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Foreword

Eric McQueen

Chief Executive

It is my privilege to introduce our plan for 2021-22. It sets out our key business outcomes and the environment in which the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) will operate in 2021-22.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, the challenges that we face in the year ahead are significant. We enter the year with significantly increased case backlogs—as do jurisdictions the world over. But we enter it having managed essential business safely throughout the pandemic, having developed new approaches that strengthen and improve the system and with plans to start addressing backlogs as soon as it is safe to do so.

We set our plans for the coming year with a mixture of caution and confidence. Caution, as the pandemic will pose some additional and ongoing challenges to the way we do business. Confidence as we are well-positioned to meet those challenges. We have an extremely talented and committed workforce who, time and again, went above and beyond the call of duty during lockdown to safely support justice, working with the judiciary and all those involved in the business of the courts and tribunals.

Our 3-year corporate plan, published just as the pandemic emerged last year, set our vision to develop an increasingly digital service—ensuring that in-person hearings are held only where this is the most effective way to do business. We could not have anticipated the speed with which we would need to realise aspects of that vision. As I write the work of our civil courts and tribunals continues at normal levels—relying almost entirely on remote and virtual approaches that did not exist a year ago. We launched the first ever remote jury centres in the UK, safely recommencing jury trials from late September. And we introduced a range of measures to keep our buildings as safe as possible—to maintain business that had to proceed in person. These approaches have been praised by our partners and have drawn attention from jurisdictions across the globe.

While the landscape has been transformed since we published our corporate plan, the purpose and strategic priorities it set remain just as relevant. As we plan beyond the pandemic we do so with increased agility and resilience—and remain focused on achieving our strategic priorities, which support the aims and objectives set out in Scotland's National Performance Framework:

- A Well Supported Judiciary
- Satisfied Service Users
- Skilled and Motivated People
- Sustainable Buildings and Business
- Digital Services
- Efficiency and Best Value
- Purposeful Collaboration

As we move through response and into recovery we will continue to do so in partnership. The pandemic has underlined the fact that the justice system can change to meet need. It will need to keep doing so. We will work with agencies across the system to ensure that innovations are retained and developed. At the same time we will continue to invest in our people—so they have the skills and support needed to operate in new ways.

Over the next few years we have two key goals in mind. First, we must recover from the backlogs that have developed, as excessive delay causes harm to all involved. Second, in achieving that recovery we must create a better system—learning from the new approaches and opportunities that are now apparent. Courts and tribunals should be regarded as a service, not a building—efficient, accessible and, above all, fair. With these challenges and opportunities in mind I commend the outcomes set out in this plan, which will keep us focused on our purpose—Supporting Justice.



Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Who we are

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) is a non-ministerial department established by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. Its statutory function is to provide administrative support to Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG). SCTS has a presence in many of Scotland's communities where court and tribunal business is conducted daily. In total the estate comprises 71 buildings made up of courts, vulnerable witness suites, tribunals and offices. We operate from 51 distinct locations across Scotland's six sheriffdoms, together with 13 remote video witness sites. Tribunals also make use of some 70 further venues across Scotland for hearings.

In addition to administering Scotland's courts and tribunals, the SCTS supports the OPG and Accountant of Court (AOC). The OPG provides guidance and undertakes investigations to protect vulnerable people under the terms of the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000. The Public Guardian is also the AOC. The SCTS also provides the staff and administrative support to the:

- Scottish Civil Justice Council—which drafts rules of procedure for the civil courts, and advises the Lord President on the development of the civil justice system; and
- Scottish Sentencing Council— which is responsible for preparing sentencing guidelines, and for publishing guideline judgments and information about sentences imposed by the courts in Scotland.

The purpose of the SCTS is **supporting justice**. We fulfil that purpose by providing the people, buildings and services needed to support the judiciary, courts, devolved tribunals and the OPG. This Business Plan covers the 2021-22 financial year. It aligns with our [Corporate Plan 2020-23](#), which sets out our strategic priorities and objectives for that three year period. For each year of the Corporate Plan, SCTS prepares a Business Plan. This plan explains the environment within which the SCTS will be operating for the year ahead, and sets down the outcomes we aim to deliver this year. We report on performance against our key performance indicators in our [Board Scorecard](#). We also prepare and publish an Annual Report and Accounts, a Business Plan Delivery Report and publish [quarterly Official Statistics on criminal case activity](#) in Scotland's courts.

Our focus is providing access to justice, maximising the benefits of technology, and improving the service we offer to all users. Underpinning the outcomes set out in this plan, each business unit within the SCTS produces its own annual plan, setting out more detailed priorities and activities on which they will focus. All our work is underpinned by our core values of **respect, service and excellence**:

Our Strategic Priorities



Our Values & Behaviours

Respect	Service	Excellence
Be courteous Be open & fair Work as one team	Deliver a professional service Learn in all we do Set an example	Innovate Collaborate Be accountable



Our Operating Environment

Scotland's courts, tribunals and the OPG have experienced unprecedented change over the past year, as a result of COVID-19. However our purpose has remained the same—supporting justice. We continue to pursue that purpose by improving our services, to create a more just, resilient and efficient system. Throughout the pandemic we have been guided by three key priorities:

- Support the public health response to the outbreak — protecting the life and safety of all staff, court and tribunal users;
- Maintain all essential business so far as possible — ensuring cases are not lost;
- Minimise accumulation of case backlogs so far as possible — to facilitate the most effective recovery.

Achieving these has required significant innovation and a range of different approaches over the course of the year:

- The opening of remote jury centres across Scotland using state-of-the-art technology: allowing High and Sheriff Court solemn trials to resume, physically distanced, with jurors attending at remote locations. By November 2020 the High Court was operating at pre-COVID trial capacity. By February 2021 the Sheriff Court was also back operating at pre-COVID trial capacity.
- The launch of our integrated case management system in the Court of Session, facilitating online submission for personal injury cases.
- The Court of Session operating entirely as a virtual court, at business-as-usual levels, using a secure video-conferencing solution with a hybrid of video and teleconferencing supporting the ongoing work of the Sheriff Appeal Court, Bail Appeal Court, evidential hearings and all urgent and non-urgent business types.
- The roll-out of virtual hearings for a significant proportion of Sheriff Court civil cases including proofs, debates, evidential and Fatal Accident Inquiry hearings.
- The transition to remote working for the vast majority of tribunals hearings, using a combination of video-conferencing and telephony solutions, with tribunals operating at business as usual levels.
- Significant infrastructure developments to support the continued growth in Tribunals — including the expansion of the Social Security Chamber and transfer of the Parking and Bus Lanes Appeals Tribunal.
- The transition of over 600 staff to daily remote working, with the deployment of over 1,100 new laptops, technical support and furniture — up to 40% of SCTS staff are working from home daily.
- Continued investment in digital infrastructure and security to ensure capacity can meet demand, including the roll-out of improved internal communications and video-conferencing solutions to all staff and judiciary.
- Investment of more than £750,000 adapting the built estate to meet Public Health standards including physical distancing and the introduction of contact tracing — minimising the opportunity for virus transmission and allowing courts to continue operating safely, facilitating over 2,500 criminal trials and many more procedural hearings.
- The development of criminal custody cases being managed via video-link — using pilots to explore best practice.
- A successful pilot of virtual summary trials in Grampian, Highland and Islands, paving the way for a greater use of this approach in domestic abuse cases.
- The conclusion of over 45,000 criminal cases including those proceeded digitally.
- Generating savings in excess of £250,000 through improved procurement practices.

This is the second year in our three year corporate planning period. Over the course of this year the business delivered by our courts, devolved tribunals and the OPG will continue to evolve. Whilst the environment in which we have been working has changed at huge pace much of this change has served to quicken progress towards the vision set out in our Corporate Plan, rather than obstruct it. As such over the coming year, we will continue to focus on our three key areas of reform: criminal justice, civil justice and tribunals. We will also take forward a number of corporate initiatives to support our people, premises and systems — ensuring we adapt to new ways of doing business, have the skills to succeed and are building a sustainable approach to our work for the future.



Our Operating Environment (cont.)

To be successful in this continually uncertain time, the SCTS maintains a clear strategy and is committed to partnership working. Our strategy map below illustrates how our purpose of supporting justice is translated into seven strategic priorities — and how these priorities support the wider outcomes set in Scotland's [National Performance Framework](#):



In order to deliver successfully on these priorities the way in which we approach our business is critical. Whilst independent, we work collaboratively with the Scottish Government, the Justice Board for Scotland, local criminal justice boards and a broad range of justice partners. The [Justice in Scotland – Vision and Priorities](#) document provides a common focus for all agencies involved in the delivery of criminal and civil justice, and our work supports the delivery of its outcomes and goals (which are summarised at [Annex A](#)).

COVID-19 Moving to Recovery & Renewal

The 2020-21 financial year was dominated by COVID-19. The pandemic has had a major impact across all sectors, including the justice system. Our business traditionally relied on face-to-face interactions and paper based processes, which were not compatible with the exceptional public health measures required. An unprecedented response was necessary, both to support the public health effort and to maintain the most essential services that support justice. Across the justice system – the police, Crown, court and tribunal staff, the legal profession and a range of voluntary agencies have worked together to manage the response to the challenges faced and to help develop approaches to ensure the justice system can recover, and flourish in the future.

In August 2020 we published '[COVID-19 Respond, Recover and Renew – Supporting Justice through the pandemic and beyond](#)'. The report summarised measures implemented since the onset of the pandemic, the steps being taken to manage recovery and our emerging thoughts on how we can use the experiences and lessons of the pandemic to build a more just, resilient and efficient system for the future.

Since that publication the onset of a second wave over the winter required the response effort to continue for longer than any of us would have wished. As we entered 2021 the increasing spread of the new variant resulted in a need to reduce the number of people attending court. The Lord President [announced](#), on 11 January, that the criminal courts would focus on the most serious trials and the majority of summary trials were adjourned. This reduced the overall number of criminal trials taking place by up to 75%. With the situation now improving, the resumption of summary trials is scheduled for April.

Throughout this period we have continued to innovate in response to the pandemic, taking forward a range of initiatives including:

- **The full implementation of remote jury centres**, allowing the resumption of 15-person jury trials in a safe and secure environment. Pre-pandemic capacity was achieved in the High Court by November and in the sheriff and jury courts by February.
- **Enhancing technology** to allow remote appearance and representation in criminal custody cases which has significantly reduced the number of people needing to physically attend court.
- **Evaluating our early experience** of running virtual summary criminal trials and considering how best to fully utilise this new way of working.
- **Continuing to develop and embed the processes** that support civil and tribunal business being dealt with via electronic submission of case papers and the use of virtual hearings, via the WebEx platform. At the beginning of 2020-21 this was not a platform we used: by February 2021 (the most recent month for which figures are available) over 4,000 WebEx meetings and hearings were conducted across SCTS.

These innovations have allowed civil and tribunal business to continue without increased backlogs or delay overall — but this is not the case in relation to criminal business, where physical attendance at court is often still required. In view of the rapidly changing nature and impact of the pandemic on criminal business we now publish monthly [management information](#) setting out the level of cases being processed and the projected case backlogs. In March 2020, when we first entered lockdown, there were 390 scheduled High Court trials, approximately 500 Sheriff Court solemn trials and almost 14,000 sheriff summary criminal cases in the system. The system generally has a scheduled “backlog” around these levels, the bulk of which represents a caseload that will be managed through the system within timescales considered to be suitable. However, by February 2021 the forecast backlog had risen to over 740 High Court trials, over 2,600 Sheriff Court solemn cases and over 35,000 sheriff summary cases.

Had it not been for a number of the innovations introduced these backlogs would have been even greater. However, we must acknowledge that increased delays due to higher backlogs have real and detrimental impacts on victims, vulnerable witnesses, accused persons and public confidence in the system. For those reasons, we have been working with agencies across the justice system to develop approaches to recovery that will address backlogs in an effective and sustainable way.

COVID-19 Moving to Recovery & Renewal (cont.)

Tackling Criminal Case Backlogs

Even a return to full “pre-COVID-19” case processing levels will not be sufficient to make inroads to the backlogs that have developed in criminal cases. A concerted recovery programme will be required over a number of years. Working in collaboration with Criminal Justice Board partners, we have developed proposals to reduce the backlog of criminal cases. Increases in capacity will be required at each stage of the system — from detection through to disposal — as cases can only progress through the system at a pace that is sustainable for all the agencies and organisations involved. The Scottish Government has committed £50m across the justice sector in 2021-22 to support this plan. SCTS will use its share of this funding to introduce 16 additional criminal courts.

- **4 High Courts**
- **2 Solemn Sheriff Courts**
- **Up to 10 Summary Courts**

We are planning for these to be operational from September 2021, provided public health advice allows for this. The safety of all those using our premises will remain the top priority. The additional courts will allow us to begin addressing the backlogs that have developed, *although we anticipate that 3-4 years of operation at this enhanced level will be necessary to return backlogs to pre-COVID levels*.

Cases Involving Multiple Accused

The restoration of trial court capacity for solemn cases in both the High Court and Sheriff Court was fully achieved in February. Work is now progressing to provide capacity to hold trials involving multiple-accused persons (in excess of three accused). By the end of April, Edinburgh High Court will have been adapted to safely enable trials involving up to five accused in a single courtroom—this will then be followed by arrangements allowing trials involving up to nine accused (across two courtrooms) to take place in the West of Scotland. The two court model will build on existing digital innovations, with some of the accused viewing and hearing proceedings from a separate courtroom. Plans are also being progressed to ensure provision of at least one multi-accused trial court in each sheriffdom.

Evidence by Commissioner

Purpose-built facilities in Glasgow for Evidence by Commissioner Hearings (where a witness’ examination and cross-examination is recorded in advance of a trial) were unable to be utilised due to physical distancing requirements. In the interim, hearings of this nature took place in Glasgow and Edinburgh High Courts. Work has now been completed to re-configure space that enables hearings to take place in a COVID-19 secure manner, and an additional hearing room has been fitted out, doubling capacity. We will continue to explore and develop these facilities, as they improve *the way in which vulnerable witnesses can provide evidence*.

Renewing with Resilience

We know that creating additional court capacity to reduce the backlog of cases will not be a sufficient response to the pandemic, so we continue investing in technologies that facilitate remote appearance, share evidence and improve our services to victims, witnesses and accused, alongside the traditional court programme. This is in line with one of the key objectives set in our Corporate Plan for 2020-23: to *“Reduce the need for physical attendance at proceedings where it adds little or no value by exploiting the technology introduced across Scotland’s courts & tribunals”*.

Nearly all civil business in the Court of Session and tribunal hearings are now conducted virtually using either Cisco WebEx or, where necessary, by telephone. The Sheriff Appeal court and All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court continue operating at pre-lockdown levels using WebEx..

In November 2020, virtual hearings were expanded, using Cisco WebEx, to the Sheriff Courts to conduct proofs, debates, evidential hearings and Fatal Accident Inquiries.

COVID-19 Moving to Recovery & Renewal (cont.)

Renewing with Resilience (cont.)

Since March 2020, child welfare hearings have been conducted remotely by way of written submissions or telephone conference, or a combination of both. To facilitate participation in child welfare hearings and to improve efficiency a pilot was introduced in Forfar and Stirling Sheriff Courts last December, permitting parties and their solicitors to appear virtually before the presiding sheriff court using WebEx.

Work is ongoing to increase the use of virtual summary trials in Grampian, Highland and Islands, both to support additional case capacity during lockdown and with a view to a potential roll-out to the majority of domestic abuse cases heard at the summary level in the longer term (these comprise around 20% of summary trial business). External witness sites, at which support will be provided by Victim Support Scotland, have also been developed to aid witnesses give evidence remotely.

Work continues to scale up the use of virtual custody hearings. Whilst these were initially introduced to ensure that any accused person appearing from custody with COVID-19 symptoms did not need to physically attend court, their potential to reduce the need for custody transfers and holding periods in court cells is clear. An 8-week pilot has been conducted in Falkirk, with custody cases calling remotely from Falkirk Police Station. The initial feedback has been broadly positive — and plans are under development to extend the approach to Aberdeen Sheriff Court ahead of a potential wider roll-out.

As we gradually emerge from the pandemic we will be faced with the legacy of increased case backlogs, but presented with the opportunity to continue to make the most of new approaches, even as the ability to run business in more traditional ways recovers. The justice system has moved rapidly to accommodate increased remote and digital working. We believe this should not only be seen as a response to COVID-19, but as a core part of the system of the future. It increases resilience — by providing more than one way in which to do business. It can increase efficiency — reducing the need for travel, large quantities of paper and the challenge of getting the many required parties together for a case in the one place at the one time. It also has the potential to improve accessibility — providing easier access to hearings for the media and public whilst making remote, round the clock services and information available for all those who need them.

As we continue to plan for the future we need to learn from the past year and design longer-term changes in consultation with all those who use the courts and tribunals; building on innovation whilst recognising the long-standing strengths of our system. We are in dialogue with the Scottish Government and have stressed the importance of preserving a number of the changes made in emergency legislation which have made things like the electronic transfer of case papers and the holding of remote hearings possible.

One of the positive legacies of this tragic pandemic has been to “prove the concept” of a number of these new ways of working. They also have the potential to support us in our work to meet another worldwide challenge. The Scottish Government has set the target that all public sector bodies should produce zero greenhouse gas emissions by or before 2045. In November, Scotland will host the COP26 Climate Conference . Whilst that may pose some short term challenges for the justice system in managing such a major event, the longer term opportunities are ones that we must take. Many of the strides we have taken over the past year — making the system more resilient, efficient, accessible and fair — are ones that we can build upon to meet this next, and greater, challenge.



Key Reform Areas 2021-22

Scotland's justice system continually develops in response to wider changes in society. Policy developments, environmental changes and new legislation influence our operating environment. Strong partnerships across the justice system are essential if new policies are to be effective.

Our high-level priorities are set out in the [Corporate Plan 2020-23](#). We also have key corporate strategies covering people, estates and digital development, setting our priorities in these core supporting areas.

Scotland's courts and tribunals provide the forum in which citizens can assert their rights — supporting the delivery of the outcomes and priorities set in the Justice Strategy for Scotland. By implementing reform, sharing information and building on advances in technology we help to shape and improve the performance of the system

Click [here](#) for a summary of the Scottish Government's Strategy for Justice.

Some of the **key policy and legislative developments** that will have a bearing on our work in 2021-22 are outlined below. Additionally, the Scottish Parliament election in May 2021 will bring in a new programme for government. This may require us to change or refocus some priorities during the year.

Criminal Justice Reform

An efficient, digitally enabled system that meets the needs of those involved in it is central to our criminal justice reform agenda. We have sought to maximise our capacity for innovation to address the challenges that COVID-19 has presented. It is essential we build on this progress as we explore how cases can be most effectively managed to meet the range and volumes of business we face — whilst ensuring improvements to the experience of victims and witnesses.

The Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 ("the 2019 Act") came into force on 20 January 2020 — introducing a presumption that child witnesses in the most serious criminal cases (in the High Court initially) should have their evidence pre-recorded, to minimise the potential trauma of court appearances. The new state of the art Glasgow Evidence and Hearings Suite, opened in 2019, provides purpose-built facilities for the taking of evidence. Work to enhance such facilities in Inverness, Edinburgh and Aberdeen is also well-advanced. The availability of suites was constrained by the COVID 19 pandemic, though as earlier noted work is under way to ensure they can be used with appropriate distancing and safety arrangements in place. We will continue to support the phased commencement of the Act, which will see an increase in evidence taken in this way. As this work develops, and we learn lessons, the approach will be extended from the High Court to Sheriff Court solemn cases.

Levels of sexual offending remain at their highest since current records began and this growth has shifted the balance of work in the criminal courts — particularly the High Court. It has been recognised that the system must adapt to manage the business it faces efficiently and effectively, and prioritise the needs of those most affected. A review group, led by the Lord Justice Clerk (Lady Dorrian) was established in 2019 to examine how sexual offences cases are managed and whether there are ways to improve the experience for all participants. The review published its [Final Report](#) on 18 March 2021. Over the course of this year we will explore and develop the proposals for change to improve the operation of the system in this high-profile area.

We expect the remaining provisions of the **Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019** to be implemented during 2021-22. The Act introduces a number of significant changes to the electronic monitoring of offenders regime. This includes making available at first instance, except in the JP Court, as part of a community payback order, a restricted movement requirement and extending the use of electronic monitoring to form part of other court orders, and to monitor accused who are released on bail. It also enables new forms of electronic monitoring to be introduced in the future, e.g. GPS technology and alcohol / drug monitoring.

Key Reform Areas 2021-22 (cont.)

Whilst the provisions will not lead to increases in case volumes it may lead to an increase in the number of orders made, and their complexity, which will impact on case processing time. The extension of the presumption against short-term sentences, introduced in 2019, has also increased the potential range of cases to which provisions of this nature may apply. The extension of electronic monitoring to bail may impact significantly on the length of time it takes to handle cases, including new breach proceedings. We will continue to work closely with justice partners on its implementation.

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, introduced in 2020, aims to modernise existing laws that protect certain groups from hate crime; pulling them into a single Bill and building on the current groups specifically protected. **The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill** was also introduced in 2020, and brings new domestic abuse protection notices and orders. The SCTS will continue monitoring the progress of both Bills through Parliament, and liaise with Scottish Government and justice partners to ensure their provisions, which have the potential to require a number of new court processes to be developed, can be implemented effectively.

Civil Justice

There has been a sustained reform across the civil courts, most recently through the introduction of simple procedure. We have developed several digital systems that are increasingly enabling online administration through Civil Online, including end-to-end processing for simple procedure cases. This has been accelerated in response to COVID-19 and many of the innovations introduced will remain in place, as we adapt to a model where civil business is processed using the optimal balance of virtual and traditional processes — supported by more comprehensive digital case management platforms. Work to upgrade digital services in the Office of the Public Guardian is progressing, and a new change programme has been established to oversee change to support civil justice reform.

The Children (Scotland) Act 2020, along with the **Scottish Government's Family Law Modernisation Strategy**, will make substantial changes to how family proceedings operate in Scotland's courts. It aims to ensure that: the views of the child are heard in contact and residence cases; that provisions are in place to further protect victims of domestic abuse and their children; and that the best interests of the child are at the centre of contact and residence cases and Children's Hearings. We will continue to work with the Scottish Government to ensure proposals can be implemented effectively.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill will incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. It will impact on courts, tribunals and the SCTS as a public authority. The Bill provides that public authorities must not act in a way incompatible with the UNCRC and enables any person to bring proceedings against a public authority in a civil court or tribunal for acting, or proposing to act, in an incompatible manner. It also gives courts the power to strike down or declare as incompatible with the UNCRC requirements any legislation that cannot be interpreted consistently with the UNCRC. We will monitor the Bill as it progresses through Parliament, and any subsequent scrutiny, and engage with the Scottish Government to ensure that it can be implemented effectively.

We expect the remaining provisions of the **Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Act 2018** to be implemented this year. These aim to increase access to justice, by reducing uncertainty over the rates of legal expense a pursuer may be liable for. This may increase civil litigation levels – particularly in the National Personal Injury Court and Court of Session. We will keep both case levels and court capacity under review as measures are introduced. A number of changes in court rules relating to family law cases are also under consideration by the family law sub-committee of the Scottish Civil Justice Council (SCJC). These include potential **extension of Simplified Divorce applications** (currently available only to couples without children) to families with children under 16, and proposals to further develop active judicial case management in family actions. We will work with the SCJC over the coming year to ensure that these and any other rule changes can be implemented successfully.

Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution will feature in the reform of all areas of civil law. We will continue to be supportive of measures designed to make most effective and efficient use of judicial resources; and which improve access to justice for those seeking to resolve disputes in Scotland.

Key Reform Areas 2021-22 (cont.)

Tribunals Reform

The **Tribunals Reform Programme** will continue to manage a range of initiatives drawing the work of tribunals across Scotland into the coherent, integrated structure set out in the **Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014**. The overarching vision for the programme is ensuring the delivery of **Judicially-led tribunals that are modern, efficient and user-focused**.

This year we will introduce innovations improving the range of information available to tribunal users and stakeholders, and open new channels for interacting and engaging with the Tribunals. COVID-19 highlighted the need to develop new services at pace for users. New systems were designed and implemented quickly across tribunals, primarily as telephone and video based hearings to maintain access to justice, while keeping users, judiciary and staff as safe as possible.

This approach has served to quicken development of our operating model, whilst ensuring that efficient, high-quality digital services have been maintained for all tribunal users and stakeholders. The progress of the past year in developing and refining these services provides a strong platform from which to build on this year.

The majority of Scotland's devolved tribunals have now transferred into the **First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Chamber** structure — including the jurisdictions covering Housing and Property, Health and Education, Tax, the General Regulatory Chamber and the Social Security Chamber. The Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland is scheduled to transfer into the Mental Health Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal within the next twelve months, and preparations are also under way for the transfer of the Valuation Appeal Committees, currently operated by local authorities, to transfer into a new Valuation Appeals Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal during 2022.

A key priority of the programme is ensuring that the judiciary, staff, systems and resources are in place to manage increasing tribunal case volumes. Over the last three years, the level of cases received annually by Scotland's devolved tribunals has increased by over 75%. There has been continued growth in the Housing and Property Chamber and the Mental Health Tribunal caseloads, the latter of which continues to have the highest case levels of the devolved tribunals. The Valuation Appeals Chamber will require the recruitment of judiciary and staff and the development of new systems to support what will be a brand new service, from April 2022.

As new welfare benefits are devolved to Scotland, the work of the Social Security Chamber will increase significantly. Building from around 100 appeals received in 2020-21 towards tens of thousands of appeals anticipated following the expected introduction of Child Disability Payment in the summer of 2021 and Adult Disability Payment from 2022. We are working closely with the Scottish Government to ensure that the systems needed to manage this level of business are in place and that sufficient resources — both staff and judiciary — are available to support the expansion.

Proposals for the devolution of the administration of reserved Tribunals to SCTS — including social security, taxation and employment — remain on hold, pending agreement on the transfer between the UK and Scottish Governments. The work of the Tribunals Reform programme will continue beyond the coming year until at least 2023, by which time the tribunals' landscape will have developed and expanded considerably under the leadership of the President of Scottish Tribunals and the Lord President.



Our Financial Environment

The Scottish Government's budget for SCTS has been set at £129.3m for 2021-22 (inclusive of £8m capital and £25.6m of depreciation charges). The material uplift in funding from the previous year reflects pay and inflationary pressures, acceleration of service digitisation, increased judicial pensions coupled with COVID-19 safe environment provisions.

Further detail on the 2021-22 financial plan is provided at [Annex B](#) (p26-27)

SCTS remains committed to delivering high quality services and promoting reform to ensure that Scotland's courts and tribunals continue to meet the expectations of the public within the challenging financial environment and resources available.

Total in-year funding is estimated to be £48.3m (detailed at Annex B) giving a total net budget (inclusive of depreciation) for 2021-22 of £177.6m.

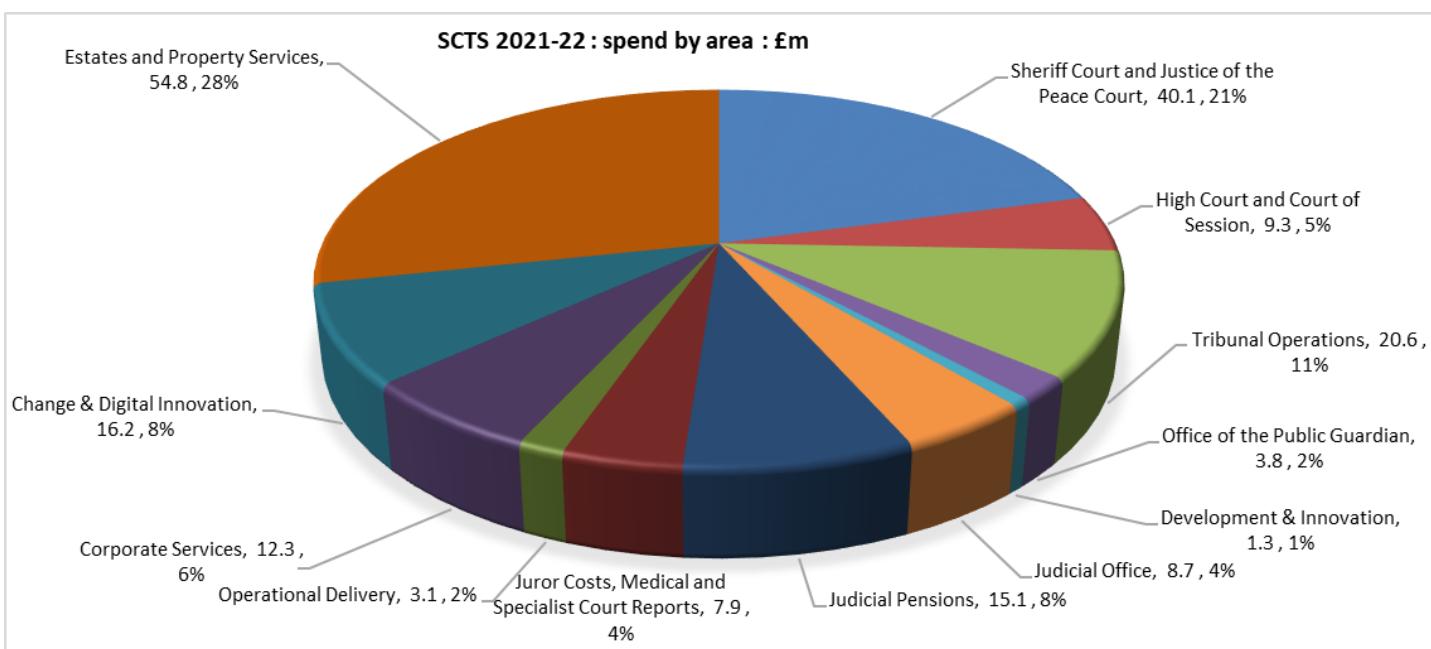
Most of the in-year funding will support ongoing reforms within the Tribunals service and continuing remote jury trials. In year funding of £5m in respect of Civil Fees and fines has been committed by the Scottish Government in anticipation of continued pressure on fees and fines income due to COVID-19. An additional £2m in year funding has been provided to ensure a safe environment for our service users.

Where do we invest our resources?

Figure 1 shows where the SCTS allocates its resource by business area. Over 85% of the total spend is invested directly in supporting front line operations, including the cost of maintaining a diverse and historical estate which accounts for 36% of total funding (excluding depreciation). SCTS continues to innovate and digitise its service with some 11% of core funds targeted on strengthening our digital infrastructure and innovation to improve front line services.

The financial plan detailed at Annex B (pages 26-27) illustrates that total revenue expenditure for 2021-22 is budgeted at £180.2m. Our major cost areas of staff, accommodation and estates management account for 69% of revenue expenditure. Capital funding for 2021-22 is set at £13.0m which includes £5m of anticipated in year funding in respect of a new case management system for the Social Security chamber (£3.1m), investment in remote Jury Trials capacity (£1.8m) with the remainder to fund investment in business as usual activities.

Figure 1—Revenue & capital expenditure 2021-22 by business area: £193.3m

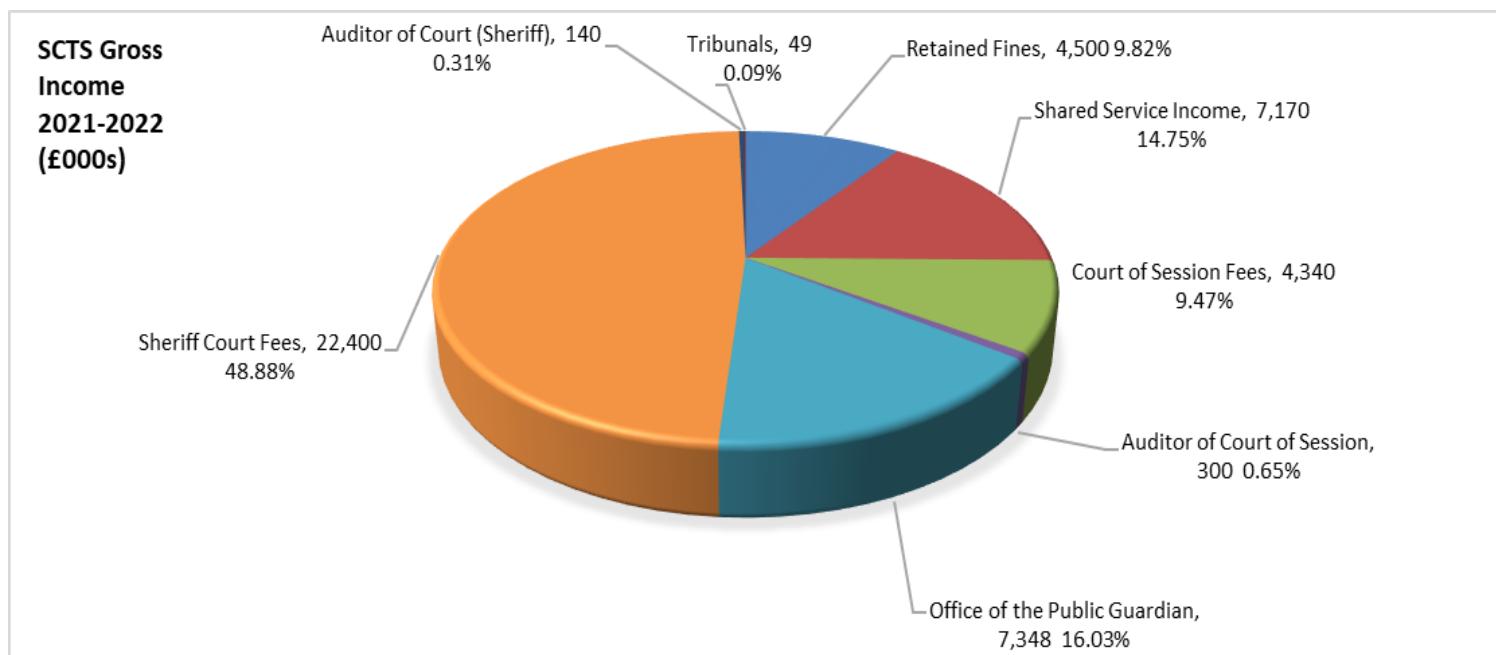


Our Financial Environment (cont.)

Income

Total gross income for 2021-22 is projected to be £46.2m of which 74% relates to Civil Fees. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of this income by category. A COVID-19 consequential of £5m has been committed by the Scottish Government to underwrite the risk of a fees and fines shortfall; this has been offset within the £177.6m total budget presented in Annex B. SCTS also provides accommodation and associated services which are recharged to a number of other public bodies, notably the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and HMCTS.

Figure 2 — SCTS budgeted gross income 2021-2022: £46.2m



Tables summarising the financial allocation for 2021-22, broken down by both service area and cost category, can be found at [Annex B](#) (pages 26-27).





Business Volumes

The figures detailed at **Annex C** illustrate the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on processing certain types of business over the past 12 months. It is likely to continue having an impact in the coming year.

On the one hand the continued need to prioritise user safety and maintain physical distancing will reduce our capability to return to full business as usual processing levels for a proportion of the year – which cannot be precisely ascertained at this time. On the other (as covered under the COVID section of this plan at pages 7-9) we hope to be able to introduce additional court capacity later in the year, in order to increase case throughput and begin addressing the backlogs that have developed.

Annex C provides summaries of key business volumes for 2018-19 & 2019-20.

It also provides a forecast of 2020-21 volumes and a projection for 2021-22 (p28-31)

The projections provided for the coming year therefore need to be read with an additional degree of caution — particularly in relation to criminal business. In order to increase transparency and support recovery planning we are now publishing [monthly statistics](#) on criminal case throughput and outstanding case levels, which you may wish to refer to for the most up to date position.

While recorded crime was 6% lower in the period between April and December 2020 than the same period in 2019, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service are now receiving a higher number of monthly reports than their 2019-20 average. Levels of new criminal business coming into the system therefore appear to be quite steady, alongside the backlog that has accumulated as a consequence of the pandemic.

Levels of sexual crime remain at the second highest level recorded since 1971, the first year for which comparable data was available. While the level of indictments and complaints registered fell over the past 12 months this was attributable to the impact of the pandemic, not to any fall in the level of business due to enter the system.

The importance of each case taking place within a reasonable timescale is not lost amongst the volumes faced by the system. At the end of 2020 the average waiting period between a summary criminal case first calling and its trial date had grown to 21 weeks in the sheriff court and over 19 weeks in the Justice of the Peace Court, against the below-17 week timescale considered to be optimal. These figures demonstrate the need for investment in additional capacity to commence recovery from the backlogs that have developed.

Civil court business has experienced less of an impact from the pandemic, given the ability to conduct the majority of processes online. There was actually a small increase in the number of proofs proceeding in the Court of Session, but a decline in the number of sheriff court cases lodged, which can be attributed to reduced activity across the board as a consequence of COVID-19. We expect these case volumes to recover to normal levels over the course of the coming year.

Office of the Public Guardian

Both the submission and processing of Powers of Attorney (POA) and Guardianship orders was affected by the pandemic — with only around half the usual level of POA registered in the past year. The Public Guardian has ensured that all urgent and expedited applications have taken priority at this time, to ensure that the most essential cases were prioritised. Work is underway to address backlogs that have arisen, over the course of the coming year.

Tribunal Business

Whilst there have been some temporary impacts as a consequence of the pandemic, levels of business across Scotland's devolved tribunals generally continue growing. The Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland, which had the largest caseload over the past year, experienced almost a 10% increase in receipts. Cases in the Social Security Chamber are expected to rise significantly as new devolved benefits are introduced. New projections will become available in a number of areas over the coming year — where possible we have sought to provide detail for those business levels in **Annex C**.



Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Business Outcomes for 2021-22

Our key business outcomes for 2021-22 are listed on the following pages — grouped under our seven strategic priorities:

A Well Supported Judiciary

Satisfied Service Users

Skilled & Motivated People

Sustainable Buildings & Business

Digital Services

Efficiency & Best Value

Purposeful Collaboration

The SCTS Board scrutinises progress against this plan quarterly, alongside consideration of the [Board Scorecard](#) which reports on operational performance against the key indicators listed at [Annex F](#). This plan is supported by more detailed unit plans produced by each business area of the SCTS, which are used by Directors to manage progress in their areas.

The identification and effective management of risk is necessary to ensure that the risks to achieving our priorities are identified, assessed, addressed and reviewed. The key corporate risks identified by the SCTS Board are summarised at [Annex D](#). These were reviewed by the Board in February 2021 and are kept under regular review. Actions to control and mitigate corporate risks are monitored by both the SCTS Executive Team and the SCTS Board's Audit and Risk Committee.





Further information on these outcomes can be found on pages 18-24



A Well Supported Judiciary

Strategic Priority 1

Scotland's judiciary are equipped with the right people, systems, technology and processes to ensure they can dispense justice effectively

Key focus areas

Delivering effective ongoing support to the courts and tribunals judiciary as they manage business

Managing the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in partnership—aiming to build capacity and exploit new approaches

Continuing the development and implementation of reforms that improve the experience of the court system for all involved—especially victims and witnesses

Supporting the tribunal judiciary as further reforms to the tribunal system are implemented

Outcome

We will fulfil our purpose of supporting justice by delivering the administration of Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian—developing sustainable virtual and remote working methods for use beyond the pandemic to deliver an improved service

Timescale

Performance reported quarterly using SCTS Board Scorecard

We will, as soon as it is safe to do so, work with the judiciary and justice organisations to introduce additional criminal case capacity to commence reduction of backlogs that have accumulated as a consequence of the pandemic

September 2021

We will explore the recommendations of the Lord Justice Clerk's review of the management of sexual offence cases and develop an implementation plan to ensure that its aim of improving the experiences of complainants and witnesses, is achieved

October 2021

We will maintain the successful implementation of the Tribunals Reform Programme, including the expansion of the Social Security Chamber, the transfer of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland and the establishment of a Valuation Appeal Chamber in the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland

Ongoing throughout 2021-22





Satisfied Service Users

Strategic Priority 2

We inspire confidence through the delivery of a high-quality customer service

Key focus areas:

Building our understanding of the needs and views of courts, tribunals and OPG users to inform improvements in service quality

Maintaining a safe operating environment for all our business—during the pandemic and beyond

Advancing our equalities agenda, to ensure that the experience of all those using Scotland's courts and tribunals is both fair and positive

Maintaining our focus on services provided to victims and witnesses—building improvements that enhance their experience

Outcome

Timescale

We will maintain the safest possible operating environment for all essential court and tribunal business that must continue to be delivered in person during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ongoing until measures are no longer required

We will review our approach to measuring user and customer satisfaction to ensure it provides high quality insight on our service in an efficient and timely way

December 2021

We will publish our bi-annual Mainstreaming Equality Report and evaluate progress towards delivery of our Equality Outcomes, promoting awareness and understanding of equality and diversity, to improve services

June 2021

We will review our service standards for victims and witnesses and continue to support the work of the Victims' Taskforce, ensuring that new developments in our services improve the experience for victims and witnesses

September 2021



Skilled & Motivated People

Strategic Priority 3

We support our people to provide excellent customer service — focusing on their performance, learning, resilience and well-being

Key focus areas:

Doing all we can to support our people to continue working effectively through the pandemic and into the recovery period

Ensuring that our learning and development provision is informed by the changing models of service delivery, supporting our people in an increasingly digital environment

Continuing to develop the capability of our managers and people at both strategic and operational levels

Building on our People Strategy by developing systems, policies and analytics that allow us to make decisions in the most efficient way

Outcome

Timescale

We will support our people to work well and work safely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic —providing high quality home-working solutions plus equipment, resources and policies for all that prioritise health, safety and wellbeing

September 2021

We will develop a programme to assess and support the level of digital and technical skills required by our people in the longer-term to support both the judiciary and service users in an increasingly digital environment

December 2021

We will implement the second phase of our People Systems upgrade, delivering a new recruitment module and review implementation of the first phase (salaries and expenses) to ensure that improvements and efficiencies are achieved

February 2022

We will review and update our performance management, succession planning and talent management processes to ensure our people are supported to give their best, both now and in the future

March 2022





Sustainable Buildings & Business Strategic Priority 4

We provide a high-quality, safe and secure environment for Scotland's Courts and Tribunals, and take further action to reduce our environmental impact without compromising our core services

Key focus areas:

Implementing our Estates Strategy and Carbon Management Plan to deliver facilities that are optimal for the 21st century

Balancing estates investment with maintenance and access requirements against the backdrop of a tight budget and ambitious zero-carbon goals

Reflecting on the configuration of our estate following the pandemic — so that benefits of new ways of working can be maintained

Delivering improved facilities for service users across the country, as resources allow

Outcome

Timescale

We will extend our capacity to conduct solemn trials by maintaining the innovative use of remote jury centres and by reconfiguring court rooms to accommodate solemn and multi-accused trials — ensuring that the most serious criminal business can continue to be heard and backlogs addressed

October 2021

We will submit proposals to the Scottish Government for future investment in our built estate — setting out the measures required to address backlog maintenance and to achieve the step-change in sustainability needed to meet carbon-zero targets

December 2021

We will review our Estates Strategy to identify the long-term opportunities presented through increased digital and remote working — equipping our facilities for the future

March 2022

We will meet our demanding carbon reduction targets and demonstrate our commitment to ongoing progress by retaining Carbon Trust Triple standard accreditation

Throughout 2021-22 (performance reported quarterly)



Digital Services Strategic Priority 5

We maximise the opportunities provided by technology to improve processes, access to information and to support quicker and better outcomes

Key focus areas:

Transitioning towards state-of-the-art cloud based technologies that ensure modern, scalable, secure and resilient infrastructure to accommodate both current and future needs.
Adopting agile approaches to deliver change across the organisation, realising value at pace.

Building on the innovations introduced to support the justice system during the pandemic, to provide a modern, flexible and digitally enabled justice system.

Outcome

Timescale

We will improve our digital infrastructure including networking, firewalls, secure remote access, collaboration platforms and cloud platforms—allowing court and tribunal business to be conducted remotely on secure and reliable platforms as further reforms are introduced

Ongoing throughout 2021-22

We will enhance the tribunals' case management capability by introducing a new online facility in the Social Security Chamber, including a notification portal and the automated secure exchange of data. These new facilities will be capable of roll-out to a wider range of jurisdictions in future

November 2021

We will minimise inconvenience and reduce the need for physical appearance at court by developing a solution for the remote provision of evidence by police and professional witnesses.

October 2021

We will build on the introduction of virtual summary trials and virtual custody cases during the pandemic, increasing resilience and capacity, whilst reducing costs and carbon emissions

December 2021





Efficiency & Best Value

Strategic Priority 6

We have financial stability that enables us to improve our services in an effective, economical and sustainable manner

Key Focus Areas:

Ensuring that clear and efficient business processes are in place, meeting the needs of all service users

Maintaining facilities, systems and processes that are reliable, efficient and valued by those who use them

Improving systems and services so that we can work more effectively with the public — and with each other

Sharing a wider range of information on our work proactively to build insight and public confidence

Outcome

Timescale

We will introduce a new digital expense payment system, initially for appellants in the Social Security Chamber — providing a more efficient and secure system with a high-quality customer interface and fast payments service

August 2021

We will undertake a strategic analysis of vulnerable witness, video link and remote tribunal sites, in collaboration with COPFS, to ensure we have an appropriate range of sites that support vulnerable witnesses to give their best evidence in a quality environment

January 2022

We will make enhancements to the SCTS website capability and content, expanding the range of statistics available with new management information reports for civil business

February 2022

We will identify and drive savings through our approach to purchasing and contract management, delivering a further £0.5m of savings through better procurement and cost avoidance

Ongoing throughout 2021-22



PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7

We work with justice bodies to deliver significant change and improvement to Scotland's justice system — through collaboration, communication and reform

Key focus areas:

Working together across the justice system to respond, recover and renew following the COVID-19 pandemic

Supporting collaborative reform and improvement of courts and tribunals through our change programmes

Providing support to the range of councils and other bodies that work in collaboration with SCTS

Outcome

Due Date

We will support the work of the Justice Board for Scotland and criminal justice boards, working collaboratively to manage the response, recovery and lessons learned from COVID-19 — building on innovations that have been implemented

Ongoing throughout
2021-22

We will manage criminal business levels in close collaboration with justice partners, using performance reporting that will visibly demonstrate the progress being made to address backlogs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

Performance
monitored/
published monthly

We will support the Scottish Civil Justice Council as it develops new strategic proposals for civil justice reform and provide effective administrative support to the Scottish Sentencing Council so it can deliver its distinct work programme to a high standard

Ongoing throughout
2021-22

We will work with partners at national and local levels to prepare for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, ensuring that robust cross-sector contingency and service plans are in place

November 2021



JUSTICE IN SCOTLAND: VISION AND PRIORITIES

VISION

A JUST, SAFE & RESILIENT SCOTLAND

OUTCOMES

We live in safe, cohesive and resilient communities Prevention and early intervention improve wellbeing and life chances Our system and interventions are proportionate, fair and effective We deliver person-centred, modern and affordable public services



PRIORITIES

We will enable our communities to be safe and supportive, where individuals exercise their rights and responsibilities

We will enable our people, economy and infrastructure to respond to major risk, recover from emergencies and adapt to emerging threats

We will modernise civil and criminal law and the justice system to meet the needs of people in Scotland in the 21st Century

We will work with others to improve health and wellbeing in justice settings, focusing on mental health and substance use

We will work to quickly identify offenders and ensure responses are proportionate, just, effective and promote rehabilitation

We will improve the experience of victims and witnesses, minimising court attendance and supporting them to give best evidence

We will use prison only where necessary to address offending or to protect public safety, focusing on recovery and reintegration

Annex B—Summary Financial Plan

2020-21 - Financial Summary by Cost Category

SCTS BUDGET 2021-22

Cost Category (£000's)	Total		
	2021-2022 Budget Bill	In Year Funding	2021-2022 Total Budget
Pay	69,058	10,716	79,774
Other Staff Costs	455	1	456
Rent & Rates	12,937	10,573	23,510
Accommodation	10,011	3,135	13,146
Building Maintenance	6,793	560	7,353
Judicial Costs	1,803	2,188	3,991
Judicial Pensions	15,006	88	15,094
Tribunal Members fees	7,034	1,913	8,947
Office & Other	9,070	6,914	15,984
Supplies & Services	1,510	1,346	2,856
Training	374	37	411
Travel	740	52	792
Business Costs	134,791	37,523	172,314
 Total Operational Costs	 7,170	 740	 7,910
 Total Revenue Expenditure	 141,961	 38,263	 180,224
Fees for Civil Cases	(34,278)	-	(34,278)
Rents Receivable	-	-	-
Recharges	(7,470)	-	(7,470)
Retained Fines	(4,500)	-	(4,500)
Total Receipts	(46,248)	-	(46,248)
 COVID-19 Consequential Income	 -	 5,000	 5,000
 Net Revenue Expenditure	 95,713	 43,263	 138,976
 Capital			
Buildings	2,900	1,026	3,926
Furniture & Fittings	100	-	100
Digital Infrastructure	4,830	4,012	8,842
HR	170	-	170
Total Capital Expenditure	8,000	5,038	13,038
 Non-Cash Ring Fenced DEL Depreciation	 25,600	 -	 25,600
 Total Net Expenditure	 129,313	 48,301	 177,614
 AME Expenditure	 -	 -	 -

A commentary on the financial environment and budget can be found at pages 13-14 of this plan





Annex B—Summary Financial Plan (cont.)

2021-22 – Financial Summary by Service Area

Budgets 2021-22 - Financial Summary by Service Area			
Service Area (£000's)	Revenue	Capital	Total
Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court	40,131	15	40,146
High Court and Court of Session	9,341	-	9,341
Tribunal Operations	17,408	3,205	20,613
Office of the Public Guardian	3,763	-	3,763
Development & Innovation	1,292	-	1,292
Judicial Office	8,690	-	8,690
Judicial Pensions	15,094	-	15,094
Juror Costs, Medical and Specialist Court Reports	7,910	-	7,910
Operational Delivery	3,070	-	3,070
Corporate Services	11,918	341	12,259
Change & Digital Innovation	10,823	5,419	16,242
Estates and Property Services	50,784	4,058	54,842
Total Direct & Operational Costs	180,224	13,038	193,262
Receipts	(46,248)	-	(46,248)
COVID-19 Consequentials Income	5,000	-	5,000
Total Net Expenditure before depreciation	138,976	13,038	152,014
Non-Cash Ring Fenced DEL Depreciation	25,600	-	25,600
Total Net Expenditure	164,576	13,038	177,614

A commentary on the financial environment and budget can be found at pages 13-14 of this plan



Annex C—Key Business Volumes & Planning Assumptions

Supreme Courts, Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts, Office of the Public Guardian

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 (Forecast)	2021/22 (Projection)
High Court				
High Court judge days	3676	3486	1733	4000
Indictments registered	999	1118	812	900
Trials Evidence Led	507	498	262	600
High Court: criminal appeals lodged	594	630	260	600
Court of Session				
Court of Session judge days	1424	1328	1105	1300
Cases registered	987	975	939	900
Proofs proceeding	58	58	60	60
Court of Session: civil appeals/reclaiming motions	180	229	161	180
All-Scotland Courts				
Sheriff Appeal Court – criminal appeals lodged	723	701	279	600
Sheriff Appeal Court – civil appeals lodged	266	294	133	250
Personal Injury Court: registrations	3591	3220	2872	3000
Sheriff Courts				
Sheriff Court sitting days	26884	26981	16000	28000
Sheriff Courts: Summary				
Complaints registered	59777	65490	55523	60000
Trials Evidence Led	7731	6946	2749	8200
Sheriff Courts: Solemn				
S&J Indictments registered	5182	5452	4912	5000
S&J Trials Evidence Led	1119	1134	281	1200
Sheriff Courts: Civil				
Ordinary Cause registered	22776	23089	17404	23000
OC Proofs and Debates proceeding	563	543	177	500
Summary Cause/Small Claims/Simple Proc reg'd	43465	45953	18757	45000
SC Proofs Proceeding	379	368	80	400
JP Courts				
Complaints registered	36955	33582	16077	34000
Trials Evidence Led	1785	1543	395	1500
Office of the Public Guardian				
Powers of Attorney registered	60778	64166	30287	60000
Guardianship Orders registered	2764	2778	1551	2800
Access to funds orders registered	247	221	153	250
Intervention orders registered	426	476	299	480

Note —Whilst the projections provided for 2021-22 provide our best estimate of outturn at the beginning of the financial year, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may affect these figures. To ensure that figures relating to criminal case numbers are kept up to date monthly statistics are being published on the [SCTS website](#)



 Annex C—Key Business Volumes & Planning Assumptions
(cont.)

Upper Tribunal, First-tier Tribunals and other Tribunals administered by the SCTS

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 (Forecast)	2021/22 (Projection)
Upper Tribunal for Scotland				
Receipts	35	53	37	98
Disposals	16	51	44	88
Hearing Days	8	22	22	39
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber)				
Property Factor				
Receipts	225	187	167	210
Disposals	169	208	202	189
Hearing Days	125	74	115	80
Rent & Repairs				
Receipts	163	151	133	150
Disposals	230	178	97	168
Hearing Days	241	157.5	70	156
Third Party				
Receipts	44	49	17	60
Disposals	34	25	22	49
Hearing Days	29	96	36	80
Right of Entry (<i>Cases are disposed of by decision rather than hearing</i>)				
Receipts	72	79	75	84
Disposals	73	75	58	80
Decisions	39	45	26	40
Letting Agents				
Receipts	66	151	68	178
Disposals	32	135	78	164
Hearing Days	30	43	59	50
Private Rented Sector				
Receipts	3212	3507	1946	3507
Disposals	2656	3551	2410	3963
Hearing Days	176	230	325	245
Case Management Discussion Days	794	1195	1209	1212



Annex C—Key Business Volumes & Planning Assumptions (cont.)

Upper Tribunal, First-tier Tribunals and other Tribunals administered by the SCTS (cont.)

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 (Forecast)	2021/22 (Projection)
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Health & Education)				
Additional Support Needs				
Receipts	113	146	85	150
Disposals	83	132	124	135
Hearing Days	61	47	60	60
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Tax Chamber)				
Tax				
Receipts	17	24	2	30
Disposals	6	18	8	24
Hearing Days	1	25	4	46
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Social Security)				
Social Security				
Receipts	6	67	46	2848
Disposals	-	60	56	2307
Hearing Days	-	17	4	402
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (General Regulatory Chamber)				
Charity Appeals				
Receipts	3	1	0	1
Disposals	1	1	0	1
Hearing Days	4	2	0	1
Parking and Bus Lane Appeals (SCTS assumes responsibility during 2021-22)				
Receipts	-	-	887	1464
Disposals	-	-	1004	1208
Hearing Days	-	-	32	200
Police Appeals (SCTS assumes responsibility late 2022)				
Receipts	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Hearing Days	-	-	-	-



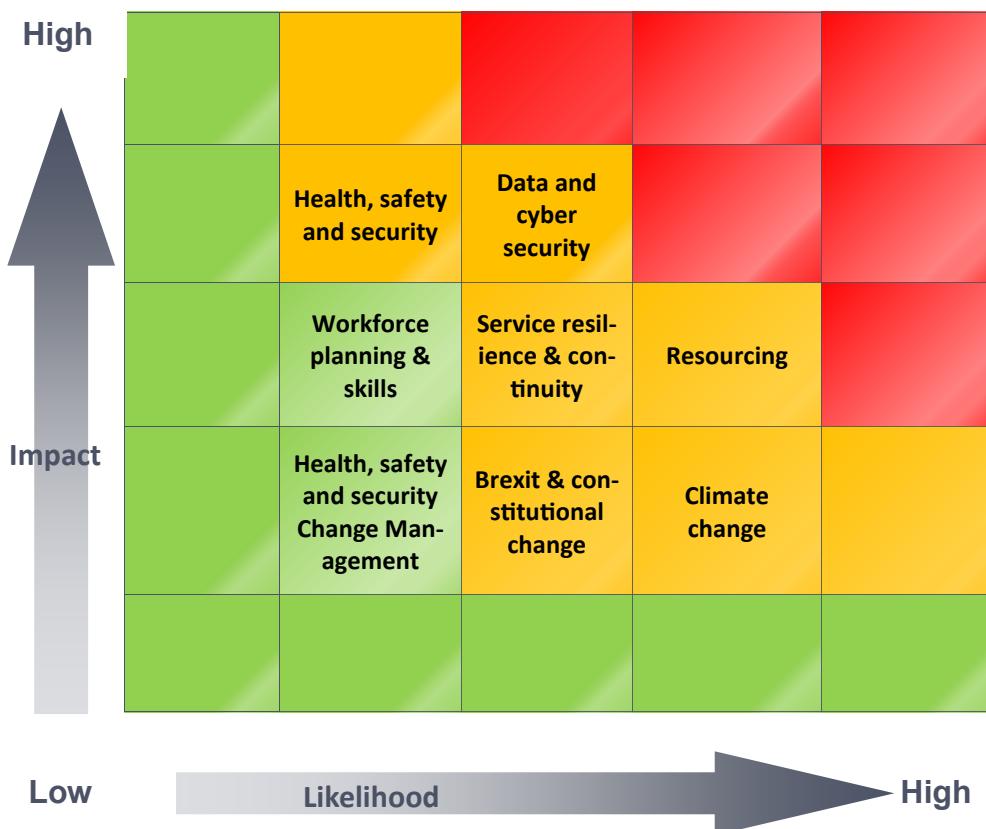
 Annex C—Key Business Volumes & Planning Assumptions
(cont.)

Other Tribunals administered by the SCTS

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 (Forecast)	2021/22 (Projection)
Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland				
Receipts	4576	4600	4996	5461
Disposals	4397	4509	4733	5243
Hearing Days	3451	3407	3184	3616
Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (Excessive Security)				
Receipts	32	31	32	30
Disposals	33	26	30	30
Hearing Days	33	22	32	30
Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland – Management of Offenders amendment – (MHTS S26) <i>(Amendment to the Mental Health for Scotland (Care and Treatment) Act 2003 introduced on 30th November 2020)</i>				
Receipts	-	-	0	42
Disposals	-	-	0	41
Hearing Days	-	-	0	31
Land Tribunal for Scotland				
Receipts	273	335	2040	600
Disposals	299	331	202	300
Hearing Days	43	80	45	80
Pensions Appeals Tribunal For Scotland				
Receipts	350	280	230	270
Disposals	300	272	210	243
Hearing Days	75	64	44	60
Council Tax Reduction Review Panel				
Receipts	61	57	40	55
Disposals	63	60	48	69
Hearing Days	13	14	9	15

 Annex D— Key Strategic Risk Categories & Corporate Risks

Strategic Risk Categories – Identified and Mapped by the SCTS



Strategic Risk Category	Principal Corporate Risk monitored by SCTS Board and Audit & Risk Committee
Workforce Planning & Skills	Failure to maintain a skilled, motivated and adaptable workforce to meet current and future needs
Health, Safety & Security	Significant health & safety or security breach
Service Resilience & Continuity	Essential business & services compromised due to critical incident(s)
Data & Cyber Security	Significant data/system loss caused by failure in information management controls or cyber-attack
Change Management	Ineffective planning and/or delivery of change impacts on delivery of core business or reform programme
Brexit and Constitutional Change	Constitutional change impacts on ability to deliver core business or reform programme
Finance & Resourcing	Financial pressures impact on delivery of core business or reform programme
Climate Change	Failure to meet Scottish Government's ambitious Climate change targets (carbon zero by 2045)





Annex E – Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Our Strategic Priorities & Objectives 2020-23

By supporting justice and building a stronger service we maintain:

- A Well Supported Judiciary; and
- Satisfied Service Users

In order to deliver we need:

- Skilled and Motivated People;
- Sustainable Buildings and Business;
- Digital Services
- Efficiency and Best Value; and
- Purposeful Collaboration

Underpinning the delivery of this we need:

- Strong leadership, governance and planning;
- Stable and sustainable funding

For each of our seven strategic priorities the SCTS Board has set out the main objectives that the organisation aims to achieve over the 2020-23 Corporate Planning period.

Strategic Priority 1 – A Well Supported Judiciary

Scotland's judiciary are equipped with the right people, systems, technology and processes to ensure they can dispense justice effectively

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- 1.1 Deliver the administration of Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian to a consistently high standard throughout the period of this plan.
- 1.2 Ensure that all of Scotland's devolved tribunals have the systems, processes and people they need to dispense justice as their caseloads and span of responsibility continues to grow.
- 1.3 Support Scotland's judiciary as the range and nature of cases they face continues to evolve—due to societal change, developments in systems and processes and broader policy changes.

Strategic Priority 2 – Satisfied Service Users

We inspire confidence through the delivery of a high-quality customer service

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- 2.1 Improve our service by learning from those who use it—inviting feedback and conducting user surveys to assess how effective we are.
- 2.2 Use the Customer Service Excellence standard to independently review and improve the quality of service we deliver.
- 2.3 Transform the service we provide to child and vulnerable witnesses to minimise the trauma they experience and ensure that the best possible evidence is captured.

Strategic Priority 3 – Skilled & Motivated People

We support our people to provide excellent customer service—focusing on their performance, learning, resilience and wellbeing

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- 3.1 Support our people to do their best—by introducing a new approach to performance management and development, and by reviewing our current reward framework.
- 3.2 Strengthen the wellbeing of our staff and those they support — through our wellbeing programme and the introduction of training on trauma awareness, that will improve both our understanding of trauma and our ability to support those experiencing it.
- 3.3 Build the confidence and competence of our people through the development of our professional training programmes — enabling all staff to develop their skills and careers in a structured and supported way.

Strategic Priority 4 – Sustainable Buildings & Business

We provide a high-quality, safe and secure environment for Scotland’s Courts and Tribunals, and take further action to reduce our environmental impact without compromising our core services

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- 4.1 Further reduce our impact on the environment—focusing on the three key drivers of our estate, our systems and our people, as we assess how to reach the carbon zero goal.
- 4.2 Set out our future vision for the courts and tribunals estate across Scotland, drawing on the lessons from the development of Inverness Justice Centre and conducting a strategic review of our estate to assess its condition, investment needs and options for future development.
- 4.3 Transform the service we provide to child and vulnerable witnesses to minimise the trauma they experience and ensure that the best possible evidence is captured.

Strategic Priority 5 – Digital Services

We maximise the opportunities provided by technology to improve processes, access to information and to support quick and better outcomes

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- 5.1 Reduce the need for physical attendance at proceedings where it adds little or no value by exploiting the technology introduced across Scotland’s courts and tribunals.
- 5.2 Improve access to justice by expanding and enhancing the range of digital services we provide.
- 5.3 Invest in the ongoing maintenance, security and usability of our digital network and systems — as it underpins an increasing proportion of what we do.



Strategic Priority 6 – Efficiency and Best Value

We have financial stability that enables us to improve our services in an effective, economical and sustainable manner

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- 6.1 Develop and introduce a modern digital HR system (including a new e-recruitment system) that reduced manual input, supports real-time updates and informs the organisation with high-quality people data and analytics.
- 6.2 Improve our ability to interact digitally with as broad a range of users as possible — investing in our web presence to enhance the information we provide and rolling-out a new system to automate expense payments and reimbursement.
- 6.3 Enhance the range of information we make available, publishing data to improve transparency. As new case management systems are introduced we will explore the potential to improve our service and generate greater insights for the justice system through the use of artificial intelligence.

Strategic Priority 7 – Purposeful Collaboration

We work with justice bodies to deliver significant change and improvement to Scotland’s justice system—through collaboration, communication and reform

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- 7.1 Propose reforms with the potential to radically improve the management of criminal business by co-ordinating and evaluating a range of pilot approaches to summary criminal case management and by taking forward the recommendations of the Lord Justice Clerk’s Review.
- 7.2 As members of Scotland’s Justice Board and its six local criminal justice boards, work in partnership with justice organisations, professional bodies and the third sector to maintain and improve system performance, share insights and support policy development leading to practical improvements.
- 7.3 Provide the staffing, systems and resources required to support the work of the Scottish Civil Justice Council and Scottish Sentencing Council as they develop court rules and sentencing guidelines to improve the operation of both the civil and criminal justice systems.

Annex F—Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Performance against the KPI measures is monitored quarterly by the SCTS Board, using its Performance Scorecard published on our website, assessing a range of measures relating to delivery of our seven Strategic Priorities. These are summarised below.

1. A Well Supported Judiciary

- 1a Judicial satisfaction levels (assessment of most recent judicial attitudes survey plus qualitative assessment by SCTS Executive Team)

2. Satisfied Service Users

- 2a User satisfaction levels (based on SCTS Court User Survey Data and ratings provided in independent Customer Service Excellence analysis)

- 2b Percentage of summary criminal cases disposed of within twenty-six weeks (based on official justice system statistics)

3. Skilled & Motivated People

- 3a Employee engagement levels (indicator based around staff turnover, absence levels and survey data)

- 3b Delivery of staff development (indicator based around proportion of staff who have completed certain key areas of training and development)

4. Sustainable Buildings & Business

- 4a Estate investment (assessment of investment levels to ensure that backlog maintenance is being managed effectively)

- 4b Sustainability and carbon reduction (assessment of whether the organisation is meeting carbon reduction targets set)

5. Digital Services

- 5a Proportion of applicable transactions carried out online (measure to assess and drive greater use of online systems, such as online fines payment)

- 5b IT system resilience (measure to report on the resilience of core SCTS systems – ensuring these are available for use when required)

6. Efficiency & Best Value

- 6a Sheriff summary criminal waiting periods (assessment of the length of time between pleading and trial diets, based on court system data)

- 6b JP summary criminal waiting periods (assessment of the length of time between pleading and trial diets, based on court system data)

- 6c Summary trials adjourned with no evidence led (proportion of trials called where the substantive business cannot proceed, based on court system data)

- 6d Court business waiting times (non-summary). An analysis of twelve key waiting indicators across a broad range of court business, assessing whether waiting times in relation to that business remain within optimal levels

- 6e Effective Tribunals Operations – an assessment of 14 key administrative targets monitored by Tribunal Operations Directorate, to ensure that tribunals are effectively administered

- 6f Delivering on our change programme – a summary of the delivery status on progress the SCTS is making towards meeting its outcomes

7. Purposeful Collaboration

- 7a Assessment of collaboration with other justice bodies and through the Justice Board for Scotland

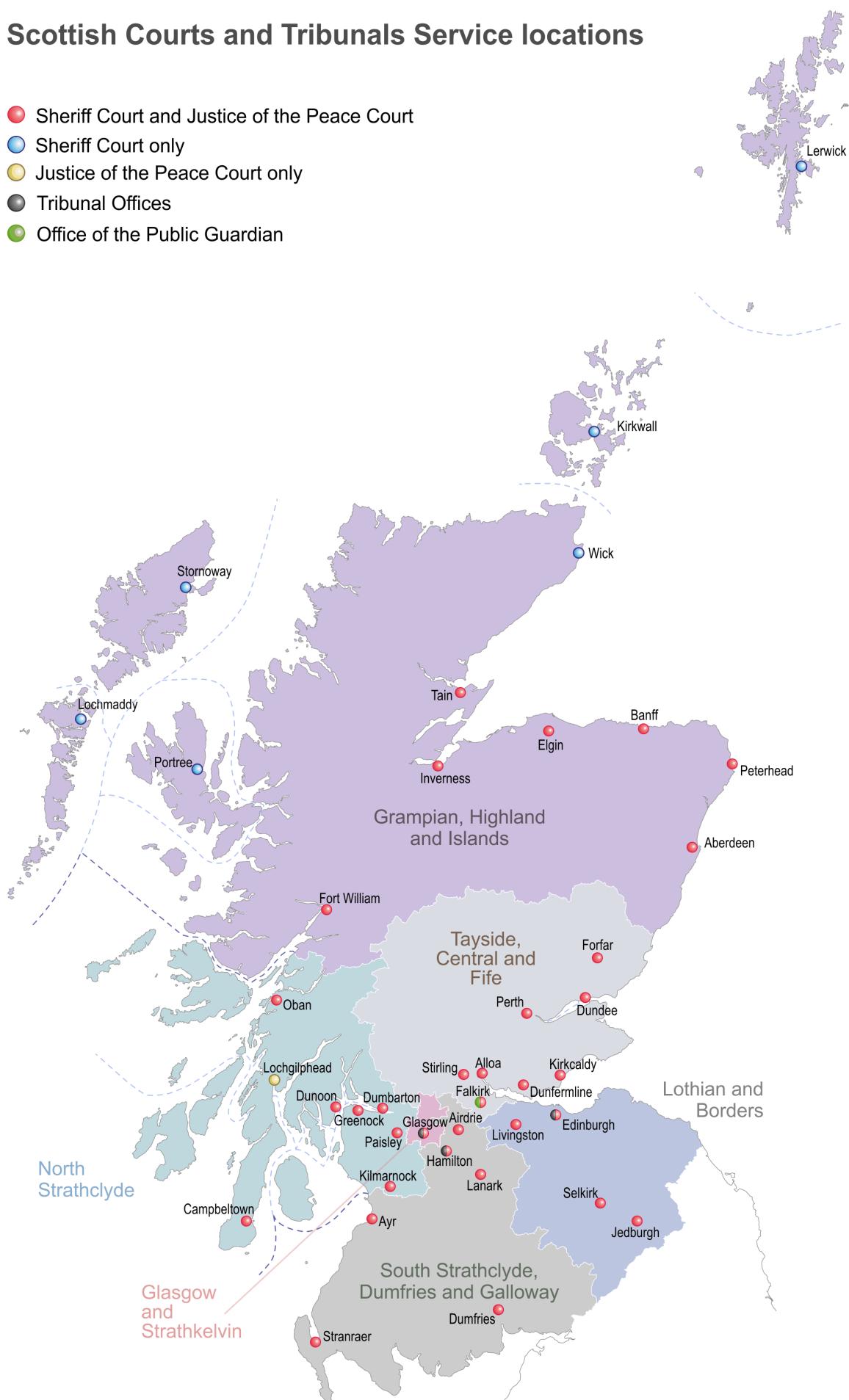
8. Financial Indicators

- 8a Managing expenditure (comparison of actual expenditure with profiled expenditure to the year end to ensure robust budgeting)

- 8b Managing income (comparison of actual fines and fees income received with profiled income to the year end to ensure robust profiling)

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service locations

- Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court
- Sheriff Court only
- Justice of the Peace Court only
- Tribunal Offices
- Office of the Public Guardian



Throughout the pandemic the SCTS has published and maintained on its website a comprehensive suite of advice and guidance documents for service users, setting out how the delivery of our business has changed, including new rules and Practice Notes and our policies on hygiene and attending at court – based on NHS Inform and Public Health Scotland advice. Links to key documents are provided below.

[SCTS and Coronavirus advice homepage](#)

[SCTS Corporate Plan 2020-23](#)

[SCTS Official Statistics](#)

Remember **FACTS** for a safer Scotland

F
A
C
T
S

Face coverings



Avoid crowded places



Clean your hands regularly



Two metre distance



Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms



nhsinform.scot/coronavirus
#WeAreScotland



Further Information

SCTS website

<http://www.scotcourtstribunals.gov.uk>

SCTS Reports and Data

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/reports-data

SCTS Board

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/the-scottish-court-service-board

Office of the Public Guardian

www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk

Scottish Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/about-scottish-tribunals>

Other Courts & Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/other-courts-and-tribunals>

Judicial Office for Scotland

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/judicial-office-for-scotland

Scottish Government

<http://www.gov.scot>

Scottish Civil Justice Council

www.scottishciviljusticecouncil.gov.uk

Scottish Sentencing Council

<https://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk>

Justice Strategy for Scotland

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/09/5924/0>



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