



MINUTES

SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD MEETING: MONDAY 26 MARCH 2018, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Present: Rt Hon Lady Dorrian, Lord Justice Clerk (Chair)
Rt Hon Lady Smith
Dr Joe Morrow CBE QC
Dr Kirsty Hood QC
Sheriff Aisha Anwar
Morna Rae, JP
Professor Hugh MacDougall
Simon Catto
Joe Al-Gharabally
Eric McQueen

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

Apologies: Rt Hon Lord Carloway, Lord President
Sheriff Principal Duncan Murray
Sheriff Grant McCulloch
Colonel David McIlroy

1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting of 5 February 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. Financial Results and Forecast Outturn 2017-18 (SCTS/Mar18/13)

3.1 The Board considered a report on the financial performance to the end of January 2018. The total budget for 2017-18 stood at £108.6m. The Scottish Government had confirmed that a further £1m expenditure could be incurred by the organisation, to ensure that the effect of reductions in retained fines income was mitigated.

3.2 Budgets remained tight across the organisation, with projected expenditure expected to meet the full budget for the year, including the additional £1m. Any available resources identified would, where possible, be directed towards backlog maintenance on the estate.

4. Quarterly Performance Review & SCTS Board Scorecard (SCTS/Mar18/14)

4.1 The Board received the quarterly report on SCTS performance, including the Business Plan delivery report and the SCTS Scorecard for quarter 3 of 2017-18. The Board acknowledged the resilience of both the judiciary and SCTS staff during the recent extreme weather. Their planning

and joint work had ensured that no cases were lost across Scotland's courts or tribunals due to staffing shortages.

5. SCTS Business Plan and Budget 2018-19 (SCTS/Mar18/15)

5.1 The draft SCTS Business Plan 2018-19, which sets out the key outcomes SCTS planned to deliver over the coming year was presented to the Board for approval. The Business Plan also details the organisational budget for the financial year 2018-19. It was acknowledged that budgets over the coming year would remain challenging, however the Board received assurance that the Executive would continue to realise efficiencies wherever possible and explore sustainable funding approaches to make the best use of the funding available.

5.2 The Board approved the 2018-19 SCTS Business Plan and Budget contained therein. The plan would now be finalised for publication on the SCTS website.

6. SCTS Financial Strategy (SCTS/Mar18/17)

6.1 The draft SCTS Financial Strategy was considered and discussed. The strategy set out the financial scenarios that would be faced by the organisation over the coming five years and focussed on a number of priorities that would be taken forward to ensure that the organisation could align resources with priorities and continue to deliver services in the most effective and efficient way.

6.2 The Board agreed that the service provided by Scotland's courts and tribunals was an essential element of a well-functioning democratic society and that the strategy should stress its importance, whilst recognising the pressures facing public sector finances generally and exploring options for further reform in the way in which services could be delivered in the future. The Board underpinned the need for reform proposals to be developed in tandem with the Scottish Government and other justice organisations.

7. 2018-19 Pay Remit (SCTS/Mar18/18)

7.1 Proposals for the 2018-19 staff pay settlement, approved by the SCTS Executive, were scrutinised by the Board. The proposals complied with the Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy and sought to make the best use of the limited flexibility available to improve staff reward.

7.2 The Board approved the proposed pay settlement, noting that consultation with the PCS Union had still to be completed before formal submission of the settlement to the Scottish Government.

8. Review of Staff Survey Follow-up Actions (SCTS/Mar18/19)

8.1 As reported at the December Board meeting the overall staff engagement index score was 63% placing SCTS as the joint highest scoring department in Scotland.

8.2 The Chair of the People Committee reported that their meeting in February had scrutinised the staff survey results and acknowledged the significant work that was under way at a local level to explore the results and address issues identified. The Board were reassured that this approach would allow further development to take place and welcomed the partnership approach being taken with the PCS Union.

9. Devolution of Reserved Tribunals (SCTS/Mar18/20)

9.1 The Board reviewed the current position on plans to devolve the administration of reserved tribunals to SCTS. Progress remained very limited since the last meeting. The required transitional funding had not been identified in the draft Scottish budget for 2018-19. The draft Orders in Council, required to effect the change, were yet to have been produced. The Board noted the current position and agreed that clarity should continue to be sought on the likely timescale of the transfer process.

10. ICMS – Progress Report (SCTS/Mar18/21)

10.1 The current position on ICMS development was reported. The Board commended the successful launch of phase 1 of the “Civil On-line” portal which allowed parties in simple procedure actions to track and view the status of their cases online. Feedback from users had been positive, whilst acknowledging the limited functionality currently available.

10.2 The Audit and Risk Committee welcomed the robust testing and project controls that had ensured a successful launch of phase 1. They would continue to scrutinise the development of phase 2 (which would provide for the online submission of simple procedure cases) which remained on track for early 2019.

11. Inverness Justice Centre (SCTS/Mar18/22)

11.1 Progress on the development of the Inverness Justice Centre was reviewed. A formal ceremony, involving the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, SCTS Chief Executive and Sheriff Principal to launch the construction phase had taken place on the 8 March. The overall programme remained on-track to deliver an operational justice centre by the end of 2019.

12. Glasgow Integrated Tribunals Centre (SCTS/Mar18/23)

12.1 The Board discussed the progress made to relocate SCTS and HMCTS staff and Tribunal judiciary to 3 Atlantic Quay in Glasgow. Staff were expected to relocate to the Glasgow Integrated Tribunals Centre in late March, with the building opening to the public in early April.

12.2 At the request of the Cabinet Secretary, a site visit with presentations was made with officials from Scottish Government and the Lord Justice Clerk. Following the visit, and building on feedback received from attendees, the 6th Floor design which included an area for children and vulnerable witnesses had been further developed and expanded. A business case to seek additional funding would be submitted to the Scottish Government to allow the work to proceed in the 2018-19 financial year.

13. SCTS Committee Update (Oral)

People Committee

13.1 The Committee Chair reported on the matters discussed at the last meeting. Following the publication of the SCTS People Strategy in February, the committee were appraised of the work underway to ensure the ambitious programme of activities was delivered in partnership with Directors, senior managers, operational managers and the PCS Union.

Estates Committee

13.2 An update was provided from the Deputy Chair of the Estates Committee on the discussions at their last meeting. A feasibility report for Peterhead Sheriff Court had recommended extensive roof work improvements prior to renewing defective cladding. The Committee had requested an options appraisal to clarify viable actions available to SCTS for their next meeting and would keep the Board abreast of developments.

14. Any Other Business

SCTS Digital Strategy

14.1 The Board were advised that the SCTS Digital Strategy was under development and would be shared with the Board for comment and approval in advance of the next meeting.

15. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only

15.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

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

No matters were raised by exception.

16. Date of the Next Meeting

16.1 The next meeting would be held on Monday 25 June 2018, with court visits in Grampian, Highland and Islands taking place in advance of the formal meeting.

17. Workshop Session – David Harvie, Crown Agent

17.1 David Harvie, Crown Agent, joined the Board and presented an overview of the priorities and pressures facing the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and the linkages to SCTS.

17.2 The changing distribution of criminal court business was identified as a shared issue for both organisations. The number of serious sexual offence and domestic abuse cases continued to rise, whilst the downward trend in lower level summary criminal business continued. Ensuring that the justice system could match resources to priorities would continue to be of significant importance in realising efficiencies and delivering the best possible service to all court users.

17.3 The Chair thanked David for leading an informative discussion on shared issues for both organisations.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
March 2018