

## Assurance and Best Value Framework

The Assurance and Best Value Framework provides a consolidated overview of the arrangements in place across the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to support effective governance, assurance and continuous improvement. It maps key business processes and areas against the Scottish Government's Best Value themes, identifying the sources of assurance that support each area and demonstrating how these operate across operational management, corporate oversight and independent or external review.

The framework was originally developed to bring together, in a single document, the arrangements that provide assurance across SCTS' principal business areas. It uses a "three lines of defence" model, recording assurance sources at operational delivery level, corporate oversight level and independent or external review level. This helps demonstrate how assurance is generated, reviewed and challenged across the organisation.

Over time, the framework has been developed to provide a broader picture of organisational assurance. It links key business processes to the relevant Best Value themes and corporate risk areas, helping to show how governance, performance, risk and assurance arrangements support the delivery of SCTS' statutory responsibilities and strategic priorities.

The framework is reviewed annually by the Audit and Risk Committee and maintained by the Executive as part of SCTS' overall assurance arrangements. The published version focuses on the framework's core purpose: explaining the main assurance sources in place across SCTS business areas, the Best Value themes to which those areas contribute, and the associated corporate risk areas.

For publication, some internal management information has been removed. This includes named individual leads, proposed future development activity and internal assurance ratings or scoring. These redactions allow the framework to provide a clear and transparent overview of SCTS' assurance and Best Value arrangements, while protecting personal information, internal management assessments and operational detail that is more appropriate for internal governance and scrutiny.

Business Process / Area	Best Value Themes	Assurance Sources		
		Business Management (1st Line)	Corporate Oversight (2nd Line)	Independent Assurance (3rd Line)
<b>1. Corporate Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vision and Leadership</li> <li>2. Governance &amp; Accountability</li> <li>3. Effective Use of Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founding legislation (<i>Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008</i>).</li> <li>• Board Standing Orders</li> <li>• Members Code of Conduct &amp; Register of Interests (<i>updated twice per year/as required</i>).</li> <li>• Secretariat/Executive Team stewardship of Board &amp; Committees.</li> <li>• Clear and published remits, meeting minutes etc.</li> <li>• Board Scheme of Delegation allocating clear roles and responsibilities – reviewed annually.</li> <li>• Monthly finance reports, KPIs and overview reports of progress against audit recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board and Sub Committee operation/scrutiny.</li> <li>• Annual review of Standing Orders and members code of conduct (<i>last completed June 2026</i>).</li> <li>• Annual Committee Remit review.</li> <li>• Committee Annual Reports.</li> <li>• Annual Board &amp; Committee self-assessment and individual member assessments.</li> <li>• Corporate Assurance group meets quarterly to review arrangements in place.</li> <li>• Executive Team monthly People Finance and Performance meeting.</li> <li>• Directors Statements of Assurance process (annual).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework document - agreement between SCTS and Scottish Ministers re governance, finance and operations of the functions of SCTS (reviewed with Scottish Government every 5 years).</li> <li>• Annual Report &amp; Accounts (approved unqualified, published August 2025).</li> <li>• Membership of Scottish Government (SG) Delivery Bodies Network.</li> <li>• Internal audit annual assurance opinion.</li> <li>• Assurance and Best Value Framework (reviewed annually by ARC).</li> </ul>
<b>2. Strategy, Planning and Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vision and Leadership</li> <li>2. Governance &amp; Accountability</li> <li>3. Effective Use of Resources</li> <li>4. Partnerships &amp; Collaborative Working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Unit plans, linked to 3-year Corporate Plan, strategic priorities and National Performance Framework.</li> <li>• Individual objectives linked to Business Unit Plans.</li> <li>• Business Unit reporting structure aligned to Executive Directors.</li> <li>• Key plans developed and reviewed in consultation with Executive Team, Directors &amp; Senior Managers before being finalised.</li> <li>• Horizon Scanning report 'Forward Look' published quarterly shows key changes impacting SCTS and aids planning.</li> <li>• Business volume modelling and criminal case recovery planning in place.</li> <li>• Business Continuity plans, policies and guidance hosted on Intranet.</li> <li>• Business Unit Continuity Plans and co-ordination arrangements in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan 2026-2029 approved by SCTS Board.</li> <li>• Key Corporate strategies in place (E.G. estates, people, digital, sustainability, financial).</li> <li>• Annual business plan produced and published.</li> <li>• Business Unit Planning Guidance updated annually.</li> <li>• Business Plan Delivery Report – reviewed quarterly by Executive Team and SCTS Board.</li> <li>• Executive Change Board keep under review key reforms to be delivered over a 3-year period.</li> <li>• Annual review of Business Continuity Strategy, Guidance and Business Unit plans.</li> <li>• Test exercise of Business Continuity Plans on a needs assessed basis.</li> <li>• Cyber Incident exercise facilitated with Executive Team (Q2 2025-26).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual People Survey 2024 (86% score in organisational objectives &amp; purpose theme).</li> <li>• Joint planning &amp; working arrangements with partners supported via the Justice Board.</li> <li>• Membership of SG Resilience Sub-Group, to ensure effective joint contingency planning.</li> <li>• External/Internal Audit reviews (Business Continuity and Service Resilience review in Q2 2023-24: Substantial Assurance).</li> <li>• Ongoing membership of Cross-Government Business Continuity Forum.</li> <li>• Review of Cyber Incident response arrangements by SG Cyber Resilience Team.</li> </ul>

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<b>3. Change Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Governance &amp; Accountability</li> <li>3. Effective Use of Resources</li> <li>4. Partnerships &amp; Collaborative Working</li> <li>6. Fairness &amp; Equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated change function with specialists in key roles.</li> <li>Dedicated Head of Change &amp; Business Architecture.</li> <li>LOAD Agile delivery framework with guidance, templates and approval processes in place.</li> <li>Change activity subject to Equality and Data Protection Impact Assessments, as required.</li> <li>Monthly report from CDi setting out progress of 'in-flight' change activities.</li> <li>Change Labs hold quarterly Programme Increment (PI) planning events, ensuring effective use of resources.</li> <li>Collaborative working with SG Digital Directorate to share knowledge and resource to achieve improved outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work of Change LABS overseen by Executive Action Boards (EABs) and overall change portfolio including non-Lab projects overseen by Executive Change Board (ECB).</li> <li>Board approval of major projects (as defined in Board Scheme of Delegation).</li> <li>ECB appraises change portfolio priorities, capacity and resourcing / financials.</li> <li>Programme / Project Boards oversee significant change not governed by Change LABS</li> <li>Front Door Forum assesses and makes recommendations regarding change activity proposals.</li> <li>Quarterly reporting to SG Digital Portfolio Office (DPfO) to show current / planned digital change investment activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateway reviews and external assessment of major change activity.</li> <li>Quarterly updates provided to Digital Portfolio Office on all Digital Projects.</li> <li>SG DAO reviews SCTS digital change initiatives that have an external user element, under the Technology Assurance Framework &amp; compliance with Digital First Service Standards.</li> <li>Quarterly updates of major projects provided to the Public Audit Committee (PAC) via the Digital Portfolio Office (DPO).</li> <li>SG-led Criminal Justice Board sub-group oversees all change activity linked to the Vision for Justice Three Year delivery plan.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vision and Leadership</li> <li>2. Governance &amp; Accountability</li> <li>3. Effective Use of Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Management Framework reviewed annually – detailing approach to identification, management &amp; escalation.</li> <li>Business Unit Risk Registers reviewed and published quarterly.</li> <li>Change management delivery and technical risks managed in LABS.</li> <li>Change risk reporting and escalation approach in place to enhance transparency within LABs and at ECB/EAB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director Scrutiny of Business Unit Risk Registers.</li> <li>Corporate Risk Register regularly updated. Risks owned at Executive level with regular Executive Team review.</li> <li>EABs review LAB risks regularly and strategic oversight by the ECB (6 times per year).</li> <li>Directors' Statements of Assurance process details directors' risk management responsibilities and seeks assurance therein.</li> <li>ARC &amp; Board oversight and scrutiny through periodic review of corporate risk register and annual risk workshop.</li> <li>Deliver training to Business Units on risk management (ongoing 2024-25).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Report &amp; Accounts – including Governance Statement and summary of principal risks – published Q2 2024-25</li> <li>Risk-based approach to internal audit identification of topics.</li> <li>ARC approved changes to some corporate risks (categories / descriptions names) revised in 2025 with data &amp; cyber security separated and constitutional change removed.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Performance Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Governance &amp; Accountability</li> <li>3. Effective Use of Resources</li> <li>4. Partnerships &amp; Collaborative Working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated Management Information and Analysis Team.</li> <li>Regular/detailed management reports – informing operational analysis &amp; corporate performance.</li> <li>Business/ operational reporting generated through operational case management systems.</li> <li>Various Business Units have KPI Scorecards monitoring business performance locally.</li> <li>Criminal court modelling updated annually, indicating the level of court provision that will be necessary to maintain an effective system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suite of key Performance Indicators (KPI) monitored quarterly in SCTS Board Scorecard (reviewed annually).</li> <li>Internal quality assurance &amp; guidance on KPIs.</li> <li>Detailed statistical reports on operational and corporate performance reviewed by Exec Team.</li> <li>Performance data published on staff intranet.</li> <li>Monthly statistics on criminal case activity including showing business volumes and trends.</li> <li>Quarterly fines enforcement published on website.</li> <li>Half yearly civil registration volumes and commissary data published.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistics Publications (e.g. Quarterly Fines Report)</li> <li>Statistics publication on criminal court performance (published monthly) and civil registrations (published every 6 months)</li> <li>SCTS data now forms part of a monthly multi-agency Criminal Justice Board Management Information report, assured by Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services.</li> <li>External Audit Reviews.</li> </ul>

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<b>6. Data Handling, FOI &amp; Information Security</b>	2. Governance & Accountability 3. Effective Use of Resources 5. Working with Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register of FOI cases with assigned leads/timescales.</li> <li>Dedicated FOI/Data Team.</li> <li>Local controls &amp; guidance relating to data handling.</li> <li>Data Protection Impact Assessment guidance deployed.</li> <li>Data sharing agreements in place with key partners.</li> <li>Local Information Asset Registers.</li> <li>Mandatory Protecting Information e-learning.</li> <li>Clear desk policy.</li> <li>Dedicated cyber security team.</li> <li>Cyber security awareness, guidance and technical controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data Security policy sets out key responsibilities.</li> <li>Data Protection incidents reviewed quarterly by Executive Team and ARC.</li> <li>Encryption, accreditation and access procedures agreed and monitored.</li> <li>Annual all-staff mandatory training on data protection.</li> <li>Corporate complaints handling procedure – cases independently investigated.</li> <li>Information Governance Principles published February 2025.</li> <li>Monthly Cyber Security Report to Executive Team</li> <li>Membership in SCTS Resilience team with weekly contact with corporate team colleagues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information Commissioner Office oversight/role in any reportable incidents and Audit of SCTS compliance with data protection legislation carried out July 2025.</li> <li>Scottish Information Commissioners Office for FOI appeals.</li> <li>Role of Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in reviewing complaints made against SCTS.</li> <li>Cyber Essentials Plus standard awarded – annual accreditation through the cyber essentials scheme.</li> <li>Independent technical security assurance and incident response arrangements.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Legal &amp; Regulatory Compliance of court, tribunal and OPG operations</b>	2. Governance & Accountability 7. Fairness & Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation team, Tribunals policy team and the Public Guardian work closely with SG providing analysis on impact of policy changes.</li> <li>Updates and guidance on implementation of new legislation/rules provided for all staff.</li> <li>Legislation and Information Unit translate detailed policy into practical advice for court staff.</li> <li>Framework document (agreement between SG &amp; SCTS) in place.</li> <li>Extensive technical support for staff available including technical manual, in-person and online training.</li> <li>Lord President's Private Office assess the impact of legislative change on court rules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twice annual updates to SCTS Board/Executive Team on new/emerging legislation.</li> <li>Updates for Executive Change Board, ahead of each meeting, on legislation which requires IT changes.</li> <li>Irregularities/challenges brought to Executive Team's attention.</li> <li>Tribunals' Reform programme oversees establishment of new jurisdictions.</li> <li>Reporting on other statutory duties contained in Annual Report and Accounts.</li> <li>Criminal Courts Rules Council and Scottish Civil Justice Council review and approve new rules of court (Criminal and Civil).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong independent challenge of compliance as any irregularities/ invalidity of approach subject to challenge by parties to a particular case.</li> <li>Justice Board for Scotland provide co-ordination and oversight of system-wide developments (including oversight of implementation of new proposals requiring legislation).</li> </ul>
<b>8. Property Services</b>	4. Partnerships & Collaborative Working 5. Working with Communities 6. Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estates Strategy sets out overall approach (revised strategy currently in development).</li> <li>Professionally qualified estates teams.</li> <li>Frameworks in place for large contracts.</li> <li>Facilities Management Contract – sets clear service levels.</li> <li>Prioritised maintenance &amp; investment schedules ensure that available resources support improvement of key sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board &amp; Estates Committee oversight/ approval of key initiatives and developments.</li> <li>ECB oversight of relevant estates projects.</li> <li>Statutory compliance reporting regime.</li> <li>Board Scorecard KPIs monitor backlog maintenance and carbon reduction targets.</li> <li>H &amp; S Audits and Fire Risk assessments inform both investment and compliance activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent condition surveys &amp; estate valuation.</li> <li>Gateway Review of significant projects (e.g. Edinburgh Justice Campus).</li> <li>Community asset transfers of surplus buildings via Community Empowerment legislation.</li> <li>New framework contract management protocols in place.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Health, Safety and Security</b>	2. Governance & Accountability 4. Partnerships &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professionally qualified health &amp; safety team.</li> <li>Local plans, procedures &amp; marshals in place.</li> <li>Range of mandatory e-learning.</li> <li>Proportionate protective security arrangements are in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolution incident logging system records incidents and produces report.</li> <li>Health &amp; Safety, Security and Works oversees detailed work/provides report to Estates Committee.</li> <li>FM contract in place with regime of pre-planned maintenance.</li> <li>H&amp;S audits, Security audits and Fire Risk Assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodic independent fire safety checks.</li> <li>Independent compliance checks built into facilities management contract.</li> <li>HMIP review of custody facilities and development of shared standards (ongoing).</li> <li>Independent reviews of significant incidents (e.g. structural surveys currently being completed in relation to industry wide</li> </ul>

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	Collaborative Working 7. Fairness & Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range of operational practices reviewed to improve health &amp; safety (e.g. monitoring incidents of violence &amp; aggression)</li> <li>Dedicated Health &amp; Safety and security co-ordinators as well as Estate Security Manager to drive forward new processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly Health &amp; Safety Site Inspection checklist completed by court management.</li> <li>Bi-annual security report provided to the Executive Team on security matters.</li> </ul>	<p>concerns over the use of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete – RAAC).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FM contractor conduct independent annual security audits.</li> <li>FM contractor conduct regular QHSE audit of their paperwork and procedures.</li> </ul>
10. Sustainability	4. Partnership & Collaborative Working 5. Working with Communities 6. Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability strategy sets out how SCTS can support justices in a way that uses our resources efficiently and makes a substantial contribution to tackling climate change.</li> <li>Regular energy use and emissions monitoring using a building monitoring system.</li> <li>Sustainability Development Policy – ensuring sustainability is factored into key investments &amp; decisions. Sustainability built into major investments – e.g. Edinburgh Justice Rationalisation.</li> <li>On-line Sustainability Hub.</li> <li>Waste recycling contract awarded to OCS. Overall land diversion rate of 97%.</li> <li>Electric vehicle (EV) charging points in place across SCTS estate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability KPI in Board Scorecard to monitor annual performance (As an organisation, our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have more than halved since 2010).</li> <li>Oversight of sustainability issues maintained by Estates Committee and SCTS Board.</li> <li>SCTS Public Bodies Climate Change Duty Report submitted annually.</li> <li>Successful upgrade of building environmental management system has improved metrics.</li> <li>Annual Report and Accounts provides information on environmental matters, including the impact of the SCTS's business on the environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon Reduce certification achieved (in September 2025) aligning SCTS to international standards relating to measuring and reporting of greenhouse gases.</li> <li>Independent publication of SCTS performance on carbon by Sustainable Scotland Network.</li> <li>Contract activity conducted in line with SG Sustainability Procurement Action Plan.</li> </ul>
11. Finance & Procurement	2. Governance & Accountability 3. Effective Use of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial reporting delivered through SG Shared Accounting system.</li> <li>Professionally qualified finance and procurement team, with business partnering arrangements.</li> <li>Policies and guidelines for key activities regularly reviewed.</li> <li>Procurement, contract management and financial controls.</li> <li>Timetable for year-end returns, ARA preparations.</li> <li>Asset management software package in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly budget monitoring, profiling and reporting.</li> <li>Executive Team budget review (6-weekly).</li> <li>SCTS Board financial review (every 2 monthly meeting).</li> <li>KPIs &amp; procurement MI reporting (e.g. invoice payments).</li> <li>FPU Leadership led oversight groups for reconciliations, forecasting, technical accounting and procurement.</li> <li>Medium Term Financial Strategy setting out the financial plan required to deliver the priorities and objectives of SCTS.</li> <li>Scottish Government monthly returns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External audit opinion on accounts (Annual Report and Accounts published each year).</li> <li>Internal audit assurance opinion on annual work programme.</li> <li>National Fraud Initiative - payables data matching</li> <li>Procurement Capability Assessment rating</li> <li>Audit and Risk Committee oversight of Finance and Procurement capacity and capability through provided reports.</li> </ul>
12. HR and ELU Systems & Processes	1. Vision and Leadership 2. Governance & Accountability 3. Effective Use of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full range of HR policies and procedures in place, and regularly reviewed.</li> <li>Wellbeing and Carers hubs provide a range of support.</li> <li>CIPD membership is held across all HR specialisms, with HR business partnering.</li> <li>Established digital systems in place to support employees (performance appraisal, payroll, e-learning etc).</li> <li>Centralised Recruitment and Resourcing team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People scorecard provides overview of key indicators.</li> <li>People Committee oversight of initiatives.</li> <li>Joint pay remit approval process (in partnership with PCS).</li> <li>Gender Pay Gap results published annually.</li> <li>Equal Pay Statement produced every 4 years, reviewed every 2 years.</li> <li>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.</li> <li>35-hour working week evaluation plan.</li> <li>Critical position analysis at SEO level through to Executive Director level – supporting succession planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UK Civil Service People Survey 2025</li> <li>Performance Institute Learning Award achieved.</li> <li>Civil Service Commissioner Audit successfully completed.</li> <li>Audit Scotland review of payroll function (no recommendations for change).</li> <li>SG Audit of Resourcing and Succession Planning.</li> <li>SQA accreditation.</li> <li>National Fraud Initiative - employee data matching completed.</li> <li>Accredited living wage employer</li> <li>Founding signatories to “Fair work Agreement” established by SG.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Partnerships &amp; Collaborative Working</li> <li>7. Fairness &amp; Equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership Agreement with PCS Union and monthly HRU/ELU/PCS meetings.</li> <li>Technical and professional training</li> <li>Talent management programme, aligned to SCTS Leadership attributes.</li> <li>Leadership Attributes Development Framework and Diagnostic Tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCTS Learning Council provides advice to ELU regarding business learning needs and policies.</li> <li>National Wellbeing and Carers Group.</li> </ul>	
13. Equality	7. Fairness & Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated equalities advisory staff.</li> <li>Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies in place.</li> <li>Equality Impact Assessments – carried out at policy and project level where required.</li> <li>Ongoing delivery of actions set out in the SCTS Equalities Outcomes Report and associated action plan.</li> <li>Mandatory online equality e-learning.</li> <li>An annual inclusion Calendar.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodic review of equalities performance and action plan by Employee Equality Group.</li> <li>Oversight of Equality issues by SCTS People Committee.</li> <li>Annual workplace equality survey.</li> <li>Biannual review of equality outcomes and delivery – published online.</li> <li>Annual review and report of Victims and Witnesses Service Standards.</li> <li>Inclusion Ambassadors / champions.</li> <li>Equality and Diversity online training Module developed by an independent body.</li> <li>Regular review of completed EqlAs.</li> <li>EDI Strategic Action Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workplace Equality Survey benchmarking.</li> <li>SCTS was awarded the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion Silver Award for 2025 in the Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) exercise.</li> <li>Members of Non-Departmental Public Bodies Equality Forum.</li> <li>Launched the LGBT+ employee network.</li> <li>British Sign Language Plan 2023-24 in place (in collaboration with EAG members, British Deaf Association and PCS).</li> </ul>
14. ICT Systems & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Effective Use of Resources</li> <li>4. Partnerships &amp; Collaborative Working</li> <li>6. Sustainable Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist, qualified staff in post – e.g. dedicated technical support (RUN) team and service desk located in RUN operation centre (ROC).</li> <li>Dedicated team oversees ICT governance, spending and contract management.</li> <li>Architecture team define and set standards for new technology.</li> <li>Green ICT strategy and alignment to corporate sustainability objectives.</li> <li>Quality Assurance team provides independent end-to-end testing service.</li> <li>Migrated to in-house support model for development of business applications, delivering value for money and enhanced ability to meet business needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical and Digital Strategy directs key development priorities.</li> <li>Executive Directors assigned as senior sponsor 'owners' of key digital systems – ensuring risk based decisions take account of business needs.</li> <li>Board and ARC interest/ oversight of digital developments in view of their profile and risk.</li> <li>Monthly updates on service delivery, incidents, and system availability produced and issued to all Directors.</li> <li>CDi leadership team meets regularly to review service delivery across all teams.</li> <li>Digital development platform is fully embedded, which has improved oversight and control of systems development and maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External/Gateway review of significant new investments.</li> <li>SCTS is a key partner in development of the Justice Digital Strategy.</li> <li>Review of Information Asset Registers and DPIA guidance templates (continues).</li> <li>Cyber reaccreditation (annually in Q3/4).</li> <li>Compliance with government standard to ensure new digital services meet set criteria.</li> </ul>
15. Corporate Comms	1. Vision and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professionally qualified team supporting both corporate, judicial and internal communications.</li> <li>Programme of internal and external communications</li> <li>Benchmarked Digital Content Style guide.</li> <li>Management and ongoing development of new SCTS Corporate website.</li> <li>Liaising with staff across the organisation the team ensure clear and consistent messaging aligned to the corporate plan ensuring SCTS reputation is protected.</li> <li>Day to day management of media enquiries and engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive team oversight of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly and strategic comms tracker.</li> <li>Key communications and high-level correspondence.</li> <li>SCTS Core Script</li> </ul> </li> <li>Executive team (and/or Board) approval of major announcements.</li> <li>Staff Survey outcomes used to inform future engagement strategy</li> <li>Daily media monitoring to support intelligence.</li> <li>Liaison with other justice agencies on key announcements that have cross justice implications.</li> <li>Open Justice Steering Group in place, driving forward activity to ensure that justice is not only done, but seen to be done.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedded annual customer service assessment process.</li> <li>Staff Survey demonstrates high awareness of SCTS purpose &amp; objectives (remains strong at 82% - ahead of other civil service organisations).</li> <li>Communication qualifications and training to ensure comms staff maintain skills.</li> <li>Positive feedback from both media and justice partners following handling of high profile court cases, launch of livestreaming in the criminal appeal court (in addition to ongoing livestreaming for Inner House cases) and support for production of documentaries regarding significant court cases.</li> </ul>

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		Business Management (1st Line)	Corporate Oversight (2nd Line)	Independent Assurance (3rd Line)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active monitoring of media and social media articles affecting SCTS.</li> </ul>		
<b>16. Court &amp; Tribunal Operational Delivery</b>  <i>(where processes not already covered above)</i>	4. Partnerships & Collaborative Working  5. Working with Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Reporting/ caseload statistics used to support management.</li> <li>New ideas/policies implemented with support of Operations Delivery Business Unit.</li> <li>Staff coaching and development processes in place across units.</li> <li>Comprehensive range of virtual and digital hearing solutions in place.</li> <li>Evidence by Commissioner suites operational providing improved services to child and vulnerable witnesses (facilities will be available in every Sheriffdom by April 2026).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going review of performance by lead Directors with Executive Directors for court, tribunal and OPG operations.</li> <li>Performance against operational KPIs assessed in Board Scorecard and local service delivery targets.</li> <li>Management checks, developed in collaboration with finance colleagues provide assurance to the business.</li> <li>Complaints investigated and reviewed to learn lessons/drive improvement.</li> <li>Joint business Protocols with Police Scotland and COPFS.</li> <li>Operations Directorate Business Review and Planning workshops (quarterly).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly publication of key court performance data – accredited to National Statistics standard.</li> <li>Criminal Court Case Modelling, published annually.</li> <li>Annual Report and Accounts provides year-end statistics on operational performance and annual Business Plan provides case projections.</li> <li>Criminal Justice Board overseeing key initiatives to modernise criminal justice system and support work to address challenges.</li> <li>Local Criminal Justice Board activity provides multi-agency, independent oversight – informed by business volume statistics.</li> </ul>
<b>17. Collaboration &amp; Partnership</b>	2. Governance & Accountability  4. Partnership & collaborative working  5. Working with Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local partnership arrangements function across courts, tribunals and corporate services.</li> <li>Significant change programmes involve partner organisations – e.g. Summary Case Management, Jury Process, National Sexual Offences Court etc.</li> <li>Strong collaboration on the managing the challenges faced by the High Court due to rise in business volumes.</li> <li>LJC Sexual Offences Review: SCTS is leading the implementation of those recommendations not requiring legislative change and working in collaboration with SG and Justice Organisations as the Victim, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Act is implemented.</li> <li>SCTS renewed a strategic partnership with OCS and COPFS to deliver sustainable facilities management across 74 sites, focusing on innovation and energy efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local criminal justice boards – chaired by Sheriffs Principal and supported by SCTS - provide forum to ensure collaboration between justice partners, and to discuss issues of concern.</li> <li>Executive team regular meetings with key partner groups – e.g. Faculty, Law Society, third sector groups etc. to discuss issues of interest/concern and seek feedback on performance.</li> <li>SCTS Board engagement programme ensures meetings with key partners</li> <li>Community Impact Indicator data collected to demonstrate range of SCTS community events.</li> <li>NHS Education Scotland and Justice Partners overseeing introduction of trauma informed workforce across entire justice sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer collaboration and partnership facilitated through Justice Board for Scotland.</li> <li>Criminal Justice sub-group of Justice Board co-ordinating multi agency transformation activity.</li> <li>Third party recognition of community support from organisations including Scottish Civic Trust, and several community partnerships/trusts involved in prior asset acquisition.</li> <li>Representation on Victims Taskforce to improve system operation and support to victims and witnesses.</li> </ul>

## Best Value Themes (Updated by Scottish Government – March 2020)

### Theme 1 - Vision and Leadership

A Best Value organisation will have in place a clear vision and strategic direction. It will show how it contributes to the delivery of improved outcomes for Scotland's people demonstrating pace and depth towards delivery of long-term sustainable services, making Scotland a better place to live and a more prosperous and successful country. The strategy will display a clear sense of purpose. It will reflect the needs of Scotland's people and will be clearly communicated to all staff and stakeholders. The strategy will show a clear direction of travel, will be clearly defined and target driven, and will be led by Senior Staff. They will foster a culture of cooperation which is underpinned by clear plans and strategies (aligned to resources) reflecting commitment to continuous improvement – providing effective mechanisms for informed decision making and performance scrutiny.

### Theme 2 – Governance and Accountability

A Best Value organisation will be able to demonstrate structures, policies and leadership behaviours which support the application of good standards of governance and accountability. It will do so using robust data and management information to demonstrate how the organisation is improving efficiency, focusing on priorities and achieving value for money in delivering its outcomes. These good standards will be reflected in clear roles, responsibilities and relationships within the organisation. Good governance arrangements will provide the supporting framework for the overall delivery of Best Value and will ensure open-ness and transparency. Key organisational processes are integrated with its planning cycle. Public reporting should show the impact of the organisation's activities, with clear links between the activities and what outcomes are being delivered to customers and stakeholders. Good governance provides an assurance that the organisation has a suitable focus on continuous improvement and quality. Out-with the organisation, good governance will show itself through an organisational commitment to public performance reporting about the quality of activities being delivered and commitments for future delivery. Business continuity plans are in place to allow effective and appropriate response to planned or unplanned events and circumstances.

### Theme 3 – Effective Use of Resources

A Best Value organisation will show that it is conscious of being publicly funded in everything it does, ensuring all its resources are deployed to achieve its strategic priorities. The organisation will have in place a workforce strategy setting out how its staff will deliver its vision, priorities and values. It will be able to show how its effective management of financial and all other resources (including staff, asset management, information, financial management and planning, performance management, ICT and procurement)) is contributing to delivery of specific outcomes, and it will work with its partners to maximise use of resources to achieve shared priorities and outcomes. Decisions on allocating resources are based on an integrated strategic approach, are risk-aware and evidence-based in their pursuit of its strategic outcomes.

### Theme 4 – Partnerships and Collaborative Working

A Best Value organisation will show how it, and its partnerships, are displaying effective collaborative leadership in identifying and adapting their service delivery to meet local needs and deliver better and customer-focused outcomes. The organisation will identify and address any impediments that inhibit collaborative working, and have a clear focus on the gain which can be achieved through collaborative working and community engagement in order to facilitate the achievement of its strategic objectives and outcomes.

### Theme 5 – Working with Communities

A Best Value organisation will demonstrate understanding of communities' needs by ensuring there is engagement and collaboration in strategic planning in a way that is open, fair and inclusive, to deliver better outcomes and reduce inequalities. The organisation will seek to ensure communities' needs are met by providing a clear line of sight from individual actions through to the National Outcomes and the National Performance Framework. The measures used to manage and report on performance will also enable the organisation to provide assurances on quality and link this to continuous improvement and the delivery of better local outcomes.

### Theme 6 – Sustainable Development

A Best Value organisation will ensure that sustainable development is reflected in its strategic priorities and is embedded in its planning processes as a guiding principle for all of its activities. It will be able to demonstrate sound use of resources with its performance scrutinised through both qualitative and quantitative measures and indicators. It will form a core element of its governance arrangements and report publicly on its performance. It will ensure that its pursuit of sustainable development meets the needs of present social, economic and environmental wellbeing without compromising future capacity.

### Theme 7 – Fairness & Equality

Equality is integral to the work of the organisation. Public Bodies have a range of legal duties and responsibilities with regard to equality. These are reflected in its corporate processes with accessible information on its services and performance. A Best Value organisation will demonstrate that consideration of equality issues is embedded in its vision and strategic direction and throughout all of its work. It will take active steps to tackle inequalities and promote fairness across the organisation, to create equal opportunities. The equality impact of policies and practices delivered through partnerships should always be considered, with equality impact information and data analysed in the planning of services. A focus on setting equality outcomes at the individual Public Body level will encourage equality to be considered at the partnership level.