



MINUTES

SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD

MEETING: MONDAY 25 JUNE 2018, FORT WILLIAM, PORTREE AND STORNOWAY (VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCE)

Present: Rt Hon Lord Carloway, Lord President (Chair)
Dr Joe Morrow CBE QC
Dr Kirsty Hood QC
Sheriff Principal Duncan Murray
Sheriff Grant McCulloch
Sheriff Aisha Anwar
Morna Rae, JP
Professor Hugh MacDougall
Simon Catto
Joe Al-Gharabally
Colonel David McIlroy
Eric McQueen

Attended: Noel Rehfisch, Corporate Secretary, SCTS
Karen Lawrie, Secretariat Business Manager (Minutes)

Apologies: Rt Hon Lady Dorrian, Lord Justice Clerk
Rt Hon Lady Smith

1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting of 26 March 2018

1.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising and Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.

2.2 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Observations from Visits

3.1 Ahead of the formal meeting the Board had split into 3 groups to visit courts in Fort William, Portree and Stornoway. Board members met with local judiciary and staff who provided a tour of the court buildings. This provided an opportunity for the Board to discuss how business was managed within each court and to view the technology installed in the courtrooms. The complexities of managing court business in an island court were discussed. The Board were impressed with the professionalism, motivation and enthusiasm of the staff whom they met and the strong working relationships with local partners.

3.2 The Board meeting was then held via video conference, using the in-court facilities at each of the three locations.

4. Financial Update (SCTS/Jun18/27)

4.1 The Board considered the provisional year-end outturn for the 2017-18 financial year. Total expenditure including depreciation stood at £108.4m against a budget of £108.6m. Total Net Expenditure was provisionally £1.7m above budget, due to declining levels of retained fines and a historical VAT liability of £0.8m. These pressures had been managed within budget and in consultation with the Scottish Government.

4.2 The tight financial position faced by SCTS was acknowledged. The Executive assured the Board that a full review of the 2018-19 budgets alongside implementation of the actions set out in the Financial Strategy would be undertaken. A Financial Report would be presented to the next meeting providing an analysis of both income and expenditure levels for the year to date.

5. Quarterly Performance Review & SCTS Board Scorecard (SCTS/Jun18/28)

5.1 The Board carried out its quarterly performance review of the organisation. The current position on delivery of the outcomes in the 2018-19 Business Plan was considered.

5.2 The Board Scorecard for Quarter 4 of the 2017-18 was scrutinised. The Board discussed the Financial Performance data, requesting that further detail be submitted for consideration at the next meeting.

6. Standards of Service for Victims and Witnesses (SCTS/Jun18/29)

6.1 A report on the operation of shared standards of service for victims and witnesses was reviewed. The cross justice sector report provided a summary of the service standards in place over the past 12 months and the efforts made by organisations to ensure that these were met. Details of further actions that would be taken over the coming year were outlined.

6.2 The Board reported that staff had shared their knowledge and understanding of managing cases involving victims and vulnerable witnesses in a court environment during the visits that had preceded the meeting. SCTS staff were commended by the Board for their efforts in maintaining service levels in busy court environments.

7. Integrated Case Management System Progress Report (SCTS/Jun18/30)

7.1 The current position on the development of the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) was reported. Phase one of the project, the Civil Online Tracker, was launched successfully on 13 March 2018 and was now a stable live service. This allowed the status of civil simple procedure cases to be reviewed online by the parties to a case.

7.2 Work to finalise the scope of phase two, which would provide for the online submission of simple procedure cases, was ongoing, with a launch date of early 2019 anticipated.

7.3 The Board discussed the complexities of the project and the reporting in place to monitor its development. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee confirmed that the workshop session following their meeting in August would focus on the continued development of the ICMS system.

8. Devolution of Reserved Tribunals (SCTS/Jun18/31)

8.1 The Board recognised that planning for the transfer of the administration of reserved tribunals from HMCTS to SCTS remained on hold, pending progress being made on the transfer of powers between the Scottish and UK Governments. Members acknowledged the considerable progress under way to continue the establishment of the new chamber structure for devolved tribunals which was being overseen by the Tribunals Reform Programme Board.

9. Inverness Justice Centre (SCTS/Jun18/32)

9.1 Progress on the development of the Inverness Justice Centre was reviewed. The groundworks, drainage and foundation works were well underway. Off-site manufacturing was progressing to the programme timeline. The Project Board would be holding its next meeting in Inverness to allow a visit to the site. The programme remained on track to deliver an operational justice centre around the end of 2019.

9.2 A user group involving staff, judiciary and representatives from all of the agencies that would occupy the building had been established. The group would discuss how to make the best use of the new facilities to provide an integrated and collaborative service.

9.3 The Board welcomed the notification that the demolition of the adjacent former Inverness College would commence over the summer.

9.4 It was agreed that continued development of the Inverness Justice Centre would be overseen by the Estates Committee, with periodic updates provided to the Board.

10. Annual Review of Standing Orders (SCTS/Jun18/33)

10.1 The Board conducted its annual review of SCTS Standing Orders. A number of amendments to ensure the standing orders remained accurate were proposed and approved. The Board determined that the limit on the level of budget which the Chief Executive could transfer from one category to another should be increased from £250k to £500k.

10.2 The revised Standing Orders would supersede the existing version from 1 July 2018 and would be published on the SCTS website.

11. SCTS Committee Update (Oral)

Audit and Risk Committee

11.1 The Committee Chair provided an update on the key points from the last meeting in April. At the next meeting in August the Committee would receive the Draft Annual Report 2017-18 from External Audit and would also review the Final Accounts 2017-18.

People Committee

11.2 The Committee Chair summarised the matters discussed at the last meeting. The Committee had welcomed the appointments of Lisa Sellars as Director HR and Jessica MacDonald as Director Education and Learning. The Committee were confident that the appointments would ensure delivery of the ambitious programme outlined in the People Strategy.

Estates Committee

11.3 The Chair of the Estates Committee reported on discussions at the May meeting which had taken place at the Glasgow Tribunal Centre. Committee members had reviewed significant maintenance pressures at Peterhead, Glasgow and Dumbarton. Options for managing these pressures would be considered by the Committee at their September meeting, prior to making recommendations to the Board.

11.4 Plans to improve the court facilities in Kirkcaldy were progressing. Planning permission would be sought in the near future. The proposals had been positively received by justice partners.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 There was no other business raised.

13. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only

13.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- Court Programming
- ICT High Level Risks
- the SCTS Decision Tracker

Court Programming

13.2 The Board commended current performance levels across both the High Court and the sheriff courts. The Executive confirmed that performance in all areas across courts, tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian, was meeting or exceeding targets.

13.3 No further matters were raised by exception.

14. Date of the Next Meeting

14.1 The next meeting would be held on Monday 20 August 2018 in Edinburgh.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
June 2018