

SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
MEETING: Monday 17 February 2025 – Virtual, MS Teams

Members Present:

David Caddick, SCTS Board (chair)
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:

Vince Guz, Programme Manager Edinburgh Justice Campus (EJC)
Sarah Imery, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)
Del Kaiser, Head of Health, Safety and Security, SCTS
Karen Lawrie, Head of Secretariat, 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
Kyle Williamson, Head of Service Development, SCTS

Apologies:

Luke Broadbent, Non-Executive Member
Steven D'Arcy, Corporate Secretary, 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 21 October were approved subject to a minor amendment.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 The Executive reported that elevated levels of Radon gas had been identified within the Inverness Justice Centre (IJC). Radon gas is a naturally occurring gas that is present throughout the country. The gas had been identified through routine testing within the IJC by HMCTS which showed elevated levels in one of their rooms in the building.

3.2 As a result of this a further broader investigation was commissioned by the SCTS. This included an extended survey, based on the professional advice of the Radon specialists, where areas were selected on the likelihood of low air movement and located on the ground floor due the density of Radon gas being heavier than air. Additional monitoring devices had been placed throughout the building.

3.3 The SCTS commissioned monitoring indicated that elevated levels, which required action, were present in two further areas of the IJC. Control measures were immediately implemented in these areas. A further ground floor area, occupied by Police Scotland, was shown to be borderline. Staff and justice partners had been notified and alternative accommodation found

for staff in the highest level area, occupied by Victim Support Scotland, as a precaution. A full report was being developed and would provide analysis and impacts. A Radon expert was involved in the development of FAQs that had been shared with staff, judiciary and Justice Partners.

3.4 The Committee had been assured that, based on the professional advice received, all SCTS staff were operating within a safe working environment. Members commended SCTS for their quick reaction following the discovery of Radon within the IJC building and the control measures implemented. Members reiterated that Radon was a naturally occurring gas that was present in the majority of the UK. They were assured that given the levels detected the SCTS had acted in line with the professional advice received. The Committee would be kept informed of any further actions deemed necessary.

4. Estates Finance Report 2024-25

4.1 The Executive provided an overview of the Finance Quarterly Update 2024-25. The allocated budget had been adjusted to accelerated spend for the Edinburgh Justice Campus, the budget is now £39.4m.

4.2 Due to increasing costs throughout the Estates, and reactive court maintenance the budget was forecasting an over spend. A triage system for maintenance requests had been implemented in November 2024 in order to manage the overspend this allowed the team to ensure requests were managed in order of priority which had resulted in some reduction in job volumes and costs.

4.3 A recent unexpected Non Domestic Rate Rebate received from Edinburgh City Council was welcomed. The Property Services unit had been allocated a proportion of the rebate to meet cost pressures.

4.4 The Committee welcomed the detailed quarterly update. Members acknowledged the financial challenges being faced and the steps being taken by the PSU Team to ensure the most efficient and effective use of their budget. The Committee commended their continued efforts to ensure the SCTS estate is maintained and safe despite ongoing pressures.

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. Work had commenced and was due to be completed by the end of March 2025. The search for a suitable location in North Strathclyde was progressing with potential premises identified in Kilmarnock and Paisley, with building survey reports and due diligence checks underway. If the sites were suitable these would be delivered in 2025-26. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

5.3 Glasgow Tribunals Centre

The SG had agreed that a portion of the Scottish Government EBC funding allocated in the 2024-25 budget be used to improve the EBC Facilities within the Glasgow Tribunals Centre (GTC). The funding would be used to 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. In addition, SCTS had swapped location with HMCTS within the building due to the increased

demand for Tribunals space. Works had begun on the ground floor to create two hearing suites, a Sensory Room and a vulnerable user entrance. Work across both floors had been progressing well and are due to be completed by March 2025.

5.4 Aberdeen Sheriff Court

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) had continued engage with the Executive regarding the potential impact of the Council regeneration of the Queen Street areas in Aberdeen. The initial internal (soft) strip out of the former Police HQ building had been completed in September 2024. ACC had indicated their plans to develop Queen Street Urban Park following planning permission being submitted with an estimated completion date of spring 2026. ACC were now progressing 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. The building is physically interconnected to the SCTS Civil Court Building and provided services to the main SCTS building. It was confirmed that ACC would be responsible for providing alternative services should the current provisions be removed. The potential impact on SCTS Operations was being monitored.

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.

5.6 The Committee thanked the Executive for their informative and clear update.

6. Edinburgh Justice Campus (EJC) Update

6.1 Vince Guz, Programme Manager Edinburgh Justice Campus (EJC) provided members with an update on EJC progress since the last meeting. The relocation of the Scottish Land Court and Lands Tribunal (SLCLT) from George House to Parliament House in Edinburgh, had taken place in January.

6.2 The next stage of phase 2 would focus on renovation of Parliament House, Cowgate Level -4 in order to accommodate hearing rooms for the Health and Education Chamber and Mental Health Tribunal. The works were scheduled to be completed in March 2025. The lift installation would likely be completed in the summer of 2025 which would delay occupation of the new facilities until then.

6.3 The Committee acknowledged the good progress being made with this programme of works.

7. Airdrie Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Update

7.1 The Executive advised that they had recently visited Airdrie Sheriff Court to meet with staff, judiciary and justice partners.

7.2 They confirmed that funding had been identified to complete the necessary works on the 1st floor accommodation that would allow staff to return to the main building from the modular accommodation, and for the fines counter to reopen. As part of the works, a more dynamic, functional division of space would be created and would be as energy efficient as possible. The building works were estimated to complete in early July 2025

7.3 The modular accommodation situated at the front of the building would remain on site in the interim. The Executive informed members that due to health and safety regulations, the modular accommodation could not be occupied at the same time as the 1st floor of the building. Consideration would be given to what will be done with the modular building and the Estates committee updated on any developments.

7.4 Members commended the Property and Services Team for their ongoing works in Airdrie Sheriff Court. They discussed the possible medium and longer term options which would all be subject to funding from the Scottish Government.

8. Facilities Management (FM) Contract

8.1 The Executive reported that the SCTS Facilities Management (FM) Contract had commenced on 1 July 2024. The contract was formally signed by the SCTS Chief Executive and Sheriff Martin-Brown, on behalf of the SCTS Board and OCS Officials on the 3 February 2025. A suite of KPIs had been agreed and would be implemented in the near future to allow close monitoring of the contract.

8.2 Members thanked the Property and Services Team and the Procurement team for substantial work to embed the contract successfully.

9. Sustainability Strategy

9.1 Following the publication of the SCTS Sustainability Strategy in October 2024, a Sustainability Action Plan is being developed to monitor progress on a number of projects underway.

9.2 The Property and Service team continued to work with the Education and Learning Unit to involve members on the SCTS talent programme and AO development programme in order to reach wider teams and encourage engagement on how best to reduce waste, CO2 and paper usage. Data would be analysed and factored into future programmes.

9.3 Grid Edge, an energy monitoring software, had been installed within the buildings 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. Since November 2024 Grid Edge had identified savings at 10 sites across the estate.

9.4 The SCTS Board Sustainability Champion and members commended the progress made with the sustainability action plan, in spite other ongoing pressures they were facing.

10. Estates Strategy

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

10.2 Since the creation of the Estates Strategy 9 years ago, the landscape of SCTS had been transformed greatly, with new digital approaches as part of the response to a pandemic and the introduction of hybrid working that had reduced the physical presence of staff in buildings.

10.3 The development of a new Estates Strategy was in its early stages. The Committee acknowledged the challenges and complexities of managing the SCTS estates which comprised of a large number of old buildings which limited the changes that could be made to make the estate more sustainable. All members confirmed they would be happy to participate in the development of the strategy.

11. Any Other Business (AOB)

11.1 Members were informed that Lord Pentland had been appointed as Lord President on 3 February, and Lord Beckett had been appointed as the Lord Justice Clerk on 4 February following the retirement of Lord Carloway and Lady Dorrian.

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.

12.3 Following the members appraisal exercise conducted last year, members agreed that a paper outlining the SCTS Statutory Compliance in Estates matters would be beneficial. A draft paper would be brought to the May meeting to allow the Committee to provide comment on the format.

12.4 The venue for an in-person meeting in May would be considered.

13. Date of Next Meeting

13.1 The next meeting would take place on the 12 May 2025.

SCTS Secretariat
February 2025