

UNIVERSITY COURT – AGENDA

Tuesday 2 March 2021, 09.30-12.30

Apologies: Heather Stenhouse

Declarations of interest: None

Introduction		
1.	Minutes of the meetings held on 26 November 2020 and 25 January 2021	Paper A Paper B 5 mins
2.	Matters arising	Oral
3.	Principal's Report and update on COVID-19 pandemic response <i>Principal, Vice-Principal, University Secretary & Compliance Officer</i>	Oral 40 mins
Substantive items		
4.	Q2 Business Report 2020/21 <i>Chief Financial Officer; Director of Strategy & Policy</i>	Paper C 20 mins
5.	Strategic Plan 2020-25: Mid-year progress report 2020-21 <i>Director of Strategy & Policy</i>	Paper D 15 mins
6.	Preparations for COP26 <i>Associate Principal, Research & Innovation</i>	Oral 25 mins



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Items for formal approval		<i>15 mins</i>
7.	Convener's Action: appointment to Remuneration Committee	Paper E
8.	Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-evaluation report for 2017-2020 Interim Outcome Agreement for 2020/21 	Paper F
9.	Complaints Handling Procedure	Paper G
Items for information		<i>5 mins</i>
10.	Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015): Annual Update	Paper H
Committee reports <i>(for noting, unless otherwise stated)</i>		<i>5 mins</i>
11.	Executive Team	Paper I
12.	Senate [recommended approval considered under item 9, above]	Paper J
13.	Court Business Group	Paper K
14.	Court Membership Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For approval: Extensions to lay member terms of office 	Paper L
15.	Audit & Risk Committee	Paper M
16.	Staff Committee	Paper N
17.	Enterprise & Investment Committee	Paper O
18.	Estates Committee	Paper P
Closing remarks		<i>5 mins</i>
19.	Any other business Date of next meeting Tuesday 11 May 2021, extended meeting with strategy session, 9.30-16.00 (precise timing TBC)	

MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT

26 November 2020

Meeting held by videoconference

Present: Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Virginia Beckett, Dr Jeremy Beeton, Dr Archie Bethel, Linda Brownlow, Kayla-Megan Burns, Ronnie Cleland, Alison Culpan, Gillian Hastings, Chelbi Hillan, Stephen Ingledew, Dr Barbara Keating, Councillor Ruairi Kelly, Susan Kelly, Professor Scott MacGregor, William McLachlan, Dr Katharine Mitchell, Malcolm Roughead, Heather Stenhouse, Marion Venman, Peter Young

Attending: Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Adrian Gillespie, Professor David Hillier, Professor Atilla Incecik, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Professor Ian Rivers, Gordon Scott, Professor Eleanor Shaw, Rona Smith, Professor Iain Stewart, Steven Wallace, Dr Daniel Wedgwood, Claire Carroll (item 8), Professor Stephen McArthur (item 8)

Apologies: Andrew Eccles

Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting.

No interests were declared.

1. Minutes

Court **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising, other than those covered in the main agenda.

3. Principal's Report

The Principal updated Court on recent developments, noting that the leadership of Court had been given regular briefing on operational issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic and that further summary of recent achievements would be given in the strategy session that was to follow this meeting. The following points were noted:

- In August 2019, the Principal had commissioned an independent QC-led Inquiry into the University's handling of matters relating to Kevin O'Gorman, a former staff member. This followed his conviction of a range of serious offences, some of which were carried out when he was an employee of the University between 2005 and 2012. Dr Craig Sandison QC had conducted a thorough and detailed independent examination of the University's records, systems, processes and actions to ascertain the facts pertaining to Kevin O'Gorman's recruitment to and promotion within the University, his activities while in post, the disciplinary processes undertaken, and his exit from the University. QC Sandison was also asked to make any recommendations as he saw fit. His report and recommendations had been sent to all staff and students, to the Executive Team, Senate and Court and had been made public in its entirety on 9 November 2020. The report contained recommendations, which, on behalf of the University, the Principal had accepted unreservedly. Sexual misconduct has no place in higher

education. With the objective of reducing risks, particularly for those most vulnerable, the Principal had invited the USCO to lead an Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG), tasked with implementing the recommendations in 2020/21. Work on the recommendations would provide opportunities for the University to enhance procedures to safeguard members of the university community. Involving staff and students, the IRIG would take forward the implementation work and would go beyond the report to identify other policies and actions to create an even stronger and safer environment for all. The work of the group would be open to wide participation from across the University. A report on the work of IRIG and implementation of the Inquiry recommendations would be submitted to Court in due course.

- 'Strathclyde Inspire', the University's new entrepreneurial strategy, had been launched on 19 November.
- The University had marked a Conferment Day online, in place of cancelled autumn graduation ceremonies, on the model of the well-received summer Conferment Day.
- The University continued to attract major research grants. The Principal gave details of some of the most significant recent awards.

Court **noted** the report.

4. Update on Health, Safety & Wellbeing

The University Secretary & Compliance Officer gave Court an overview of recent activity to manage the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The following points were noted:

- The health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff, visitors and the wider community continued to be the University's highest priority and national guidance was being followed at every stage.
- Between 20 November and 11 December, the Glasgow city region had been placed under the Scottish Government's Strategic Framework Level 4 restrictions, meaning that only essential teaching and essential research could take place on campus. Clear justifications and additional risk assessments were required and the Executive Team was considering each case.
- A test centre was being established at the Barony Hall to administer Lateral Flow Asymptomatic Covid-19 tests in anticipation of students travelling over the Christmas break, to help prevent transmission of the virus during travel or as a result of changing household.
- The University continued to provide support for mental health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on students remaining on campus over the Christmas break. Special support provision was being arranged for this period.

The USCO provided a summary of recorded cases of Covid-19 within University-managed residences and in the wider University community. The number and pattern of positive cases suggested that transmission control measures were effective.

Court **noted** the update.

5. Financial Statements 2019/20

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented the draft Financial Statements. While accounts preparation was complete, the Statements could be not be approved at this stage. Owing to the unusual conditions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, further work was required, in conjunction with the external auditor, to finalise the Going Concern section of the Statements. This was in line with the approach taken throughout the sector. A final version of the Financial Statements would be presented to Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) at its meeting in January and final approval would be sought through an Extraordinary Meeting of Court shortly thereafter. The CFO thanked Court for its flexible approach to this unavoidably extended process.

The Going Concern modelling was dependent in part on the University's continuing negotiations with the European Investment Bank (EIB) regarding its debt covenants, in the light of the impacts of the pandemic. These negotiations were progressing well and were likely to conclude soon.

Summarising the accounts, the CFO noted that headline surplus/deficit figures were subject to significant fluctuation caused by how pensions and capital grants, in particular, must be recorded under current accounting standards. The underlying picture was one of resilience, bearing in mind that the financial year in

question had seen normal operations in part but had also been significantly affected by the pandemic. Despite this, total income had remained flat and recurring income excluding volatile capital grants had grown, on a year-on-year basis.

Research intensity had continued to grow, advancing strategic objectives and bringing a corresponding increase in staff costs. Overall, both revenue and expenditure had been affected by the pandemic.

The University had significant headroom on all covenants at year-end. Reverse stress-testing carried out for Going Concern modelling showed the University to be resilient and in a strong position in the context of the sector.

In subsequent discussion, the CFO clarified the basis of Going Concern modelling, which drew on rich information including scenarios developed in Q1 forecasting, and the nature of the EIB negotiations. It was noted that the EIB was able to offer amendments to the terms of covenants and/or temporary waivers of covenant conditions, with previous budgetary performance taken into account when developing such solutions.

Members asked whether disposal of assets, mentioned in the accounts as a potential mitigation against any significant shortfall, might be pursued in the near future. It was noted that any asset disposal would be a lengthy process and that the value of maintaining any given asset would need to be considered. There would be significant work on space utilisation, which would help to inform a strategic approach to the University's physical assets.

Members commended the management of the impacts of the pandemic by the Finance team and the wider University, noting that a strong sense of institutional identity and purpose had been key to this.

Court **noted** the draft Financial Statements and the plan for their completion and approval by ARC and Court.

6. Q1 Business Report

The CFO summarised the Q1 financial forecast. The pandemic had affected both income and expenditure, including a significant reduction in non-EU tuition fee income. Significant growth in tuition fee income in the previous year had provided a strong basis for managing this. Relative to 2018/19, overall income was broadly unchanged, despite the effects of the pandemic. While the pattern of the University's performance for non-EU tuition fee income meant that the University would not consequently qualify for additional UK government loan assistance, this was also an indicator of financial strength and stability relative to the sector.

A cautious approach had been taken in forecasting. In line with this, income from student residences had been calculated on a revised assumption of 50% occupancy. The University's primary mitigation for the shortfall in fee income, the provision of additional January intakes for certain PGT courses, was not reflected in the present forecast but was showing positive results. The University was aiming to further diversify its international markets and finding strong demand in a number of countries, in addition to the expected recovery of existing markets. Research income was expected to rise on emergence from the pandemic crisis, the current 'order book' being strong.

Based on expected outcomes from ongoing negotiations with the European Investment Bank, taking into account a range of scenarios, clear headroom was projected on the University's debt covenants. No additional debt was required to maintain liquidity, but the University would seek to take advantage of any future offer of low-interest Financial Transactions loan funding, as it would under normal conditions.

The Director of Strategy & Policy presented the non-financial elements of the Business Report. Staff turnover and reported sickness absence had decreased. The gender pay gap showed a gradual reduction, based on year-end figures. The value of research grant applications was close to that at Q1 in the previous year, despite predictable falls in EU funding applications for cyclical reasons.

Demand for the PGT programmes with new January commencements was continuing to rise, with new applications in addition to deferrals. Applications for autumn entry to the next academic year were being monitored closely; early signs were positive, with strong recovery in key markets.

The University was on course to meet the target of the Commission on Widening Access for SIMD20 student numbers ten years ahead of schedule, showing exceptional performance in this area for a research-intensive institution. The University had also increased its intake of care-experienced students.

Subsequent discussion centred on the additional risks posed by the UK's withdrawal from the EU. While there was continuing uncertainty around the nature and impact of this, the University was continuing to monitor risks and plan accordingly and was considering potential mitigations in the event of a 'no deal' scenario. It was noted that the opportunity for informed assessment and the formulation of any appropriate actions was expected to arise in January 2021, with greater knowledge of both external developments and the positive financial impacts of the new student cohorts.

Court **noted** the Business Report.

7. Strategic Plan Progress Report

The Director of Strategy & Policy presented a summary of progress against the University's strategic KPIs, which covered both a final review of the KPIs from the 2015-2020 strategy and an early assessment of progress relative to the Vision 2025 strategic KPIs.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was visible in certain areas, in particular industrial research income, but in other areas, including student recruitment, it did not yet feed into the figures.

A number of areas showed highly positive performance, including Widening Access (as noted under the previous item). The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions had achieved the relevant targets in the last strategic plan and was on track for the 2025 target at this stage. Further work would be required to maintain and build on recent success in this area.

Members were informed that discussion of the KPIs and targets was to be undertaken, as part of an annual process, and that both opportunities and risks would be taken into consideration.

Court **noted** the report.

8. REF 2021 update

Professor Stephen McArthur (Deputy Associate Principal) and Claire Carroll (Research Policy Manager) gave an overview of preparations for the REF2021 submission.

The primary focus at this stage was on Impact and Environment statements and good progress was being made with these. The institutional Environment statement had been updated and would be shared with selected Court members soon for review – those members were thanked for volunteering their help. Environment metrics had been finalised since the last Court meeting. It was noted that Environment would contribute 15% of the score for each Unit of Assessment (UoA), based on a combination of narrative and metrics that could vary according to UoA.

Court noted that, as agreed by Court Business Group, an Extraordinary Meeting of Court was to be held in order to review the REF submission in detail, the scheduled March Court meeting being very close to the submission deadline. This additional meeting was likely to be combined with the planned meeting to approve the Financial Statements.

It was noted that a number of Impact case studies gathered for the REF would potentially be of use in activity surrounding the COP26 climate conference.

Court **noted** the update.

Items for formal approval

9. Annual Statement on Research Integrity

Court **approved** the Statement.

10. Convener's Action: SBS UAE branch campus – Country Manager and Authority to operate banking facilities

Court **homologated** approval by Convener's Action to

- change the SBS Country Manager on the Dubai Commercial Licence; and
- authorise the SBS Country Manager to open, operate and close bank accounts,

as set out in the paper, noting that the Vice Convener had signed relevant documents on behalf of the Convener.

Item for information

Court received and **noted** the following items:

11. Lady Curran Endowment Fund

12. Independent QC Inquiry Report

Court noted that the Inquiry Report had been discussed as part of item 3 (see above). Court was supportive of the way in which the process had been managed and welcomed the report and the University's proposals for full implementation of all the Report's recommendations and further enhancement of relevant policies and procedures through the work of the Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group.

Committee Reports

Court received and **noted** the following committee reports:

13. Executive Team

14. Court Business Group

15. Audit & Risk Committee

Court **approved** retention of Ernst & Young LLP as the University's External Auditor for the audit of the 2020/21 Financial Statements.

16. Estates Committee

17. Senate (relevant approval noted under item 9)

18. AOB

There was no other business.

Date of next meeting

- Extraordinary meeting to approve Financial Statements and review the REF submission: date to be confirmed [minute note: subsequently scheduled for 25 January 2021]
- Next ordinary meeting: 2 March 2021

MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT

25 January 2021

Meeting held by videoconference

Present: Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Virginia Beckett, Dr Jeremy Beeton, Dr Archie Bethel, Linda Brownlow, Kayla-Megan Burns, Ronnie Cleland, Alison Culpan, Andrew Eccles, Gillian Hastings, Chelbi Hillan, Councillor Ruairi Kelly, Susan Kelly, Professor Scott MacGregor, William McLachlan, Malcolm Roughead, Marion Venman, Peter Young, Brenda Wyllie

Attending: Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Adrian Gillespie, Professor David Hillier, Professor Atilla Incecik, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Professor Ian Rivers, Gordon Scott, Professor Eleanor Shaw, Rona Smith, Professor Iain Stewart, Steven Wallace, Dr Daniel Wedgwood, Kirsty MacLeod (items 1 & 2), Claire Carroll (item 3), Professor Stephen McArthur (item 3)

Apologies: Stephen Ingledew, Dr Barbara Keating, Dr Katherine Mitchell, Heather Stenhouse

Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting.

No interests were declared.

1. Going Concern assessment and EIB covenant amendment

[Reserved]

2. Financial Statements 2019/20

The CFO presented the Financial Statements, noting that Court had already considered a draft version at the November meeting of Court. The final version reflected additional work with ARC and the external auditor in relation to Going Concern (see previous item). Members' attention was drawn to the auditor's report; it was notable that no Emphasis of Matter paragraph had been included, despite the challenging external environment.

Court **approved** the Financial Statements, subject to conclusion of the final audit procedures on the Going Concern work and subject to the signing of the EIB amendment.

The Convener commended Finance and the wider University management for the quality of their work on the Financial Statements, despite the current challenging circumstances.

3. REF 2021: Submission Development

Professor Stephen McArthur (Deputy Associate Principal) and Claire Carroll (Research Policy Manager) gave an overview of preparations for the REF2021 submission, noting that this would be the final substantial update for Court before the submission was made. Final performance forecasts had been provided. It was noted that minor changes had been made at the national level to some aspects of the timing of the REF process, but none of these affected the University's submission deadline.

Final selection of outputs had been completed within the Units of Assessment (UoAs) and the selection of case studies was largely complete. A detailed internal review of Impact case studies had been conducted, with significant input from expert advisors. UoA-level Environment narratives had also been thoroughly reviewed, with further work required only in two very large UoAs. The University was also conducting system and administrative checks to ensure a smooth submission process.

Performance forecasting had been conducted on conservative assumptions, recognising that some aspects of the review process could not be replicated internally. Internal scoring used a more fine-grained scale than the official REF scores and all intermediate internal scores had been 'rounded down' to ensure a cautious forecast.

The Executive Deans provided summaries of REF preparations and predictions in their respective Faculties and confirmed that they had endorsed the processes and approaches taken to reach these.

Court **noted** the summary and forecasts.

Items for formal approval

4. Court dates 2021/22

Court **approved** the proposed meeting dates.

5. AOB

There was no other business.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 2 March 2021

Q2 Business Report 2020/21
[RESERVED ITEM]

Strategic Plan 2020-25 Mid-year progress report 2020-21
[RESERVED ITEM]

Appointment to Remuneration Committee

[The following is the text of the Court Membership Group (CMG) paper, on the basis of which CMG recommended the appointment, which was subsequently effected by Convener's Action on behalf of Court and which Court is now asked to **homologate**.]

1. The terms of reference of Remuneration Committee state that its composition should be:

"The Convener of Court ex officio, the Treasurer ex officio, up to five other members, appointed based on their skills and experience. These may be existing members of Court or external individuals co-opted to provide expertise not otherwise available amongst the membership of Court, subject to there being a majority of lay members on the Committee at all times (with the majority of these being members of Court)"
2. In the 2019-20 session, Marion Venman served in the final membership category listed above. This was a one-year appointment, to achieve an appropriate level of attendance at the November 2019 meeting. However, it would be beneficial to the Committee to continue to draw on Marion's skills and experience in the current year (which is her final year as a member of Court; this is why the re-appointment is for a single year only).
3. It is therefore proposed that the committee co-opt Marion Venman, who has indicated she would be willing to re-join the Committee, if appointed. Marion has previously served on Staff Committee, in addition to prior service on Remuneration Committee, and therefore is experienced in both University staffing matters and in senior remuneration.
4. To enable this appointment to be made within the required timescale, CMG is being consulted by correspondence. The proposed appointment will then be recommended for Court approval by Convener's Action, for homologation on 2 March 2021.

Recommendations

5. CMG is invited to **recommend to Court** that **Marion Venman** be appointed to Remuneration Committee for the current session.

**Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council
[RESERVED ITEM]**

Revised Complaints Handling Procedure

Background

1. A model Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) was developed and published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) under section 16B of the SPSO Act 2002 (as amended by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010). All Scottish universities were required to adopt the two stage model CHP by 30 August 2013. Following the internal approval of a suitable procedure by Court, on the recommendation of Senate, the University implemented the CHP on 27 August 2013 and provided the required notification to the SPSO to indicate compliance.
2. In 2018-19, SPSO conducted a review of the MCHP and made revisions to:
 - standardise the core text across all of Scotland's public services (to remove minor inconsistencies in how the MCHP operates within different sectors), while retaining individualised sector-specific content and examples in each version
 - update the MCHPs in line with:
 - feedback from organisations under jurisdiction (via a consultation survey and individual feedback from contacts with SPSO)
 - issues identified in casework
 - recent research and good practice in relation to using alternative resolution approaches, promoting positive complaint behaviours and improving access to complaints for vulnerable groups.
3. The updated MCHPs were published under section 16B(5) of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 on 31 January 2020 with public sector organisations required to implement changes by April 2021.

The MCHP

4. The revised MCHP for each sector includes the following sections:
 - Part 1: Overview and structure
 - Part 2: When to use the procedure – guidance on identifying what is and what is not a complaint, handling complex or unusual complaint circumstances, the interaction of complaints and other processes, and what to do if the MCHP does not apply
 - Part 3: The complaints handling process – guidance on handling a complaint through stages 1 and 2, and dealing with post-closure contact
 - Part 4: Governance of the procedure – staff roles and responsibilities and guidance on recording, reporting, publicising and learning from complaints
 - Part 5: Customer-facing guide – information for customers on how we handle complaints
 - Implementation guide
5. The SPSO states that the CHP is designed to be an internal document for universities to adopt. It contains references and links to more detailed guidance from the SPSO. There is limited scope to change the text with changes permitted only where necessary to adapt it to the University's structures.

Key Changes in the Revised MCHP

6. There will continue to be a 2 stage process for handling complaints with unchanged time limits: frontline (maximum time limit of 5 working days) and investigation (maximum time limit of 20 working days). Any member of staff may deal with frontline complaints, including the staff

member complained about. The main principle remains to respond to complaints at the earliest opportunity and as close to the point of service delivery as possible.

7. The revised procedure has a requirement for all staff to receive training on the procedure at induction and refresher training as appropriate. Work is ongoing to develop appropriate, online training for new staff, as required by the procedure, along with refresher training on the revised CHP.
8. Key points to note in the revised CHP are as follows:
 - Complaint Categories: The revised CHP includes Additional Categories of what is and is not a Complaint. Most notably, a concern about student conduct or a grievance relating to staff recruitment, are no longer considered complaints under this procedure. However, new categories of complaint are specified as failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance and disagreement with a decision. When the procedure does not apply we are required to explain to the complainant why we have made this decision, what action (if any) we will take (and advise them of their right to contact the SPSO if they remain dissatisfied).
 - Frontline Complaints: To date, we have used “resolved” as the default term for handling complaints at Frontline (Stage 1). In the revised procedure we can no longer use resolved in this way as the term now has a specific meaning. Also, the CHP now requires that the complainant is given an outcome of the complaint (upheld, partially upheld or not upheld) at frontline. We are also required to signpost to the complainant how to escalate the complaint to stage 2 if they remain dissatisfied.
 - Timeframes: The basic timeframes remain unchanged, however, the revised procedure states explicitly that, if a complaint has not been closed within ten working days, it must be escalated to stage 2 for a final response. This has the potential to cause an increase in cases being escalated to stage 2 unnecessarily.
 - Where a complainant has received a stage 1 response, and wishes to escalate to stage 2, they must now request this either within six months of when they first knew of the problem or within two months of receiving their stage 1 response (if this is later). The CHP was previously silent on this and other HEIS have reported complainants raising a complaint at stage 2 a considerable time after receiving a stage 1 response.
 - Resolving a complaint: A complaint may now be resolved at any point in the complaint handling process. A complaint is resolved when both the University and the complainant agree what action will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the complainant, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld. We must keep a clear record of how the complaint was resolved, what action was agreed and the complainant’s agreement to this as a final outcome. Where a complaint is resolved, we do not need to continue looking into it or provide a decision on all points of complaint, but should instead confirm the resolution agreed and signpost the complainant to stage 2 or to the SPSO as usual.

Independent QC Inquiry Report recommendations

9. While preparing for the introduction of the revised CHP, the QC-led Independent Inquiry into the University's handling of matters relating to Kevin O'Gorman, a former staff member was received. The QC's recommendations were accepted unreservedly by the Principal, on behalf of the University. This included recommendations that relate to the University's handling of complaints. In particular, the report recommends that:
 - complaints of or concerning sexual misconduct should not be subject to any indicative time limit;
 - procedures should explicitly require the recording of the reasons for decisions taken in the processing and disposal of complaints; and
 - the procedure and the training of complaints handlers should ensure sensitivity to the likely power dynamic underlying any complaint coming to their attention, in terms of the potential suggestion that a staff member could influence the complainant's academic career, and how that dynamic may inform the proper handling of the complaint.
10. The Principal invited the USCO to lead an Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG), tasked with implementing the recommendations in 2020/21. Since the University's scope to adapt the SPSO's model CHP is limited, the recommendations relating to complaints handling will be addressed through: the guide for students (part 5) and separate guidance for staff handling complaints, both of which are being developed in consultation with IRIG. Further amendments and/or additional examples may therefore be added to the guide for students (part 5), at IRIG's request, following Court approval.
11. The QC's recommendations relating to complaints handling provide opportunities for us to enhance our procedures and strengthen guidance to safeguard members of our university community. A report on the work undertaken by IRIG will be presented to Court in June 2021.

Recommendation

12. The University's version of the SPSO's revised Model Complaints Handling Procedure is available on SharePoint. Court is invited to:
 - **note** the key changes to the CHP and **approve** the revised procedure for implementation from 1 April 2021;
 - **note** that the recommendations from the Independent QC-led Inquiry relating to complaints will be implemented through the guidance that will accompany the new model CHP, in consultation with the IRIG.

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) Prevent – Annual Update

Background and national context

1. The [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) includes a duty on Universities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. UK government guidance on how specified authorities in England and Wales and in Scotland are to comply with the Prevent duty was published in September 2015.
2. In Scotland compliance is led by the Higher Education Prevent Working Group, established by the Scottish University Secretaries in 2015, which meets twice per annum. Membership includes a representative from each Scottish HEI; four members nominated by AUCSO (the Association of University Chief Security Officers); the Head of the Scottish Government Connected Communities Unit; Police Scotland. Representatives of NUS Scotland and UCU Scotland attend the Working Group by invitation.
3. The University Secretary and Compliance Officer or her nominee, the Director of Student Experience, represents the University on the Higher Education Prevent Working Group and at twice-yearly meetings of the Local Multi-Agency CONTEST Group.
4. The Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group met in May and December 2020. The Scottish Government Prevent Conference did not take place in 2020 because of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
5. The work of the UK Government Independent Review of Prevent has been impacted by the global pandemic and the date of publication has not been announced.
6. In addition to the University Prevent Working Group, the University Secretary and Compliance Officer has established a Safeguarding Working Group which is leading on the development of a university-wide implementation of safeguarding principles.
7. The University Prevent Working Group reports annually to ET and through ET to the University Court.
8. This paper updates Court on the actions taken to ensure compliance with statutory obligations.

University of Strathclyde Prevent Working Group

9. The University Prevent Working group is responsible for implementation of the Prevent duties and the Guidance prepared by the Higher Education Prevent Working Group. The Group’s remit includes:
 - maintaining a shared awareness and understanding of the risks of radicalisation within the campus community;
 - through the convener, reporting to the governing body;
 - communicating to relevant staff the requirements and importance of the statutory duty;
 - making decisions on sensitive matters that may arise e.g.
 - deciding what action to take where concerns are raised that a member of the campus community may be being drawn into terrorism; and
 - deciding whether to allow a controversial speaker to visit the campus.

10. The members are Dr Veena O'Halloran, USCO (Convener); Stuart Brough (ISD), Claire Carroll (RKES); Rachel Doyle (Safety, Health and Wellbeing); Gordon Scott (HR); Colin Montgomery (Campus Security); Ray McHugh (Marketing and Corporate Communications) and Gill Watt (Student Experience).
11. There is a standing invitation for two members of Strathclyde Students' Union Executive (the Student President and VP Inclusion) and the President of the Strathclyde University Muslim Students' Association to attend meetings of the University's Prevent Working Group.

The NUS opposes the legislation and hence the student representatives attend as observers, rather than members. Separately from the meetings, student representatives are consulted on all Prevent matters relating to students.

12. The agreed position of the University's Prevent Working Group is that existing managers should continue to be the initial point of contact for any Prevent concerns, with support provided by the University Prevent Working Group. Ultimate responsibility for reporting under the legislation resides with the University Secretary and Compliance Officer.
13. The sector guidance states that staff engaged in the provision of advice to students should be aware that any concerns that a student may be being drawn into terrorism should be raised with the University Secretary and Compliance Officer, who will discuss it with the University Prevent Working Group.
14. No reportable concerns under the Prevent duties were raised in 2020.

Prevent Duty Guidance Monitoring

Staff Briefings and Training

15. The Scottish HE Prevent Working Group encourages regional formal training for University managers with a role in addressing the statutory duty. The West region includes Strathclyde, Glasgow, GCU, GSA, RCS, SRUC-west and UWS. Meetings are held twice each year to share experience, practical issues and lessons learned. Local leadership has been provided by Glasgow City Council. Following the recent retirement of the City Council lead officer, notification of the new lead is currently awaited.
16. Developments in sector training is led by the Scottish Government's Safeguarding and Vulnerability Team (within the Connected Communities Unit), including the review of the Collaborative Outcomes Learning Tool (COLT) which was designed for the HE sector in Scotland. Further national developments are awaited before consideration is given to future training.

Speakers and Events

17. The [Events and Speaker Policy](#), which was approved by the Executive Team and Court in 2016 continues to be in operation across the University. It will be reviewed internally in 2021.

Provision of Welfare and Pastoral Support

18. The University has a well-established range of student support services, all of which are now accessible and available online. The promotion and support of positive mental health and wellbeing is a key aspect of the provision.

Liaison with Strathclyde Students' Union

19. The University continues to engage with Strath Union on Prevent matters. As noted above, representation from Strath Union at the University Prevent Working Group meetings is facilitated.
20. The Director of Student Experience, senior colleagues from Student Experience and Strathclyde Students' Union Executive continue to work together on the enhancement and promotion of Interfaith Services at the University. The joint Faith and Belief Fund established in 2018/19 continues to promote interfaith activities across student clubs and societies through online support.

Information Sharing

21. The Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group continues to work in conjunction with Police Scotland and the Scottish Government to establish a formal 'information sharing' protocol for Scottish Higher Education Institutions.

Safety Online

22. In complying with the Counter Terrorism Act, the University has a responsibility to protect researchers. Work is ongoing within the Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group to develop a policy to provide guidance on security sensitive research material.

Scottish Government Compliance Review

23. The Scottish Higher Education sector's progress in complying with the Counter Terrorism and security Act is monitored by the Government via quarterly reviews by the Safeguarding and Vulnerability Team. At present these reviews are suspended but may be reintroduced in the spring 2021.
24. Summary reports are presented to the Government via the Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group and are considered at the biannual meetings of the group.

Recommendation

25. Court is invited to **note** the actions taken to address the duties placed upon the University by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015).

Executive Team Report to Court

The Executive Team (ET) met on 19 November, 7 & 15 December, 26 January and 9 February, with additional meetings in November and December as the University's Emergency Management Team overseeing the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The following key items were discussed by the Executive Team and are provided here for Court to note:

1. Management of the Covid-19 pandemic response

ET took and/or reviewed a number of decisions in key areas, including

- suspension of outbound international placements and exchanges for students in Semester 2 2020/21 with specific exceptions for cases with a clear rationale, where appropriate risk assessment had been carried out.
- changing arrangements for learning and teaching, in line with changing government guidance on management of the pandemic;
- on-campus research and teaching activities under different levels of Covid-19 restrictions;
- establishment of a centre for asymptomatic testing;
- management of and additional funding for UKRI-funded PGR students affected by the pandemic;
- regular reporting on student recruitment;
- adoption of a common and consistent approach on monitoring student engagement;
- additional January starts for selected taught postgraduate programmes;
- arrangements for lateral flow Covid-19 testing on campus and support for those students requiring mandatory PCR tests;
- rent refunds for students, in the light of delayed returns to residences;
- return and resume assurance checklists;
- agreement on the proposal for the semester 2 formal assessment period to take place online for the majority of programmes.

2. Health and Safety moment

Under the 'Safety Moment' led by the University Secretary and Compliance Officer, the Team took the opportunity to discuss health, wellbeing and safety matters.

3. Professor Graeme Reid Report – Towards Vision 2025: Supporting research and innovation

ET considered a report that the Principal had commissioned from Professor Graham Reid, which focused on Strathclyde's resilience, agility and competitiveness in research and innovation, in the context of Vision 2025 and the changing external context.

4. Business Reports

ET noted the Q1 and Q2 Business Reports, comprising updates on key areas of business including finance, student recruitment and research performance.

5. Research Integrity Statement

ET endorsed the University's annual statement on research integrity, which had been recommended by Senate for approval by Court, in line with the requirements of the Concordat on Research Integrity.

6. Strathclyde Global Talent Campaign 2020-21

ET agreed a timetable for the Strathclyde Global Talent Campaign 2020-21.

7. European Investment Bank negotiations and Going Concern assessment

ET received regular updates on the University's negotiations with the European Investment Bank (EIB) regarding covenants on the University's borrowings with the EIB and work to finalise the Going Concern basis for the Annual Financial Statements. (The amendments to the University's covenants with the EIB and Financial Statements were approved by Court on 25 January 2021.)

8. Annual Planning Guidance 2021-2022

ET received an update on the annual planning and budgeting round, noting the impact of the pandemic on the financial context, and agreed that a stage-gating process be included this year to manage expenditure and investment in line with observed levels of impact and any consequent financial constraints.

9. SIMS: Executive Steering Group report and Phase 2 Project Closedown Report

ET noted project progress and delivery as reported by the SIMS Executive Steering Group (SESG), approved the formal closure of the SIMS Phase 2 project and endorsed the recommendation of the SESG that a high-level strategic group be established to consider the next stage of digital transformation.

10. Hardship Fund

ET agreed an injection of funds into the Covid-19 Hardship Fund and that it should continue to be offered on the same terms, with re-applications accepted.

11. Independent QC report

ET considered the report prepared by Craig Sandison QC into the circumstances surrounding serious misconduct by a former member of staff. Mr Sandison's report and recommendations had also been sent to all staff and students, Senate and Court and had been made public in its entirety on 9 November 2020. The report contained recommendations, which, on behalf of the University, the Principal had accepted unreservedly. The Principal had invited the USCO to lead an Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG), involving staff and students and open to input from across the University. The IRIG was tasked with implementing the recommendations in 2020/21 and to look beyond the report to identify other policies and actions to create an even stronger and safer environment for all.

12. Student Recruitment 2020-21

ET received regular updates on student recruitment.

13. EU Fees

ET endorsed a recommendation from Fees Strategy Group (FSG) regarding the approach on headline fees for future fee status of EU-domiciled students in the context of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. Considering policy elsewhere in the higher education sector, FSG had recommended aligning fees for EU students with those for non-EU students, accompanied by a support framework to manage the transition, with a focus on mitigating the impact on students.

14. Complaints Handling Report

ET noted the 2019/20 Q4 Complaints Handling Report.

15. PhD induction events

ET noted that induction events for new PhDs had been held and had generated positive engagement across the world. A buddy system had also been established and had attracted high levels of interest and many volunteers. Strathclyde had been approached for guidance on setting up similar schemes overseas, an indication that Strathclyde was recognised to be an exemplar of best practice.

16. TIC Zone

ET received a summary of progress regarding the Business Case for the proposed TIC Zone development. Noting the strong rationale for the development, given its timely expected contributions to economic growth, innovation, skills and positive social impact, ET approved arrangements for procurement of the Construction team, a commitment to high standards of sustainability (Passivhaus accreditation) and social impact, and a phased opening of the new buildings.

ET also received an update on progress with the TIC Zone innovation clusters and identification of priorities and resource requirements.

17. Brexit preparations summary

ET received a summary of the University's preparations for the end of the transition period for the UK's withdrawal from the EU, which took into account national guidance on this issue.

18. Vision 2025 KPIs, milestones and targets

ET received an overview of progress against each of the 16 strategic KPIs and the ways in which progress might be, or have been, affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Members noted the summary of progress to date, the extent of current understanding of the impact of the pandemic and the indications given of areas for further exploration.

19. SFC Outcome Agreement

ET received an update on matters relating to the University's Outcome Agreement (OA) with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). ET approved the self-evaluation report for submission to the SFC, subject to minor amendments, and also approved the draft interim Outcome Agreement. ET delegated authority for final sign off to the Principal, noting that its submission to SFC would highlight Court's role in formally approving the Outcome Agreement at its meeting on 2 March.

20. Draft Court Agenda

ET considered a draft agenda for the Court meeting on 2 March 2021.

21. Strategic Plan mid-year progress update

ET considered a mid-year progress report covering 2020-21, the second for the University's Strategic Plan, Vision 2025.

22. Non-UKRI PGR Extensions

ET agreed to introduce a second time-based scheme that would provide additional support to non-UKRI funded students who have experienced Covid-related delays. The scheme would operate in parallel with the second scheme for UKRI funded students which targeted students with nominal completion times from April 2021.

23. Strathclyde Acceleration Teams

ET agreed a framework for the creation of Strathclyde Acceleration Teams (SATs) to take forward the outputs from the Visioning Groups that had taken part in the Court strategy session on 26 November 2020. Members noted key milestones, working towards the May Court meeting.

24. Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015): Prevent Annual Update

ET reviewed and noted the report, prior to onward transmission to Court.

Senate Report to Court

Senate met on 27 January 2021. The Senate meeting took place online (via the Zoom platform) in accordance with measures in place to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

This report provides Court with key points from the Senate meeting.

FOR APPROVAL

Senate invites Court to **approve** the following recommendation considered and endorsed by Senate on 27 January 2021:

1. Revised Complaints Handling Procedure

Senate

- noted and endorsed the revisions to the University's Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP), and **recommends the new model to Court for approval** and implementation from 1 April 2021; and
- noted that the recommendations from the Independent QC-led Inquiry relating to complaints will be implemented through the guidance that will accompany the new model CHP, in consultation with the Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG).

FOR NOTING

Senate invites Court to **note** the following items considered by Senate on 27 January 2021.

2. Mark of Respect: Campbell Hunter

The Principal intimated the tragic death of Campbell Hunter as a result of an unfortunate accident on campus. Campbell was a first-year student studying English, Journalism and Psychology and lived on campus. The University community was deeply saddened by his death. Campbell was well-known and liked, and his tutors described him as a brilliant, engaged, and enthusiastic student. Since the tragedy, our student support services have been in touch with Campbell's family and friends, and support remains available to anyone who has been affected. The Procurator Fiscal is currently investigating the circumstances of his death. Meantime, the University has assessed and secured the location of the accident ahead of modifications being carried out. Senate joined in a minute's silence as a mark of respect to Campbell and his family. The condolences of Senate would be conveyed to the Hunter family.

3. Report from Senate Business Committee:

Senate Business Committee (SBC) noted at its meeting on 14 January 2021 that, since the last meeting of Senate on 18 November 2020, the Collaborative Provision Agreement (CPA) Subgroup had processed three agreements (a new financial agreement, a new collaborative agreement and a renewal of an existing collaborative agreement) which were detailed in the Faculty reports to Senate.

Senate was invited to consider and approve the reports for the January Senate meeting. Senate approval was given where requested in the reports, and is documented in the formal minute of the Senate meeting.

4. Principal's Report

The Principal provided a comprehensive report on news and items of interest since the last meeting, covering the following key topics:

- External Environment and Covid-19 News
 - The accelerated roll-out of the vaccine offered a degree of optimism and the asymptomatic testing centre at the Barony Hall would remain available for students when they plan their return once current restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, the University will continue to focus on wellbeing and Senators were encouraged to signpost teams to the wellbeing support that was available on the University's Wellbeing & Working from Home Hub.
- Vision 2025
- Launch of Strathclyde Inspire – Entrepreneurial Strategy
- Heart of the Campus Project
- National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS) construction
- Global Talent Attraction Programme (GTAP) and Portal
- Research Excellence Framework 2021
- Health & Care Futures: Pioneering Better Health
- GTRSB into HE Pledge
 - Strathclyde recently became one of the first five signatories to a pledge that commits to support access to HE for the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater (GTRSB) communities. Recognising that these communities are under-represented in HE, the University will take a number of actions this year to improve support, including a named contact for GTRSB students, developing guidance for staff regarding the experiences of GTRSB communities in education, and seeking opportunities to celebrate GTRSB culture.
- Staff Awards and Achievements
- Honorary Degrees Nominations
- QC-led Independent Inquiry - IRIG Update
 - The University Secretary and Compliance Officer provided an update to Senate on the work of the Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG) established to address the recommendations of the QC-led Independent Inquiry into matters relating to Kevin O'Gorman, a former member of staff. Following receipt of the QC's report, the Principal, on behalf of the University, accepted all the recommendations unreservedly. IRIG had met for the first time on 9 December 2020 and was scheduled to meet again on 2 February 2021 and monthly thereafter. The USCO outlined the remit of the Group which had been proposed on the basis that sexual misconduct and other inappropriate behaviours had no place in higher education: the IRIG would: (i) facilitate the implementation of the recommendations from the independent QC Inquiry; (ii) consider opportunities to go beyond the scope of the QC Independent Inquiry report to identify other policies, actions and initiatives to create an even stronger and safer culture and environment for all; and (iii) ensure its work was informed by academic research, published material and the experience of other institutions in the UK and beyond. The Principal welcomed the update and pledged that he and the Executive Team

would be among the first to participate in Bystander and First Responder training.

5. Substantive Items of Business

Senate received updates on the following items:

- i. Senate noted with interest a presentation on **Faculty Interim Reflections on Learning and Teaching and the Formal Assessment Period in the First Semester of AY 2020/21**, with an overview from the Vice-Dean Academic (Science), reflecting achievements and feedback from staff and students and featuring particular highlights and innovative approaches introduced by Vice/Associate Deans from each Faculty. The planned approach where the University transitioned from initially online to blended learning with an increase in on-campus activity during the first semester had not been possible for all, due to evolving Scottish Government guidance, but had taken place in some areas. Instead, Semester 1 had seen (i) the successful development and delivery of all undergraduate and postgraduate provision predominantly online, maintaining a balance between synchronous / asynchronous activity and (ii) the successful completion of the formal assessment period in December 2020 online. The Principal thanked all colleagues including the Vice Principal and Director of Education Enhancement for their collective input in supporting the online transition of learning, teaching and assessment so successfully during Semester 1 – an example of Team Strathclyde at its best.
- ii. The Director of Education Enhancement presented Senate with reflections on **NSS 2020 outcome performance and an update on preparations for NSS 2021** including institutional planning and key dates. For NSS 2021, the core survey questions would not change, but additional COVID-19-related questions would be included. No optional or provider-specific questions had been selected by Strathclyde. The UK survey dates were 6 January - 30 April 2021 and UK Strathclyde students would be contacted from 25 January 2021 onwards. The Executive Deans complemented this presentation by providing an update on Faculty preparations and areas for attention for 2021. Key areas of common focus included Assessment and Feedback, Student Voice, Organisation and Management with an emerging theme of Student Community, arising this year as a result of remote learning. Senate was reassured that Faculties were focussed on achieving good response rates and outcomes.
- iii. The Director of Strategy and Policy and Chief Financial Officer presented Senate with a focussed update on **student recruitment for 2020/21** (following an intake of Masters students in January 2021) and details of the **current financial forecast on the 2020/21 budget** respectively. **[Reserved]**. Although the final numbers were still settling, this reflected a positive position and may inform strategy for recruitment in January 2022. It was reported that, despite a shortfall in tuition fees as well as other income (eg Catering, Events, Halls of Residence) against the Q1 Forecast, the University remained in strong financial health with a good balance between risks and opportunities. In terms of outlook, the Q2 Forecast was currently

underway and would be completed in February and budget planning had started. Key to this process would be forecast accuracy and monitoring.

iv. The StrathUnion President provided a **Student Voice** update, highlighting several areas of interest that included:

- Appreciation for Senate's silent mark of respect for Campbell Hunter and his family;
- Welcoming the review of the University's No Detriment Policy, which had been successful last year, ahead of presentation to the March Senate which would relieve uncertainty for students;
- Welcoming the University's position on rent rebates for students unable to reside in the Halls of Residence due to restrictions in place to suppress the spread of COVID-19;
- Intimating that the biggest StrathUnion general meeting in years had recently taken place on-line with over 130 attendees with a good level of engagement;
- Welcoming StrathUnion's role in Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG) initiatives, promoting culture change around abusive behaviour; and
- Highlighting an emerging area of concern around student mental health. The University's increased investment in student wellbeing services could make a significant impact and students were being encouraged to take opportunities to talk about this issue. The StrathUnion President asked Senators for help in signposting wellbeing services to students during lectures and tutorials and via Myplace. Senate agreed that an 'all staff' communication would be circulated to help signpost students to Mental Health and Wellbeing Services.

v. B Green, Deputy Associate Principal (Learning and Teaching), presented Senate with an update on the progress of the development of the transformational spaces in the **Learning and Teaching Building** showing visuals of the various internal floors including the functional open space for StrathUnion off Richmond Street, visuals of the external Plaza area and plans for the Heart of the Campus. It was anticipated that the site would be handed back to the University by Balfour Beattie by the end of February 2021 but transitioning to occupancy would be dependent upon the relaxation of current COVID-19 restrictions hopefully by the start of AY 2021-22.

End

Court Business Group Report to Court

The following items were discussed by Court Business Group on 18 February 2021 and are provided here for Court to note.

1. Q2 Business Report 2020/21

CBG considered the Q1 Business Report and financial forecast. Taking into consideration the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the University was in a good position, its debt covenants and cash position being secure through balance of the academic year. While income and expenditure had both been affected significantly by the pandemic, there had been some recovery in income and improvements in the cost base since Q1: in particular, the introduction of additional January PGT intakes and careful cost control had partly mitigated the previously forecast shortfall to budget.

The University had been successful in its bid for low-interest 'Financial Transactions' loans from the Scottish Funding Council, reflecting confidence in the University as an investible institution. It was noted that the University's own investment priorities remained largely unaffected by the wider situation.

It was noted that both the pandemic and the UK's withdrawal from the EU impacted on a number of elements of the Business Report, at least in the short term, in some cases moving the figures in a positive direction. The data would be monitored for longer-term trends; in many cases, greater clarity was expected by the end of the academic year.

2. Strategic Plan 2020-25: mid-year progress report

CBG received a summary of progress against the University's strategic KPIs, approximately one year after the launch of the Strategic Plan. As noted in relation to the Business Report, the impacts of the pandemic and other external factors had affected a number of key data points, which would be monitored to track whether the relevant movements would be sustained into the longer term. These included the KPIs relating to the PGR population, retention and greenhouse gas emissions. CBG noted that there was on-going work in relation to measures to address the gender pay gap, which might lead to future revisions of the relevant KPI and associated targets.

3. Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council

CBG noted the two Outcome Agreement (OA) documents that had been submitted to the SFC in January, subject to Court approval: the self-evaluation report for the final year of the previous three-year OA and an interim OA for 2020-21. It was noted that the SFC was undertaking a review of the OA process and that this was therefore expected to change in the future.

CBG **recommended** the self-evaluation report and interim OA for formal approval by Court.

4. Preparations for COP26

CBG received a presentation on the University's preparations for the COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference that was to be held in Glasgow later in the year, and noted the opportunities that this would create for showcasing the University's achievements, creating a legacy in teaching, research and innovation activities and also advancing the University's own net-zero greenhouse gas emission plans.

5. Court Agenda, 2 March 2021

CBG **approved** the agenda.

Court Membership Group Report to Court

The following items were discussed by Court Membership Group on 16 February 2021.

1. Appointment to Remuneration Committee

Court Membership Group (CMG) noted the appointment of Marion Venman to Remuneration Committee. This appointment had been recently recommended by CMG, by correspondence, and approved by the Convener on behalf of Court. It would be presented to Court for homologation on 2 March.

2. Lay Members of Court: Extension of Terms of Office and Recruitment

CMG received an update on the process for appointing new lay members of Court in time for the beginning of the academic year 2021-22.

At its meeting in September 2020, CMG had delegated authority to take this work forward to a sub-group, consisting of the Convener, Vice-Convener and Senior Deputy Convener of Court. This sub-group had considered the scale of Court's recruitment needs over the coming years and had proposed that the number of vacancies arising in 2021-22 be reduced by offering extensions of Court membership to three lay Court members who would otherwise complete their final terms of office in July 2021. This would also retain important skills within the Court membership. The total number of years served by these members would remain within the maximum recommended under the current Code of Governance.

In line with this proposal, CMG **approved and recommended to Court** two-year extensions to the Court membership of Alison Culpan, Susan Kelly and Malcolm Roughead.

The sub-group had overseen a procurement process, through which the executive search agency Veredus had been contracted to assist the University with the remaining recruitment process. It was noted that an extensive list of potential contacts had been provided, but that no individuals had yet been approached about the vacancies. Veredus would now proceed with the search work to produce a longlist of formal applications from high-quality candidates. CMG noted the planned timing of the remaining process, according to which Court's approval for the new lay member appointments would be sought at the Court meeting on 17 June 2021.

Report to Court from Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee met on 20 January 2021 by videoconference.

Audit and Risk Committee makes recommendations to Court in regard to the following items:

1. Financial Statements 2019/20

ARC members reviewed the Draft Financial Statements noting the changes made since they had been considered by the University Court in November. ARC was also updated on the work performed to support the adoption of the going concern basis for the 2019/20 financial statements

Audit and Risk Committee **recommends** to Court that:

- The Financial Statements for 2019/20 be approved on a going concern basis (subject to a successful agreement of terms with the EIB and agreed amendments to the Financial Statements and Going Concern paper); and
- The relevant officers be authorised to sign the printed statements in due course.

The following items were discussed by the Audit and Risk Committee and are provided here for Court to note:

2. Going Concern Assessment

[Reserved]

3. Draft Financial Statements 2019/20

[Reserved]

4. Report from External Auditors

The representative from the External Auditors outlined amendments to the report on their audit of the financial statements since the November meeting of ARC. The External Auditor's work on going concern included a review of key assumptions underlying management's going concern assessment as well as

ensuring completeness of risks and assumptions identified based on their understanding of the University's financial position and their wider understanding of the sector risks around Covid-19. The mandatory internal consultation was underway and a clean audit opinion was anticipated subject to the conclusion of the consultation which could not be finalised until final confirmation had been received from EIB. This was expected shortly. The ongoing challenge presented by the fluid nature of the external environment and Government announcements was noted.

5. Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2019/20 – Final Draft

Members reviewed the amendments, primarily the going concern section, and requested that it be amended to mirror the wording in the Financial Statements.

6. Review of International Travel

Members noted the report on the review of International travel and the overall grading of Limited Assurance. It had not been possible to facilitate the planned workshops due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant impact on the availability of the USCO and colleagues across the University. Therefore the report was presented without management actions although a strong appetite to address the issues was noted.

Several of the findings in the report could be addressed by creating a repository drawing together all the information and policies together in one place and developing comprehensive guidance. The need for an overall travel policy and continuation of the technology first approach to business travel had also been recognised. Workshops would be held in due course to facilitate corporate level discussions on the University's expectations. Members welcomed the comprehensive report and the plan to consider an overarching policy.

7. Continuous improvement

The Director of Continuous Improvement introduced the Directorate, its team, background, development and awards. He noted that clarity of purpose, from the start, was vital and that the Executive Team had consistently communicated that the purpose of Continuous Improvement was to create staff capacity to facilitate & support growth. This was underpinned by, and aligned to, the University's People Strategy, Values and Strategic Plan.

The Directorate's current portfolio contained a range of training, facilitation and events including: Lean for Leaders training, Internal CI Network Events, Evidencing the Benefits of Change and Workshop Facilitation. Events had moved online in April 2020 with the number of events and attendees significantly increasing on the previous year during this period. Members of staff from areas across the University had been trained in Lean for Leaders methodology.

The future for the Directorate would be shaped by:

- The appointment of a new Chief Information Officer;
- Further opportunities to support digital transformation;
- The Creation of CI Champions across the University;
- Continuing as a global leader in CI in Higher Education;
- Further expansion of external training & consultancy.
- Hosting the Lean HE International Conference 2021.

8. Leaving the EU

The Director of Strategy & Policy updated Members on what the University was doing to prepare for and manage the risks associated with the wide-ranging impacts of Brexit. She noted that leaving the EU

was captured as a single risk within the University's Corporate Risk Register where, in reality, it was a multi-faceted set of risks covering an extensive range of strategic, operational and technical issues, distributed over extended timeframes and impacting all parts of the University along with many individual staff and students. The key issues for the sector had been identified prior to the referendum in 2016 and there had been little significant change in the past 4 years. These included:

- Research: access to collaborative funding schemes;
- Staff: movement, immigration rules;
- Students: immigration, mobility, fees, recognition of qualifications;
- Operations – including Procurement, Data-sharing, Tax, insurance, movement of equipment.

The deal with the EU provided some certainty in key areas. The UK would formally associate with Horizon Europe for the full 7 years which meant that UK entities would be able to access funding from all parts of programme. The UK would become a non-associated partner country to Erasmus+ with a domestic replacement, the Turing Scheme, announced which would cover only outward student mobility. The UK Government's Discovery Fund, originally designed as a potential domestic replacement for Horizon funding, was expected to continue, albeit at a lower level, providing an additional source of science & innovation funding. The University would continue mitigating actions and to search for and take advantage of any opportunities.

Members welcomed the presentation and noted the following points:

- Concern since the referendum that the UK would be considered as a less favourable partner for Horizon funding was not expected to be an issue given the certainty now in place but work on maintaining relationships would continue to counter any negative assumptions;
- An upturn in participation and leadership of Horizon projects was anticipated;
- Other than where they had Settled Status in the UK, EU students would no longer be eligible for "home" fee status and would fall into the international fee category. The University had introduced scholarships to mitigate this in the short term. Some complexity remained in the Scottish Government's definition of an EU student and further guidance was anticipated;
- The key risks would now be re-evaluated and would be expected to reduce as the threat of no deal had been removed and there was certainty around Horizon funding;
- Contacts through CESAER would be useful in maintaining relationships and developing policy.

9. Information Security Annual Report 2019/20

The Director of Information Services gave a presentation on the cyber risks facing the University and the processes and plans in place to mitigate these. He noted that Cyber Security had become even more essential during the COVID-19 pandemic with a move to remote working and online learning. He then reminded members of recent, high profile attacks including those on SEPA, Newcastle University and Blackbaud, the last of which had affected many UK HEIs including Strathclyde. An increase in attempted cyber-attacks on universities and colleges had been reported in the run up to the new academic session, particularly Covid related ransom demands. A number of scams were directed at individuals working remotely.

The University had moved all of its functions, including teaching and learning, online over one weekend in March 2020. This had meant that staff having secure access to remote services became more critical to the operation of the institution along with the roll out of several new services such as: Zoom, VPN, Office 365.

The University monitored reports of information available on the 'dark web' and took steps to secure accounts that might have been compromised. Multi Factor Authentication for University accounts had

been piloted and roll out was beginning across Professional Services areas. Other security features being rolled out included: a header alerting users when an email originated outside the University system, safe links, safe attachments, encryption and digital signatures. Staff cyber-security training had reached 86-87% which was high within the sector and refresher training was ready to be rolled out. The University was also currently pursuing Cyber Essentials Plus re-certification.

MATTERS TO BE NOTED FROM THE STAFF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2021

Strategic Recruitment

The Global Talent Attraction (GTAP) Recruitment campaign would launch later in January with the aim of recruiting up to 40 exceptional staff in areas of strategic interest. Various measures had been taken to ensure the recruitment advertising and related promotion through stakeholder networks was inclusive to encourage as diverse a range of candidates as possible.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

It was noted that Strathclyde was now a member of Advance HE's Race Equality Charter.

Socially Progressive Employer & Coronavirus Response

The Committee was given an overview of various initiatives that the University had undertaken to support staff in recent months, including the reintroduction of Friday rest and recuperation days, the wellbeing and working from home website, the rollout of the Agile Working Toolkit and Principal's Staff Engagement Sessions as well as recognition of staff contribution to support the Covid response through the Strathclyde Values Medal Ceremony.

Updated Home Office Immigration Compliance Policy

Following the end of the Brexit transition period on the 31 December 2020, a new points-based immigration system has been implemented for non-UK staff living and working in the UK. The Staff Committee **approved** the revised Policy and Procedure for the Home Office Points Based System that had been updated to take account of the new system, support ongoing compliance with Home Office requirements and ensure the University's duties as a licensed sponsor are met.

Guidance on the Provision of Employment References

The Committee reviewed draft guidance on the provision of academic employment references by University employees. This would restrict the provision of employment references by staff to line managers and senior University management. In line with the recommendations of the independent QC report, this would require future employment references for academic staff to be reviewed by the HR team prior to submission.

USS Pension Provision

It was noted that the Scheme Actuary's valuation report to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Trustees was due in mid-January and that this would provide an assessment of the current deficit within the scheme. The Staff Committee discussed the potential implications of this report.

GS/JF
16.02.2021

Enterprise & Investment Committee
[RESERVED ITEM]

Report to Court from Estates Committee

The Estates Committee met on 21 January 2021 and the following items were among those discussed:

For Noting by Court:

1. Update on Covid 19 Activities by Estates Services

The Director of Estates Services provided a verbal update on the impact Covid was having currently on activities on Campus.

Following the initial lockdown, eighteen buildings on campus had been reopened between August and October 2020, with only two buildings remaining to be opened. Of these two, the Business School had re-opened on 5 January this year, while the Ramshorn, has remained closed until the opening timescale has been agreed with the occupants, dependant on when they wish to open for business.

It was reported that prior to the current lockdown some eight hundred staff and students had been welcomed back on campus. This number had now reduced significantly with circa two hundred attending the Library and circa three hundred Academics currently on campus.

Given that the current lockdown is anticipated to last longer than the first one, resources were being reviewed to allow the buildings to be kept in a constant state of readiness, and Estates are looking at tailoring their services towards the needs of those buildings which were currently more active. It was stated that there would be no closure of buildings during this lockdown, this decision reflecting some of the lessons which had been learned from the previous experience of shutting down buildings and the significant efforts then needed to reopen them.

2. TIC Zone Update

A presentation was given by Mr Adrian Gillespie, Chief Commercial Officer, who confirmed that this project was making progress, albeit there had been some reshaping of the Business case as a result of the Covid pandemic. The TIC East site development would proceed first, and there would be a split of the project into two phases, with a proposed two-year gap before the commencement of the TIC West element.

[Reserved]

Additionally, the opportunity had arisen to pursue Passivhaus accreditation on the project, which would entail the highest standard of environmental performance and sustainability. Passivhaus would assist in propelling the University on the journey to net zero carbon and elevate it to the status of the first educational institution in Scotland to deliver Passivhaus status. An experienced contractor would be required to ensure the accreditation could be

achieved, so a procurement strategy had been agreed for the project which would enable innovation and accelerate the timeline.

The key pillars of the social impact of the project were noted. Given the location of this development was towards the east end of the city the University was engaged in working with the local community and investigating possible health innovations and work opportunities to realise the key pillars of financial inclusion, health, fair work and community engagement.

Among others, the next steps in the project development would include seeking Executive Team approval for the two-stage development, finalising the funding package and initiating the procurement preparation.

A question was raised as to whether there may be some COP26 opportunities that the University should be examining for commercial activity. It was confirmed that planning was already underway for that, that there was significant interest in the use of the TIC building for COP already and that the University would be showcasing innovation through that.

3. Heart of the Campus - Update

It was reported that in November 2020 Planning consent had been secured from Glasgow City Council (GCC) for the Heart of the Campus (HOC) works. Sixteen planning conditions had been attached, mainly fairly standard in nature and including site investigation works; the need for a stopping up order, which was already in motion; a construction traffic management plan; maintenance of the access to University car parks; and the delivery of continuous footways at Richmond Street, Rottenrow and North Portland Street, all of which conditions could be discharged effectively, with a couple already underway or in place.

The University had also confirmed that it would work with GCC on the design of the walkway and the impact of the rail tunnel. It was highlighted that this project speaks to some of the issues the University sought address to make this part of the campus more attractive to students, including the provision of digitally connected, sustainable and safe spaces.

The 'Stopping-Up Order' that will enable the pedestrianisation of Rottenrow, North Portland Street and Richmond Street was submitted at the same time as the planning application. The University's Legal Advisers, Anderson Strathern, were advising on this and liaising with colleagues at GCC. The timescale for approval of the formal 'Stopping Up' was being sought as part of the discussions via Anderson Strathern. In the interim the pedestrianisation of the areas has been secured on a temporary basis, although it was noted that the impact of this has been reduced at present due to the negative impact of Covid on the number of pedestrians in the area.

Now that planning permission has been secured, it was hoped that the submission of the business case could be brought forward to the next Estates Committee. The design team and quantity surveyor were working on the cost plan and further design refinement, as well as drafting a proposed phasing programme; the latter being desirable due to the intrusive nature of the construction works in the centre of campus, coupled with the opening of the Learning and Teaching Building.

In response to a question from the Student President it was confirmed that this project provided an opportunity to connect the Learning and Teaching building with the HOC and to link each of those in turn with the residences. This interconnectivity lies at the heart of what the University was seeking to achieve with this project and by making this area pedestrianised there would be a seamless connection between all of these. .

The Committee commended these significant proposals and welcomed the prospect of the HOC project helping to connect up the campus.

4. Hunter Global Leadership Centre Update

The Planning Application for this project was submitted by the Hunter Foundation on 2 March 2020. Subsequent to that, revised plans were submitted which addressed a number of issues which had been raised by Planning, as well as some of the concerns raised by interested parties and the local community. Among these was a commitment from the Hunter Foundation to connect Ross Priory and the new development to the main sewer, at a cost of c.£700k, as opposed to developing a new packaged plant solution.

A further period of consultation on the revised plans followed, along with notification that the planning submission would be reviewed by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Association (LLTNPA) and a decision made at their November planning committee meeting. In total over sixty representations were made to LLTNPA, which was not unexpected given the location. Although Planning unanimously approved the application on 23 November 2020, an appeal was submitted thereafter to the Scottish Minister, requesting that the decision be reviewed. This meant that no work could commence till the outcome of that was known.

The Committee expressed its support of this project and commended Estates on getting it to this stage.

5. Student Residences Redevelopment Update

Since the previous update on this project was brought to the October meeting, significant progress had been made, despite the difficulties of operating during the Covid restrictions. An external, professional team had been appointed to undertake an initial options appraisal/feasibility study. This team had familiarised itself with the existing residential estate and its condition issues, with the aim of providing accommodation which would offer c.2000 bedspaces, at least 80% of these en-suite, in accordance with the strategic brief prepared by Accommodation Services.

The Architect had developed seven options including a combination of new build and refurbishment, the details of which were set out and illustrated within the papers. The criteria against which these options would be evaluated were agreed with the project stakeholders and were as follows; Strategic Alignment, Sustainability, Financial, Property and Facilities, Compliance and Ease of Implementation. The options themselves ranged from 'do nothing' to significant demolition and new building on site. All options however were restricted to the current site area in terms of any proposed development.

The process of scoring those options against the criteria had commenced; and construction costs, including lifecycle costs, were awaited for each of the options. The aim is to reduce lifecycle costs in the future and build as efficiently as possible, meeting Passivhaus standards. It was reported that though this would be a lengthy exercise, good progress was being made and the target was that a preferred option and Full Business Case be brought to Committee later in year. In the interim, the Committee requested that a timeline for the various development options be presented to the next meeting.

The Committee also affirmed that consolidation on the current site was the correct option to pursue, however, in what is an unprecedented time, with commercial properties facing major

challenges, it was suggested that a number of parties may be looking to repurpose buildings which were not currently earning income and therefore Estates was encouraged to consider all opportunities in buildings adjacent to the campus. The Committee was assured that this was one of the options under consideration. The benefit of all residences being in a Village setting in the centre of campus was that it provided a sense of place and belonging for students which was more difficult to achieve where residences were outwith the campus boundaries.

Clarification was sought by the Student President on the use of the term 'hotel style' to describe some of the plans for the new residences, this term causing a degree of concern that this meant a layout of rooms running off a single corridor, leading to students being more isolated. However it was confirmed that this term was being used to refer as much to the quality of the accommodation as to the layout and that the experience of Covid had clearly illustrated the risk of any layout which might lead to a sense of isolation among students. It was confirmed that, while it was too early to say with any certainty what the final design of the residences would be, a significant part of the brief of this redevelopment was to create social spaces where students could meet together and socialise.

Some concern was raised on the target of 100% en-suite provision and whether that would bring affordability into question. It was confirmed that each block would have a mix of accommodation in it to ensure that there was a blend of students from different backgrounds and that accommodation at different ends of the price point would be created.