Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

MINUTES

SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
MEETING: Monday 11 May 2026 – Virtual

Members Present:

Sheriff Frank Gill, SCTS Board (Chair)
Luke Broadbent, Non-Executive Member
Alan Cormack, Non-Executive Member
Steven Dickson, SCTS Board
Alex Green, President of the General Regulatory Chamber, First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, Non-Executive Member
Joe Lynch, Non-Executive Member

Attended:

Del Kaiser, Head of Health, Safety and Security, Property Services Unit (PSU), SCTS
Kate Leer, Director Property Services, SCTS
Craig Robertson, Head of Finance and Governance (PSU), SCTS
Alice Wallace, Chief Finance Officer, SCTS
Kyle Williamson, Head of Service Estates Development (PSU), SCTS
Thomas Robinson, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

Dr David Caddick, SCTS Board
Daragh Stewart, Head of Service Delivery (PSU), SCTS
Yvonne Taylor, Principal Clerk and Director of the Supreme Courts, SCTS

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2026 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Committee received an update on matters discussed at the SCTS Board meeting in March 2026, which had included a discussion around cyber security. Members noted the increasing significance of cyber risks in a changing threat landscape.

5. Estates Financial Report 2025-26

5.1 The Committee received an update on the final outturn for 2025–26. Total Estates expenditure had been £42.2m. This included £2.0m permitted overspend that had been allocated late in the financial year, which was reflected in the weighting of expenditure towards the end of the financial year. The decision to allocate the overspend, which mitigated underspends in other areas, required the Property Services Unit (PSU) to quickly pivot projects at a late stage in the financial year.

5.2 Members commended the Executive for utilising late-year funding effectively and delivering a significant amount of work within tight timescales.

5.3 Member discussed a forecast underspend of £0.4m in the Security budget. The Executive advised that this was attributed to modelling assumptions relating to changes to the National Insurance and the Real Living Wage. Forecasting accuracy was expected to improve in 2026-27.

6. PSU Projects Update

6.1 The Committee received an update on current and planned capital projects.

Evidence by Commissioner (EbC) Suites

6.2 Members noted that Phase 2 delivery was nearing completion, with facilities in Paisley and Kilmarnock likely to be business ready in the coming weeks. The Executive confirmed that, once those works were complete, EbC provision would be in place across all Sheriffdoms.

Saughton House, Edinburgh

6.3 The Executive advised that an initial scenario planning workshop had been held regarding the future of SCTS's offices at Saughton House.

Glasgow Tribunals Centre

6.4 The Executive advised that the reconfiguration works to provide three hearing suites and the creation of President Chambers, a sensory room, a new dedicated vulnerable user entrance and two Tribunals hearing suites, were complete, with minor additional works under consideration in 2026-27.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court

6.5 Aberdeen City Council (ACC) had advised that demolition of the police headquarters building was expected to commence in October 2026, with completion estimated for 2028. Discussions were ongoing to ensure minimal disruption to court business.

6.6 The Executive advised that ongoing engagement with ACC was constructive, and that work was underway to agree a number of legal arrangements, including title, access and liabilities.

Parliament House and Edinburgh Sheriff Court

6.7 The Executive advised that accommodation for the Edinburgh Hearings Suite on level -4 of Parliament House was complete and had been well received by users,

6.8 The Executive updated that the Edinburgh Sheriff Court Level 6 Tribunals project was substantially complete, with transfer of staff and business scheduled for early July 2026.

6.9 The Executive advised that the first hearing had been held in the remote jury room that had also been installed on level 6 of Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

6.10 Members who had had the opportunity to visit the new facilities in Edinburgh Sheriff Court commended the success of the project.

Building Fabric Repairs

6.11 The Executive advised that £3.5m had been budgeted for building fabric repairs in 2026-27, and that planning was underway to prioritise planned repairs using a risk-based methodology.

6.12 Members welcomed the Executive's use of asset data, which was facilitated by detailed reporting tools provided by its facilities management services, and noted plans to further integrate this data with maintenance and supplier data to guide decision-making. Members commended the level of detail provided by the asset reports.

6.13 The Committee discussed specific design considerations at Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The Executive undertook to continue engagement with stakeholders to address outstanding concerns and provide assurance.

6.14 Members discussed some of PSU's upcoming projects for 2026-29, including the fitting out of cells for custody in Oban Sheriff Court, which, the Executive advised, had become necessary due to the relocation of Police Scotland's offices, which contained the custody cells currently used. A lift would also be installed in the building to ensure all court rooms were fully accessible. Discussions had been held with Police Scotland regarding co-location with the new Police building on the outskirts of Oban, but the site would not be large enough to accommodate SCTS. Members were assured that this was a more cost-effective option than relocating the Sheriff Court itself.

6.15 Members welcomed the update, noting that the inclusion of photographs had been particularly useful, and commended the quality and complexity of work being delivered within constrained resources.

7. Estates Strategy Update

7.1 The Executive provided an update on development of the SCTS Estates Strategy. The Executive was pausing development temporarily to ensure alignment with the 2026-29 SCTS Corporate Plan. A revised draft would be presented to the Committee in August 2026. The Committee welcomed the efforts to ensure strategic alignment across the organisation.

8. SCTS/COPFS Facilities Management Contract Governance and KPIs

8.1 In relation to its Facilities Management contract, the Executive advised that there had been no failures resulting in contractual deductions and that robust contract management arrangements were in place, with performance being actively monitored both by SCTS and through a series of supplier-side auditing processes.

8.2 The Committee welcomed the level of detail provided by the report and were content that effective oversight arrangements were in place.

9. Radon Gas

9.1 The Executive updated on radon monitoring and mitigation across the estate.

9.2 In addition to mitigations such as controlling room occupancy rates, sump pumps had been installed in one location. Ongoing monitoring was expected to show a positive impact and the results would be shared with the Committee when available.

9.3 Members noted that mitigation measures such as sump pumps had ongoing revenue costs relating to their operation (e.g. maintenance, electricity).

9.4 The Committee was assured that SCTS staff and building users across the estate were operating in a safe working environment.

10. Sustainability

10.1 The Executive advised on progress against the SCTS Sustainability Action Plan. Members noted that SCTS had exceeded its 3% energy reduction target for 2025-26, achieving an approximately 8% reduction in energy, and that £2m had been ringfenced for sustainability projects in 2026-27.

10.2 The Executive provided an update on EV charging arrangements, including the introduction of cost recovery charging across most sites, barring those with poor mobile network coverage for which a solution was in development. The Committee noted SCTS's need to ensure a cost-neutral position as a public body and recommended monitoring the cost to it per kilowatt-hour, which was set annually as part of a bulk Scottish Government contract, against market prices throughout the year.

10.3 The Committee noted progress on waste and recycling initiatives, including estate-wide standardisation of recycling bins that was expected to free up facilities management staff for other tasks such as deep cleaning. The Executive advised it would continue to manage the rollout closely and monitor feedback over the coming months.

10.4 The Executive highlighted a bid submitted to the new Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for £1.7m to support 'whole of building' sustainability projects, including the installation of an air source heat pump, roof insulation and solar panels in Kilmarnock and the installation of roof insulation, solar panels and access to the Aberdeen Heat Network in Aberdeen. Members noted that the Executive would make preparations ahead of any funding decision in August/September in order to make best use of what would then be a narrow window for spending before the end of the financial year.

10.5 The Committee emphasised the importance of continuing to pursue investment opportunities to support sustainability ambitions, for instance through the continued installation of photovoltaics that could offset higher energy costs in the future.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- Estates Projects RAG Report
- Health & Safety and Security RAG Report

11.2 No matters were raised by exception.

11.3 Members noted that this was Steven Dickson's final meeting and recorded their thanks for his valuable contribution to the Committee over his term of appointment.

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The Committee's next meeting would take place on 3 August 2026 in person in Dundee.

SCTS Secretariat
May 2026