Members

An appointment process was underway through which it was hoped to fill two vacancies.

Virtual Get-togethers

Informal online get-togethers would be arranged for the Chair and Independent Council Members – to be hosted by the Chair. **[Action]**

6. Council Calendar

Council noted the calendar.

7. Report from the President

The President gave a verbal update and in discussion the following points were noted:

- As part of government plans to support UK students to travel home (within the UK) safely for the Winter break, City had partnered with the University of London and NHS Test and Trace to run an asymptomatic testing site for lateral flow tests at Student Central on Malet St., Bloomsbury.
- Government guidance about start dates for tuition next Term was expected early next week. City's current understanding was that the plans were likely to involve mass testing of students on return to campuses and a delayed (possibly) and staggered (certainly) start to face-to-face teaching over a number of weeks to discourage the mass movement of students in a short period of time and to make the testing of potentially large numbers of people feasible.
- City had enrolled around 65% of its pre-pandemic target of postgraduate taught students. Earlier in the summer, City had revised its recruitment plans and thanks to a huge amount of hard work by colleagues in Schools and by central student recruitment and admissions teams, 97% of the revised target number of students had enrolled.
- Last week the Executive Board (EB) had taken the decision to withdraw the 2020 Staff Survey which had been supplied for the first time by the company, Robertson Cooper. The survey had not been well received by staff, and in some cases the nature of the questions and the personalised wellbeing report had caused distress. EB would reconsider how best to assess and respond to staff needs and concerns. This might be achieved by undertaking a pulse survey early in 2021.
- The Government had taken the opportunity provided by the pandemic both to recognise the increasing level of Government-generated bureaucracy in universities and to take steps to reduce it. Led by the DfE and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, the initiative involved the OfS, UK Research & Innovation and the National Institute for Health Research. There would be a root-and-branch review of the National Student Survey and shorter-term changes in, for example, how the OfS monitors universities' performance and UKRI undertakes peer review of research.
- City's new interdisciplinary London Space Institute, based in SMCSE would facilitate collaboration in education, research and enterprise between

academia, industry and the public sector, by connecting London's space sector with other sectors and industries.

- The new City Law School building was open and staff and the Library had been moving in. By early 2021 the School's staff and students would be integrated on one site for the first time in the School's history.
- The acquisition of the lease for 33 Finsbury Square should complete on 10th December and Business School staff would start to move into the building during March. The President thanked Kevin Gibbons and his team for all they had done to make the two buildings a reality for City.
- City recognised the importance of meeting the student demand for more face-to-face teaching, especially in relation to their mental health and wellbeing but also had to recognise staff concerns about travelling into central London and strike the right balance between the two. There was also a need to respect government guidance on Covid-19. Some central London universities, such as Kings, had moved all of its teaching online.

8. Students' Union Report

Council received the report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The Union continued its work on sustainability. Work with Green Impact for 2020/21 had begun with a regular Working Group meeting to develop and agree an action plan to enable a 'very good' award to be achieved this year.
- The first Student Council of the year had taken place on Wednesday 4 November with 25 people in attendance. The Union ran new Chair and Councillor training for newly elected students and saw a record response to standing part-time officer reports in the circulated papers. The Union would continue to monitor engagement with online democratic meetings.
- Ensuring up-to-date student feedback had been a priority in 2020/21. The Union had provided two appendices to its report which included the focus group report and the student check-in report. The Chair noted that the SU's check-in initiative had been praised at a CUC meeting as a good model for the Sector and, as such wished for Council to focus on this today.
- The SU believed that robust and timely communications was vitally important to City students, even if there was 100% transparency about what cannot be delivered – communications should be about managing student expectations and in turn their experience. Students were asking for more face-to-face tuition across the board and they needed to be kept informed on what actions were being taken as a result of their requests.
- More generally, the SU often felt frustrated because they gathered data from current students but did not see any demonstrable actions taken by programs to address concerns raised. The Dean of SHS took the opportunity, on behalf of Deans, to apologise for the SU's sense of frustration and of feeling unheard.
- The DP&P noted that each School was carrying out its own collection of feedback and data from students but that the SU were not always seeing responses from Schools to the issues raised. There would be further discussion of these issues at the December meeting of Senate.
- The Dean of SHS noted that the School had a great deal of data as its students consistently fed back on what they wanted. If students felt that there was a lack of true engagement they should at least be given explanations from Schools for the perceived lack of action. The Dean would consider the issues raised in by the SUP further within her School. **[Action]**
- The Dean of the Business School noted that his School continued to provide as much face-to-face teaching as possible and his Dean for Undergraduates had been working hard on this. The key issues in his School concerned assessment and feedback.
- In the City Law School, the SU President noted that 150 year-3 students had jointly raised concerns about the running of their program, but that the SU did

not know how these concerns were being addressed by the School. Failure to respond to such concerns by the School was likely to lead to an adverse impact on NSS results.

- Undergraduate student satisfaction was one of Council's key concerns and Council would like to see, at its next full meeting, more data on what actions were being taken to address student feedback and an update on how School communications had been improved. **[Action]**
- There was a case for the Executive to explore the possibility of developing further high-level data on the student experience, for example through weekly pulse surveys, to test the temperature enable appropriate action to be taken in a timely fashion. **[Action]**

Part Two – Major Items for Discussion or Decision

9. Coronavirus: Update

Council received a verbal update and the following points were noted:

- City's Covid-19 infection statistics were publicly available on the website. As of the Council meeting, a total of 15 staff and 96 students had reported positive for Covid-19.
- The University of London's asymptomatic testing centre (referred to at Item 7) would "go live" on Monday 30th November. The Government funding for such testing facilities would end on 7th December, so City was likely to incur circa £10k in costs.
- The main issue on campus related to some students not wearing face coverings. Work was already underway to encourage compliance with social distancing measures on campus. A plan for a refreshed on-campus campaign to address concerns about compliance with social distancing and the wearing of face coverings for term 2 was endorsed by EB. EB would continue to work with Schools and the SU to improve compliance.
- Work was being undertaken to ensure that space on campus, which allowed for socially distanced student interaction, was maximised.
- Communications had gone out to students with information about the remainder of term one and the start of term 2 but some of the detailed arrangements relating to term two would be influenced by Government guidance, which had not yet been received.

10. Annual Reports

10.1 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report

Council considered the report which detailed the work of ARC over the last 12 months and provided Council with assurance that City's arrangements for risk management, control, governance and management & quality assurance of data are adequate and effective.

Decision

Council approved the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report for 2019/20.

10.2 Annual Report on Prevent

Council considered the report which confirmed that City continued to have "due regard" to the implementation of the Prevent duty during the reporting year, 1st August to 31st July 2020.

Decision

Council **approved** the Prevent Report which would be submitted to OfS together with a signed declaration from the Chair of Council.

10.3 Remuneration Committee Annual Report

Council received the Remuneration Committee Annual Report on remuneration decisions and noted that the report formed part of the Annual Report and Financial Accounts (Item 11.1).

10.4 Modern Slavery Annual Statement

Council considered the Annual Statement on Slavery and Human Trafficking which was a requirement derived from the Modern Slavery Act, section 54 and associated guidance issued by the Home Office. The Act required “every organisation carrying on a business in the UK with a total annual turnover of £36M or more.....to produce a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year of the organisation”.

Council welcomed the highlighted changes following consideration of the report at CGNC and noted that the protocol used when considering donations to City would likely be reviewed as part of discussions at future meetings of the Fundraising Group.

Decision

Council **approved** the Modern Slavery Annual Statement.

10.5 Research Integrity Statement

Council noted the Research Integrity Statement which was made to demonstrate that measures were being taken to sustain and further enhance the integrity of the research undertaken at City. The report demonstrated City’s support for and its commitment to upholding the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Statement was a fulfilment of recommendations made by the Concordat for annual reporting on research integrity to Governors and covered the 2019/20 academic year.

11. Finance

11.1 2019/20 Annual Financial Accounts

Council considered the 2019/20 Annual Financial Accounts which had been reviewed by ARC and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The Statement had been produced with combined effort from Finance, SPPU, Governance and HR, and ARC had expressed its thanks to those teams and also to the external auditors.
- MetLife had reviewed City’s revised Financial Plans prior to presenting them to their Credit Committee with a view to potentially agreeing a covenant waiver.
- One issue was outstanding, which was the opinion required from the External Auditors that City was a “going concern”. The External Auditors had been of the opinion that based on cash and liquidity, City was a going concern and it just remained for the MetLife waiver to be received before the final going concern opinion could be given.
- The description of the responsibilities of Council in the report should for future years be strengthened to draw out more clearly Council’s responsibilities for strategy.
- Further consideration should also be given to how best to cover in the report the consideration by Council and its Committees of risks to City arising from a failure to realise its anticipated level of income. The risks were under active consideration at present by ARC.

This item is continued in the closed section of the minutes.

11.2 Letter of Representation

The annual Letter of Representation had been reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 9th November. In discussion, it was noted that minutes of the most recent ARC meeting recorded that:

- The CFO had assured ARC on 9th November that she was not aware of any material omission from the Annual Report and Financial Statements, and that evidence had been provided to PwC as external auditors in support of every aspect of the Letter of Representation. The CFO was of the opinion that ARC could safely accept the Annual Report and Financial Statements and recommend this work to Council.
- ARC were content with the CFO's assurance on the accuracy of the External Auditor's Report for 2019/20 and agreed to recommend it to Council.

Decision

Council approved the Letter of Representation which would be signed by the Chair and the President.

11.3 External Auditor's Report

Council received PwC's Annual Report.

11.4 Draft 2020 Financial Plan and 2020/21 Budget

Council considered the draft 2020 Financial Plan and 2020/21 Budget and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The paper provided the latest picture of the Budget for 2020/21 and of the 5-year Financial Plan, informed by the Flash Forecast and the improved position on many budget lines, including student numbers.
- Assumptions about cost savings for next year now included a £5M cost reduction in staff costs with recurrent cost savings of £10M in subsequent years. The provision for restructuring costs had been increased by £2M in the current year, in the light of this plan.
- Postgraduate student recruitment forecasts for the Business School had been adjusted down as there was concern that a return to normal levels of recruitment could be slower due to the impact of losing the Cass brand. The rebranding of the School was expected to take some time to embed and that was reflected in the adjustments to fee income projected for future years.
- Interim evidence from the current recruitment round was that home postgraduates were recruiting well whereas there were significant reductions from Asian and Indian markets.
- Although the recruitment and income forecast was much better than anticipated this year, it was still significantly down on pre-Covid expectations. The full comparison to the March plan indicates that City was anticipating a medium-term shortfall in income of around £15M as a consequence of the pandemic.
- The biggest risk for 2021/22 was not knowing whether all students who registered this year would return in January.
- The Chair of SIPCo noted that cost reduction was being addressed much more actively than ever before and City had a strong past record of hitting budget but SIPCo would continue to monitor progress.

Decision

Council approved the Budget for 2020/21.

12. HR Matters

12.1 HR Annual Report

Council received the annual HR Report which had been considered by SIPCo and which summarised the key activities and achievements of the HR Directorate. In discussion the following points were noted:

- During the last 12 months HR had continued to make progress in implementing the People Strategy. The impact of Covid had limited progress in some respects, but had accelerated developments in several areas, notably in increasing the level of discussion and interventions in relation to staff wellbeing and mental health issues.
- In response to the challenges and opportunities posed by Covid and to address a recognised deficit in policy review and development, a new Policy & Projects team had been formed in October 2020 from within the HR Directorate's existing resources, drawing on the expertise in HR Operations, recognition and reward, OD, policy development and employee relations to focus on policy development, including: improved procedural guidance and ownership by managers and staff; new ways of working, including supporting the anticipated increase in working from home/home working as the norm; and, support for the cost reduction measures, including portfolio review and changes to City's operating model.
- HR had undertaken a comprehensive review of City's recruitment and selection processes, involving large numbers of Recruiting Managers and other stakeholders. This preparation would enable the introduction of a new recruitment system in March 2021.
- In accordance with the Grievance Procedure, Council received the annual report of the numbers and types of grievances raised formally during the previous year, the number considered at the appeal stage and those applications for review that have been considered by the President and the Staff Grievance Committee. Many concerns and issues raised by staff were addressed through discussion with the manager or Head of Department. The data provided did not include issues resolved through the usual channels or through the informal stage of the Grievance Procedure.
- The Chair thanked the HR Directorate for continuing to work effectively during the pandemic.

12.2 Health and Safety Annual Report

Council received the report which had been considered by ARC and which summarised City's performance during the 2019/20 academic year. In discussion the following points were noted:

- Local area Health & Safety Plans had been embedded which focussed on the key competencies of managers and what they should be doing on a regular basis, and to ensure that basic management functions were being adhered to.
- Indications were that Covid had increased staff awareness of Health & Safety both in terms of themselves but also of the wider community. There was an increased awareness of the value of Risk Assessments.
- To address the many questions and concerns in relation to responding to the pandemic, a subgroup of the JHSCC, involving the five Trade Union Safety Representatives, the Head of Occupational Health & Safety, the Director of PAF and chaired by the Director of HR, met weekly to work through issues. The contribution and commitment of the Safety Representatives to this important work was to be commended.
- In response to the Secretary of State's request for a review of fire safety within university buildings, as a result of the Bolton residence fire on 15th November 2019, City appointed Pinsent Masons (providing specialist expertise in relation to regulatory issues) to conduct this independent review. The review findings and recommendations would be initially reported to the HSC.

12.3 Staff Mental Health Report

Council received the Staff Mental Health Report which had been considered by ARC and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The Report provided an update on current measures in place to manage and mitigate mental health arising from the pandemic. It also provided at Appendix 1, the Annual Staff Counselling Service report for 2019/20.
- The HR Director noted that she and her colleagues in HR all very much regretted the need to withdraw the recent Staff Survey, which had focussed on staff wellbeing issues. However, much work had been put into staff wellbeing before Covid, and this work put City in a strong position to respond to and provide support to staff during the pandemic. In addition to the Occupational Health and Staff Counselling Services, in June 2020 City had invested in an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to provide additional support for staff during the pandemic. The EAP provided 24/7 telephone support and access to counselling on a range of issues.
- The work of the Director of Occupational Health and Safety, Vinny King, during the Covid pandemic and his understanding of the Health and Safety aspects of keeping staff and students safe has been vital to maintain safety at City.

13. Tackling Racial Inequalities – Verbal Update

The VP (S&P and EDI) gave a verbal update on the Tackling Racial Inequalities work programme, which had been discussed in detail at the recent meeting of RemCo. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Subgroups comprising members of Network for Racial Justice (NRJ) and members of the Executive continued to meet to discuss the NRJ's demands (identified as having five themes: (i) Recruitment, Progression and Success of BAME Staff, (ii) Recruitment, Progression and Success of BAME Students, (iii) Senior Management and Leadership, (iv) Institutional Structures and Processes and (v) Culture and Environment).
- Deans and Directors continued to work to establish BAME representation on all senior boards in their respective Schools and Professional Services.
- All Schools were establishing EDI groups which would assist with embedding this work across City.
- Work continued on the establishment of PhD studentships for Black British students, with each School allocating one existing studentship for this purpose. Further consideration would be given by the VP (S&P, EDI) to fundraising for these studentships for the future. **[Action]**
- The post of Assistant Vice-President for Racial Equality had been advertised and several applications had been received. The successful postholder would link the various strands of EDI work taking place across City.
- A recommendation from the independent review of the Athena SWAN Charter, was for the establishment of the Athena SWAN Governance Committee to provide expert advice and guidance to the Advance HE Board. Professor Radnor had recently been appointed as a member of the Board.

14. Biannual Institutional Level Risk Review

Council reviewed the Institutional Level Risk Register which had been reviewed by ARC and in discussion the following points were noted:

- Risk 3, "City's reputation and financial sustainability are negatively impacted by a failure to recruit sufficient students to the desired quality level at all levels and fee statuses" :the proposed pre- and post-control significance numbers of 55 and 44 respectively appeared to be rather dramatic. The DP&P noted that this risk had been updated when City was less certain about undergraduate recruitment and the effect that any fall in the Business School numbers would have on the whole institution. Although some risk would remain he believed

that the next iteration of the register would indicate that the risk was not as great.

- Risk 6, “City does not generate sufficient new cash and manage existing cash reserves by maximising income (and cash collection) and managing costs to ensure the University is able to operate as a going concern”: City was in a much better place than had previously been anticipated and there was a case for adjusting the risk, potentially moving the post-control mark from 28 down to 21 to reflect this and the fact that City was not at risk of insolvency. The CFO noted that a shortfall in income of £20M was still a big risk and as such this was still a “red” risk.
- Risk 1, “The risk that City fails to deliver a student experience that matches its students’ expectations”: the mitigations should be reviewed, as the pre- and post-significance ratings were the same, indicating that the recommended actions would have no impact. The DP&P noted that the rationale for the scores had been that City had no experience of operating and running term 1 in the way that it had had to, but much has been learnt and it had not resulted in a catastrophic failure and so he would now modify this risk.
- Council requested that Risks 1, 3 and 6 be revisited in light of the comments made and that the mitigations in place for ALL risks be reviewed. The revised Risk Register should be considered by ARC in March prior to further consideration by Council. **[Action]**

15. Institutional and School PIs and KPIs Report

Council received the Institutional and School PIs and KPIs Report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The paper reported on progress at Institutional level against the four Academic Output KPIs and six supporting PIs set out in the *Vision & Strategy 2026*.
- The Chair of SIPCo noted that the improvement to undergraduate progression and employability were positives in the overall picture but Covid would continue to cause disruption. He welcomed the arrival of the new President which would provide an opportunity to take a fresh look at City’s KPIs and PIs.
- The SU President said that he believed that lower undergraduate tariffs might impact adversely on student satisfaction and that some students from a widening participation (WP) background felt a sense of abandonment when they arrived at City. The VP (S&P) noted that huge effort was made for the introduction of those WP students and hoped that “abandonment” was not a wide-spread feeling amongst those students. The DP&P noted that this should be explored further and if this proved to be a widespread experience for WP students, immediate and targeted action would be taken. **[Action]**
- Since the relaxation of the national student number cap in 2014/15 and its abolition a year later, there had been intensive competition for undergraduate students, particularly in London: Kings had doubled its undergraduate student numbers, and numbers at UCL and Queen Mary had also increased hugely, potentially at the expense of City. City had been able to maintain its tariff points, but the position had dipped in the latest KPI report and might now, as a result of recruitment during the pandemic, dip again – although the strategic intention remained to achieve quality constrained growth.
- The DP&P encouraged Council Members to review the Graduate Outcomes Report which was provided at the October meeting and noted that EB had recently approved funding for undergraduate employability work at City.
- The Chair welcomed the new presentation of the report.

16. Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech at City

Council considered the revised Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech at City and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The paper provided Council with an updated draft of the 'Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression at City'. The draft incorporated recommendations following a comprehensive review of the current Code of Practice and its implementation'; and reflected discussion at CGNC, and further work recommended by CGNC to explore the feasibility of committing to a 'fast track' process of 'straightforward' speaker requests.
- In the event it had been it had not been possible to identify reliably what constituted a 'straightforward' speaker, before a speaker request had been considered, but the Code's timeline had been reviewed again. Moreover, the timelines in the Code needed to be broad enough to allow for instances where an appeal may be brought and more time was needed. The timelines had therefore not been changed as a result of the further review.
- Only limited consultation had taken place with the SUP on the draft Code as the SU remained committed to non-compliance with the Prevent Duty. The SU therefore did not take up membership of the Prevent Steering Group, which had considered these issues in detail.
- Operationally, it remained the case that speakers were processed, on average, within a week or less. Of around 200 events in the last year, the number that had been subject to lengthy approval procedures – involving liaison with the police, with Special Branch or the commissioning of legal advice - had been in single figures. Most had been approved within 1-3 working days.
- The SUP believed, however, that the processes associated with speaker requests exerted a 'chilling effect' on applications and might lead to City students attending events with speakers they wished to hear at other London HEIs, where he believed that different policies had been adopted.
- The Executive at City remained in touch with developments across London on freedom of speech policies and practice; and believed that City's proposed policies were very much in line with those adopted elsewhere.
- The Chair suggested that student societies could perhaps find a way to suggest a categorisation of proposed speakers (e.g. as green, amber or red); and that the policy be revisited once more by the Executive and the SU, to explore further the possibility of noting within it that "uncontroversial" speakers would be dealt with quickly. **[Action]**

17. External Auditor's Reappointment

Council **agreed** the re-appointment of PwC to act as External Auditors for the 2020/21 Financial Year.

Part Three – Items for Information

18. Minutes for Note

18.1 Senate, 16th September 2020

18.2 Corporate Governance & Nominations Committee, 8th October 2020

18.2 Audit and Risk Committee, 28th September 2020 and
9th November 2020

18.4 Strategy, Implementation and Performance Committee, 5th November 2020

19. Strategic Estates Projects Update

Council noted the update.

20. Report on Student Case Activity in 2019 and an update on Industrial Action and Covid-19 Complaints

Council noted the report and agreed that an updated version should be considered in more detail at the March meeting. **[Action]**

21. **Developing City's Civic Engagement Strategy**
Council noted the paper.
22. **Register of Interests**
Council noted the register and that any updates should be sent to Sarah Lawton.
23. **FOI Review**
Council **agreed** that no changes were required.
24. **Date of Next Meeting**
Council Away Day Friday 12th February 2021, 9am

Part Four – Meeting of Independent Members

There was a brief informal discussion among the independent members which was not minuted.

Julia Palca, Chair of Council, December 2020.