

MINUTES

SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD

MEETING: Monday 11 August 2025, Parliament House, Edinburgh

- Present:** Lord Pentland, Lord President (Chair)
Lord Beckett, Lord Justice Clerk
Sheriff Principal Anwar, KC
Dr David Caddick MBE
Maggie Craig
Steven Dickson
Dr Sophie Flemig
Sheriff Frank Gill
Malcolm Graham
Ruth Innes, KC
Sheriff Olga Pasportnikov
Anne Scott
- Attended:** Noel Rehfisch, Deputy Chief Executive, SCTS
Steven D'Arcy, Corporate Secretary, SCTS
Karen Lawrie, SCTS Secretariat (Minutes)
- Apologies:** Lynsey Walker
Lady Wise

1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting on 9 June 2025

- 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.

3. Finance Report

3.1 The Board considered a report on financial performance to the end of June 2025. The total 2024-25 budget was £206m. This included the anticipated in-year funding transfers from the Scottish Government. Full year expenditure was currently forecast to be almost 2% above this level. Steps would be taken to ensure that a balanced annual budget would be delivered.

3.2 Board members discussed the approach to future budget negotiations, noting that the Executive had commenced discussions with the Scottish Government early and had developed a narrative that stressed the importance of adequate and stable funding for the organisation in the coming years.

3.3 Members agreed that a strong case needed to be made in upcoming budget discussions specifically in view of the value provided by the SCTS and the core role played by the organisation in upholding the rule of law. Significant financial support would be needed in the coming years to deliver modernisation and change – which could achieve longer-term efficiencies and improve services for all those using them. In contrast, if funding were not sufficient the Board stressed the importance of setting out the potential risks and missed

opportunities that would arise from seeking to maintain out of date systems and associated processes.

4. Audit and Risk Committee Update

4.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee provided a summary of the matters discussed at its last meeting. The Committee had welcomed a new member. An update was received regarding the Oracle Fusion Shared Services Programme. The Committee were reassured by the robust work being undertaken by the Finance Team and their ongoing communications with the Scottish Government to raise and resolve issues.

4.2 The Chair presented the Committee's Annual report to the Board. This reflected the work of the Committee during the 2024-25 audit year. It set out the priorities for the coming year. These included: providing direction and oversight of internal audit reviews; detailed consideration of corporate risks (including an annual workshop session with the Board and other committees); and a programme of deep dive sessions, which would allow the Committee to explore areas of particular interest in more detail with the Executive.

4.3 Based on its scrutiny and the assurances provided by the Executive, External Audit and Internal Audit, the Committee recommended approval of the SCTS Annual Report and Accounts for 2024-25. The final version of the Report and Audited Accounts was presented for approval.

4.4 Having considered the Committee's Report and its recommendation, **the Board approved the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service Annual Report and Accounts for 2024-25**. The SCTS Accountable Officer would now sign the Governance Statement. Arrangements would be put in place for the Annual Report and Accounts to be published and laid before the Scottish Parliament, following clearance from Audit Scotland.

5. SCTS Standards of Service for Victims and Witnesses

5.1 The annual report on the operation of shared standards of service for victims and witnesses was reviewed. The report provided a summary of how the standards, which had been agreed between the SCTS, Police Scotland, COPFS, the Scottish Prison Service and the Parole Board for Scotland, had operated over the last 12 months. The Board observed that SCTS had continued to ensure that the standards were met wherever possible. They also acknowledged the improvement activities under way which had the potential to further improve service standards and the desire to review the format of the current report, in consultation with partner organisations.

5.2 The Board welcomed the annual service standards report for 2024-25.

6. Quarterly Performance Review and SCTS Board Scorecard

6.1 The Board carried out its quarterly performance review of the organisation, considering progress made on delivery of the outcomes contained in the 2025-26 Business Plan and the Board Scorecard for Q1 of 2025-26.

6.2 The Board discussed recent correspondence between the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs – which outlined the challenges and opportunities faced by the SCTS and the wider justice system. It also set out how SCTS intended to support reform and digital transformation aimed at delivering real service improvements and longer-term efficiencies. This work was essential, but would require sustained effort, partnership and funding. The Board commended the position and proposals made – which would inform development of the 2026-29 Corporate Plan and associated budget.

7. SCTS Committees

Remuneration Committee

7.1 The Remuneration Committee met on 11 August ahead of the Board meeting. In accordance with the Scottish Government's Public Sector Pay Strategy for 2025-26, the Committee agreed to recommend an increase of £11 (3.1%) 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 by the Board.

7.2 The Committee had ensured that the proposed increase was in-line with the Scottish Government's Public Sector Pay policy, which reflected the constraints on public finances. In supporting the increase, the Board agreed that the value and experience brought by the external members of the Board and its Committees was an essential part of the operation of the SCTS.

8. Corporate Plan 2026-29 – Approach to Development

8.1 Following the Board meeting Steven D'Arcy (Corporate Secretary) and Noel Rehfish (Deputy Chief Executive) delivered a presentation to the Board outlining the preparatory work that had been undertaken to inform development of the 2026-29 Corporate Plan. Board members considered the proposed approach to development and the high-level structure and themes around which the plan would be based.

8.2 It was agreed that the organisation's purpose, values and behaviours all remained relevant and that there were no plans to amend these. The outcomes, when fully developed, would continue to be presented against the 4 key reform areas: Criminal; Civil; Tribunals and OPG; and Corporate. It was agreed that the current organisational strategic priorities (which had remained unchanged since 2010) should be replaced with a smaller number of delivery themes, in order to improve communications and focus.

8.3 An overview of the key trends, challenges and opportunities the organisation was likely to face over the coming planning period was presented. The significant pressures on public finances, the changing composition of the workforce and the significant opportunities and risks associated with the continuation of digital developments across society and the growth of AI was discussed.

8.4 The Board approved the overall approach to development, providing views on the potential delivery themes. They stressed the importance of developing the plan in collaboration with justice partners and ensuring that effective support to both the judiciary and service users featured prominently in the proposals as they are developed.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 None

10. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only

10.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- the SCTS Decision Tracker

11. Date of the Next Meeting

11.1 The next meeting would be on Monday 6 October 2025. The Board plan to visit Airdrie, Hamilton and Livingston Sheriff Courts prior to holding their meeting in Livingston.