



# MINUTES

## SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD

MEETING: Monday 25 November 2019, Parliament House, Edinburgh

**Present:** Rt Hon Lord Carloway, Lord President (Chair)  
Joe Al-Gharabally  
Sheriff Aisha Anwar  
Simon Catto  
Rt Hon Lady Dorrian, Lord Justice Clerk  
Dr Kirsty Hood QC  
Professor Hugh MacDougall  
Sheriff Grant McCulloch  
Eric McQueen  
Morna Rae, JP  
Anne Scott  
Rt Hon Lady Smith  
Sheriff Principal Craig Turnbull

**Attended:** Noel Rehfisch, Corporate Secretary, SCTS  
Karen Lawrie, Secretariat Business Manager, SCTS

**Apologies:** Colonel David McIlroy

### 1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting on 7 October 2019

1.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

### 2. Declarations of Interest and Matters Arising

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2.2 The Board were informed of an error in the notes to the SCTS Annual Report and Accounts for 2018-19, which had been approved at the August Board meeting. The error was one of disclosure and did not affect the underlying financial statements or the audit opinion. Remedial action had been taken. This had been reviewed and verified by the External Auditor. Specific measures had been taken by SCTS and the External Auditor to provide assurance that there would be no recurrence. The Audit and Risk Committee Chair confirmed that the findings of an independent review of Financial controls would be scrutinised at their first meeting of 2020.

### 3. Financial Results (SCTS/Nov19/41)

3.1 The Board reviewed the report on financial performance to the end of September 2019. The total budget for 2019-20 was projected to be £134.5m. The full year expenditure forecast remained over-budget. This reflected a range of pressures in areas where funding was yet to be secured from the Scottish Government. The Executive would continue to monitor these areas, and make representations to the Government, to ensure that pressures were understood and appropriate in-year budget transfers made.

#### **4. Spending Review (SCTS/Nov19/42)**

4.1 The Board discussed the position in relation to the Scottish Government's spending review. The process would set the revenue budget for the SCTS and other Scottish public sector bodies for 2020-21. The UK general election had led to a delay in the budget setting process. It had been anticipated that initial budget allocations would have been made in December. These would now not be available until the New Year when the outcome of the election and its implications for the Scottish Budget became clear. Capital budgets would be reviewed in mid-2020. The Lord President had set out the Board's views on future funding requirements to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work.

#### **5. Quarterly Performance Review and Scorecard (SCTS/Nov19/43)**

5.1 The Board carried out its quarterly review of performance. This included a progress report on the outcomes in the 2019-20 Business Plan.

5.2 The Board commended the development of a pilot Social Inclusion Modern Apprenticeship scheme. The first two apprentices would be based in Glasgow Sheriff Court and the Glasgow Tribunals Centre. A letter from the UK Civil Service Commission praised the SCTS and stated that they were extremely encouraged by the initiative, which would help to tackle the unemployment gap and contribute directly to the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

5.3 The Evidence and Hearings Suite within the Glasgow Tribunals Centre had been formally opened by the Lord Justice Clerk and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on 18 November. The facilities were complimented by all attendees.

#### **6. Inverness Justice Centre (SCTS/Nov19/44)**

6.1 Progress on the construction of the Inverness Justice Centre was reviewed. The project remained on track for completion in early 2020. The Centre was scheduled to be fully operational by 30 March 2020. Externally the building elevation works had been completed and the landscaping was progressing to plan.

#### **7. Customer Service Excellence Accreditation (SCTS/Nov19/45)**

7.1 The continued improvement recorded by the Customer Service Excellence assessors in 2019 was welcomed. The SCTS had improved the number of areas assessed as "compliance plus" and reduced the number of "partially compliant" areas to one. The CSE report would be published in the next few weeks.

7.2 The Board commended the staff of SCTS in achieving this level of accreditation. They felt the results portrayed SCTS to other organisations and the general public in a positive light.

#### **8. Court Users Survey Results (SCTS/Nov19/46)**

8.1 The 2019 Court Users Satisfaction survey had been conducted across all SCTS courts. A total of 2,483 members of the public and professional court users had taken part. The overall satisfaction rating was 92%. The Board agreed that both the CSE accreditation and Court Users Survey remained important independent mechanisms to monitor and assess that the services, which were provided by the SCTS, were of a high standard. They were also helpful in identifying areas for future development. The full survey report would be published in the next few weeks.

## **9. Corporate Plan 2020-23 Development (SCTS/Nov19/47)**

9.1 The current SCTS Corporate Plan runs from April 2017 to March 2020. A new 3-year Corporate Plan setting out the SCTS's purpose, values, priorities and high-level objectives for the coming 3 years was under development. The Plan would be published by April 2020.

9.2 The Board were updated on the work underway to develop the Plan. The development group, which included four Board members, outlined the progress from their first meeting. They commented on the wide-ranging discussions which had been undertaken during the initial meeting and the requirement to make financial assumptions, due to the delay in the publication of the Scottish Budget.

## **10. SCTS Board Operation (SCTS/Nov19/48)**

10.1 The Board reviewed the structure of its existing four Committees: People, Estates, Audit & Risk and Remuneration. The Committees had supported the Board in discharging its role to good effect over the past year. It was agreed that the structure would be maintained for 2020. The Board stressed the importance of good governance and oversight of new digital developments by the Board and its Committees and requested the Executive to examine and report on the arrangements currently in place and on those which might enhance the Board's supervisory role in digital areas.

10.2 Informed by the Board appraisal process, a schedule of workshop sessions, visits and development activities, which would coincide with each Board meeting in 2020 was considered. The Board approved the shortlist of topics for the sessions and proposed visits.

## **11. SCTS Committees:**

### *Remuneration Committee*

11.1 The Remuneration Committee had met prior to the Board meeting. In accordance with the Scottish Government's Public Pay Policy for 2019-20, the Committee agreed to recommend a 2% increase in the daily fees for those members of the SCTS Board and its Committees who were not already in receipt of remuneration from public funds. This was approved.

### *Audit and Risk Committee*

11.2 The Committee Chair updated the Board on discussions at the November meeting. The committee's post-meeting workshop sessions in 2020-21 would focus on: Readiness for Social Security Chamber Expansion (April 2020); Digital Strategy Implementation (August 2020); Criminal Justice Reform Proposals (November 2020); and Business continuity planning and resilience (January 2021).

### *People Committee*

11.3 The Committee Chair summarised the matters discussed at the October meeting and presented the Committee's Annual Report. The Committee's priorities for 2020 would include monitoring ongoing progress of the People Strategy. Workforce planning, succession planning and talent management would be scrutinised along with organisational development and design, culture and leadership. The Committee would also analyse the results of the Staff Survey 2019 before presenting their findings to the Board in March.

### *Estates Committee*

11.4 The Committee Chair submitted the Committee's Annual Report. This reported on the decisions, which had been made during the year. These included the approval of Business Cases: for the relocation of of the Justice of the Peace Court in Coatbridge to a building adjacent to Airdrie Sheriff Court; and the renewal of the lease for the Office of the Public Guardian in Falkirk. The Committee approved the estates budget priorities for 2019-20 and the list of "shovel

ready” projects maintained to ensure effective use of any late release funding from the Scottish Government.

## **12. Any Other Business**

12.1 The Lord President thanked Professor Hugh MacDougall, for his contribution to the Board and its Committees over the last 5 years as his tenure was due to end in December 2019. A new member would be appointed to succeed Professor MacDougall.

## **13. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only**

13.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- Court Programming update;
- the SCTS Decision Tracker.

No matters were raised by exception.

## **14. Date of the Next Meeting**

14.1 The next meeting would be held on Monday 3 February 2020.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service  
November 2019