



SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
MEETING: Monday 12 May 2025 –Parliament House, Edinburgh

Members Present:

Sheriff Gill, SCTS Board (chair)
Luke Broadbent, Non-Executive Member
David Caddick, SCTS Board
Alan Cormack, Non-Executive Member
Steven Dickson, SCTS Board
May Dunsmuir, President of the Health and Education Chamber, First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, Non-Executive Member
Joe Lynch, Non-Executive Member

Attended:

Malcolm Graham, Chief Executive Officer, SCTS
Vince Guz, Programme Manager Edinburgh Justice Campus (EJC)
Sarah Imery, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)
Del Kaiser, Head of Health, Safety and Security, SCTS
Kate Leer, Director Property & Services (PSU), SCTS
Craig Robertson, Head of PSU Finance and Governance, SCTS
Daragh Stewart, Head of Service Delivery PSU, SCTS
Yvonne Taylor, Principal Clerk of Session and Judiciary, SCTS
Alice Wallace, Chief Finance Officer, SCTS

Apologies:

Steven D'Arcy, Corporate Secretary, SCTS
Kyle Williamson, Head of Service Development, SCTS

1. Declaration of Interests

1.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

2. Minutes of the Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 February were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Members welcomed Sheriff Gill to the Committee. Sheriff Gill had been appointed as a member of the SCTS Board was appointed to the Estates Committee as Chair.

3.2 There were no outstanding action points from the previous meeting.

3.3 The Chair provided an overview of the discussions at the March SCTS Board meeting which had a bearing on matters relating to the Estates Committee.

4. Estates Finance Report 2024-25

4.1 The Executive provided an overview of the Finance Quarterly Update 2024-25. The allocated budget for the year was £39.4m.

4.2 Due to increased costs throughout the Estates, and reactive court maintenance the budget was forecasting a permitted overspend of £3.1m against budget. A triage system to

monitor maintenance requests had been implemented in November 2024 in order to manage the over spend. This remain in place, allowing the team to manage requests in order of priority result in a reduction in job volumes and costs.

4.3 The Executive provided an update on the 2024-25 project to deliver fabric improvements to external windows at Edinburgh High Court. The project had been funded by the Scottish Central Government Energy Efficient Grant Scheme. The work had been completed on time, along with other heating control changes.

4.4 To date the Scottish Government (SG) had not announced any further Grant Schemes for 2025-26. Despite this SCTS had secured £1.5m of funding for sustainability related projects for 2025-26 from the SG.

4.5 The Committee welcomed the detailed quarterly update. Members acknowledged the financial challenges being faced and the steps taken by the PSU Team to ensure the most efficient and effective use of their budget. Members highlighted that with the ongoing climate change pressures the triage approach may not be sustainable for a long period of time.

4.6 The Executive provided an update on the 2025-26 Budget. The allocation had been tight and SG had acknowledged this. Building Maintenance challenges had been faced due to increased national insurance contributions and increases to the real living wage factored in to prices from suppliers. Despite this, Health and Safety remained a priority for the SCTS. SCTS had started 2026-27 budget discussions with the SG, articulating that budget allocations are increasingly challenging and highlighting the need for sustainable funding.

5. Capital Projects

5.1 The Committee received an update on the Capital projects currently underway, with a breakdown on the progress since the last meeting.

5.2 Evidence by Commissioner Suites– Phase 2

As part of the 2024-25 budget settlement, the Scottish Government (SG) allocated capital funding of £2m for the provision of Evidence by Commissioner (EBC) suites, principally to cover the Sheriffdoms of South Strathclyde Dumfries and Galloway (SSD&G) and North Strathclyde (NS).

Birnie House in Hamilton had been identified as a suitable location for the SSD&G EBC Suite, the facility is scheduled to be operational by June 2025. The search for a suitable location in North Strathclyde continued to progress with potential premises identified in Kilmarnock and Paisley. An update would be provided to members once final plans had been confirmed.

5.3 Glasgow Tribunals Centre

The Scottish Government had agreed that a portion of the Scottish Government EBC funding allocated in the 2024-25 budget could be used to improve the EBC Facilities within the Glasgow Tribunals Centre (GTC). The funding would increase the number of hearing suites available for EBC from one to three, dedicating the whole 6th floor to EBC hearing suites and associated facilities. SCTS had swapped location with HMCTS within the building due to the increased demand for Tribunals space. Work across both floors had been progressing well and was due to be completed by the end of May 2025.

5.4 Aberdeen Sheriff Court

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) had continued to engage with the SCTS Executive regarding the potential impact of the Council regeneration of the Queen Street area in Aberdeen. ACC had continued to progress plans for a full demolition of the formal police HQ building in late 2025, although ACC had not yet confirmed that the necessary consents or funding for the works had been secured.

5.5 Edinburgh Sheriff Court, All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court (ASSPIC)

Works to accommodate an All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court (ASSPIC) and associated Sheriffs Chambers in the former jury muster area on Level 1 in Edinburgh Sheriff Court had been completed. The court was now fully operational. The Committee recorded their thanks to the team for all work that had been put into completing this project.

5.6 Edinburgh, Parliament House

The Scottish Land Court moved from George Street, Edinburgh to their chambers and office accommodation within level -1, in Parliament House (PH) at the start of the year. Works on the accommodation at PH level -4, Cowgate to accommodate the Health and Education and Mental Health Tribunal Chambers was underway. The scheduled completion date had been set for July 2025.

5.7 The Committee thanked the Executive for their informative update.

6. Radon Update

6.1 The Executive provided an update on the elevated levels of Radon gas identified within the Inverness Justice Centre (IJC). Radon gas was a naturally occurring gas that was present throughout the country. The gas had been identified through routine testing within the IJC by HMCTS which showed elevated levels in several areas on the ground floor of the building.

6.2 Following the detection of Radon gas, ongoing monitoring of the levels present had continually taken place. Initial detailed Radon monitoring at IJC over one month had been completed, with the results indicating that the Radon levels were within Health and Safety Executive guidance levels for workplace safety and air quality management. Further monitoring would continue for 3 months.

6.3 Following the detection, SCTS had conducted checks on 20 other premises throughout the Estate (based on the UK Health Security Agency radon map. All premises with Radon detected would be closely monitored over the next 3 months to check the levels.

6.4 The Committee remained assured that, based on the professional advice received, all SCTS staff were operating within a safe working environment. Members requested that medical advice should be sought to confirm that the safe levels of Radon detected also applied to those with additional health conditions and those who were pregnant.

6.5 Members commended SCTS for their reaction to the discovery of Radon within the IJC building and the control measures implemented. The Committee would continue to be kept informed of any further developments.

7. Edinburgh Justice Campus (EJC) Update

7.1 Vince Guz, Programme Manager Edinburgh Justice Campus (EJC) provided members with an update on EJC progress since the last meeting. Following the relocation of the Scottish Land Court and Lands Tribunal (SLCLT) from George House to Parliament House in Edinburgh in January, and the handover of the 6th floor from COPFS to Edinburgh Sheriff, phase 2 of the project was now underway.

7.2 The Executive confirmed that funding for Phase 2 had been granted. Following the relocation of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal out of the top floor of Edinburgh Sheriff Court, an area would be developed into a remote jury facility in order to replace the facility currently located at the Odeon Cinema in Lothian Road, Edinburgh. Work had begun and was scheduled to be completed in October 2025.

7.3 Work had continued to progress well within Edinburgh Sheriff Court (ESC) 6th Floor. This project consists of the reconfiguration of the existing open plan office space located on the 6th Floor in order to provide a suite of four new hearing rooms with associated consultation spaces, waiting rooms and chambers. The reconfigured space would also provide offices for

Tribunals staff. A new reception area would maximise the potential of the existing welfare spaces already located on the floor.

7.4 The renovation of Parliament House, Cowgate Level -4 had continued to make good progress with building works close to completion, this space would accommodate hearing rooms for the Health and Education Chamber and Mental Health Tribunal.

7.5 The Committee acknowledged the good progress being made with this programme of works and would welcome further updates when available.

8. Airdrie Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Update

8.1 Following the detection of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) within Airdrie Sheriff Court, the first floor area where the staff offices, canteen and ancillary accommodation were located had been closed. Staff had been temporarily relocated in modular accommodation directly in front of the Court building. The main Sheriff Court Building had remained operational during the works. The estimated completion date for the full RAAC remediation work was autumn 2025.

8.2 Consideration was being given to the future use of the modular accommodation whilst remediation work progressed.

8.3 Members commended the progression of the project. A presentation of time-lapse photographs of the works would be provided to members at the August meeting.

9. Sustainability Strategy

9.1 The SCTS Sustainability Strategy was published in October 2024, since then a Sustainability Action Plan, to monitor progress on a number of projects underway, had been developed.

9.2 The Executive highlighted the key action areas that would be further considered on the action plan going forward.

9.3 In order to maintain the focus on Sustainability throughout the organisation, the Sustainability manager was scheduled to take part in the SCTS Learning at Work week. A session for staff on how our lives and society are connected to the environment was planned.

9.4 Grid Edge, an energy monitoring software, had been installed throughout the estate to consistently monitor and optimise energy consumption by adjusting energy usage in order to lower carbon emissions. The software allowed the PSU team to identify anomalies and gain a clearer understanding of data spikes.

9.5 Proposed revisions to the EV Charging Policy would be considered by the Executive Team. It was hoped that a system would be implemented that would charge users who use the charging points forward in line with other organisations. An implementation date had still to be agreed.

9.6 The SCTS Board Sustainability Champion commended the progress made with the sustainability action plan. They welcomed a clear trajectory in order to keep pushing the plans forward.

10. FM Contract Statutory Compliance/Obligations

10.1 The Executive reported that the SCTS Facilities Management (FM) Contract with OCS had commenced on 1 July 2024. A suite of KPIs had been agreed with OCS, these were

specific metric's that would be used to measure and govern the performance of the contract. The KPI had been monitored since April 2025.

10.2 Members thanked the Property and Services Team and the Procurement team for the progress update. The Committee would review the performance against KPIs at future meetings.

11. Any Other Business (AOB)

11.1 The Chair advised that this was May Dunsmuir's last meeting. May had been a member for the past 7 years. Members thanked May for her time, dedication and commitment to the Committee during her appointment. A recruitment exercise for a new member would commence shortly.

12. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only

12.1 The following paper had been circulated for scrutiny:

- **Review of Risk – Project RAG Report**
- **Health, Safety and Security**

12.2 No matters were raised by exception.

13. Date of Next Meeting

13.1 The next meeting would take place on the 4 August 2025

14. Estates Strategy Deep Dive

14.1 The Committee welcomed Noel Rehfisch, Deputy Chief Executive to the meeting.

14.2 The Executive advised that the current Estates Strategy 2016-26 was coming to an end. The existing strategy had provided the strategic governance and practical framework for SCTS activities and services over the last 10 years for Estates matters. The strategy had aligned to the SCTS Corporate plan for 2023-26, the Financial Strategy 2024-28 and the Sustainability Strategy 2024-27.

14.3 Since the creation of the last strategy, the landscape of SCTS had been transformed greatly, with new digital approaches and the introduction of hybrid working that had reduced the physical presence of staff in buildings. The key objective of the new strategy was to 'Deliver and maintain a fit for purpose court estate to provide appropriate court and tribunal facilities supporting justice in a safe, secure and sustainable environment'

14.4 In order to develop a new strategy going forward, the Executive would look to engage the views of members, all areas of the operational business and core corporate support services. Members were encouraged to provide comments and feedback in order to assist the development of the strategy.

14.5 Members agreed that a "rolling" strategy was the correct next step. They discussed the importance of developing the strategy with sustainability and reducing carbon footprint in mind, whilst being mindful of the upcoming development of AI and digital technology. Members agreed that horizon scanning to the future would be key.

14.6 The Executive thanked members for the detailed and in-depth discussion and initial thoughts on the development of the new strategy. Members would continue to be involved in the ongoing development of the strategy.

SCTS Secretariat

