Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

MINUTES

SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
MEETING: Monday 3 August 2026 – Dundee Justice Hub

Members Present:

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

Attended:

Malcolm Graham, Chief Executive, SCTS
Del Kaiser, Head of Health, Safety and Security, SCTS
Kate Leer, Director Property Services, SCTS
Alice Wallace, Chief Finance Officer, SCTS
Kyle Williamson, Head of Service Estates Development, SCTS
Karen Lawrie, Head of Secretariat, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

Luke Broadbent, Non-Executive Member

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 11 May 2026 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Committee received an update on matters discussed at the SCTS Board meeting in June 2026. The Board had discussed the Standing Orders of the SCTS Board, the members code of conduct and the powers and responsibilities delegated from the Board to the Committees. The Chair confirmed there were no proposed changes to the Committee delegations or remit.

5. Observations from the Tour of Dundee Sheriff Court and the Dundee Justice Hub

5.1 Ahead of the formal meeting, the Committee visited Dundee Sheriff Court and the Dundee Justice Hub. The Committee met with staff who gave an insight into the workings of the court and the Vulnerable Witness Suites in the Justice Hub. The Committee were impressed with the engagement and enthusiasm displayed by the staff in all the facilities visited.

5.2 Members agreed that the visits were beneficial and aided their knowledge of SCTS. They found the visit to the historic Sheriff Court and the modern, purposely fitted out judicial hub insightful as it highlighted the challenges faced by the SCTS when managing an aged estate compared to newer sustainable buildings.

6. Estates Financial Report 2026-27

6.1 The Executive provided an overview of the property and services budget position for the first quarter of the 2026-27 financial year. The allocated budget for the year was £42.4m. The Property Services Team were anticipating delivery of a balanced budget.

6.2 The Committee were advised that SCTS had applied for a grant funding from Salix Finance in conjunction with the Scottish Government to enhance building fabric elements of windows and roof insulation and the installation of solar panels in Aberdeen Sheriff Court and Kilmarnock Sheriff Court. The bid also included the installation of a new air source heat pump at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court. The outcome of the application for funding was expected towards the end of August. The Committee would be updated at the next meeting.

6.3 The Committee thanked the Executive for the comprehensive update. Members acknowledged the ongoing financial challenges being faced and the steps taken by the PSU Team to ensure the most efficient and effective utilisation of the budget.

7. PSU Projects Update

7.1 The Committee received an update on current and planned capital projects. The 2026-27 budget (Revenue and Capital) allocated for Property Services Project activity was £13.9m.

Evidence by Commissioner (EbC) Suites

7.2 The Executive reported that the facilities in Paisley and Kilmarnock had been completed and Evidence by Commissioner provision was now in place across all six Sheriffdoms.

Glasgow Tribunals Centre

7.3 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 was now complete. Recently requested changes to the original project scope could not be facilitated as budget was not currently available.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court

7.4 The Executive advised that engagement with Aberdeen City Council (ACC) was ongoing. A timeline and detailed demolition programme had been agreed with the appointed contractor leading on the demolition of the police headquarters building after discussions with SCTS. The current demolition target completion date was the end of 2027. Discussions with ACC, the demolition contractor and operational staff in Aberdeen were ongoing to ensure minimal disruption to court business during the works.

7.5 Final negotiations were underway on the arrangements for the relocation and upgrade of the plant room to connect Aberdeen Sheriff Court to the Aberdeen District Heat Network working with Aberdeen Heat & Power. This would entail the full separation of the utilities currently servicing the Civil Court from the former Police HQ and place SCTS in control. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

Oban Sheriff Court

7.6 The Committee had been informed of the proposed works at Oban Sheriff Court by correspondence after the last meeting. The works would involve the installation of a new lift to provide access to the first-floor and the reconfiguration of the ground floor to create a custody suite of two new cells to replace the current provision in the adjacent Police Station cells. Due to the level of operational business, the original timetable of works had been revised with some works being completed in 2027-28. The Executive confirmed the revised timetable would require a reprofiled budget in 2026-27 and 2027-28.

Edinburgh Sheriff Court/Edinburgh Tribunals Centre

7.7 The Executive confirmed that the Edinburgh Sheriff Court Level 6 Tribunals project had been completed. The Tribunals staff and judiciary had moved from George House at the end of June creating the Edinburgh Tribunals Centre. Dilapidations work was underway at George House to return the SCTS areas to the Landlord.

7.8 The Committee acknowledged the good progress made across the key projects since the last meeting. They also recognised the challenges faced by the Property Services team to consider late changes to the planned scope of projects. Members confirmed they would like to visit the new facilities at the Edinburgh Tribunals Centre at a future meeting.

8. Estates Strategy 2026-31

8.1 The Executive provided final draft of the SCTS Estates Strategy 2026-31. The revised draft now aligned to the SCTS Corporate Plan 2026-29. The Committee commended the format and robust nature of the strategy. The focus on Open Justice was welcomed.

8.2 The strategy would now be presented to the Board at their meeting in October.

9. Radon Gas Update

9.1 The Executive updated on radon monitoring and mitigation across the estate. The results in the Inverness Justice Centre indicated that mitigation measures, installation of four sump pumps, had been impactful with no areas in the building now recording actionable levels of Radon Gas.

9.2 Across the wider estate a few sites were still recording actionable readings, mostly in basement or storage areas and computer rooms, which could be managed with time restriction controls in place.

9.3 The Executive confirmed that Radon monitoring and control of the occupation of affected areas across the estate had moved to a ‘business as usual’ state in accordance with the recommendations within the reports received from the Radon Protection Advisor Bureau Vertitas UK. Ongoing monitoring would continue across the estate with the results presented to the Health & Safety and Works Committee and the PCS Union. The Committee would be informed if there were any areas of concern or specific mediation works required.

9.4 The Committee was assured that SCTS staff and building users across the estate were operating in a safe working environment. Members commended the significant and pro-active steps taken by the Property Services team following the detection of high levels of Radon Gas and the necessary mitigations put in place.

10. Sustainability and Net Zero

10.1 The Executive advised on progress against the SCTS Sustainability Action Plan since the last meeting. Members noted that SCTS had exceeded its 3% energy reduction target for 2025-26, achieving an 8% reduction in energy related CO2 emissions.

10.2 The Executive reported on the installation of new solar photovoltaic panels at Glasgow Sheriff Court. The new panels replaced the old panels which were removed and recycled. The new installation was the largest in the estate and a new monitoring system, SolarEdge, was being used allowing the output of individual panels to be viewed in real time. The system would also allow early identification and targeted action of underperforming or faulty panels. The Committee discussed the possible storage of excess electricity produced. This had been considered however the cost of solar panel battery storage was currently prohibitive.

10.3 The annual Scottish Climate Week 2026 would run from the 28 September to the 4 October. The Executive outlined the developing a plan of engagement activities and communications for staff and judiciary to increase awareness of the steps SCTS was taking and to embed net Zero initiatives and climate change literacy in the organisation to aid the SCTS in achieving our carbon reduction targets.

10.4 The Committee welcomed the continued investment and action to progress the sustainability action plan. The presentation of the reports submitted to the committee would be considered ahead of the next meeting to ensure that the return on investment (costs, outlay and benefits) was clearly highlighted.

11. SCTS/COPFS Facilities Management Contract Governance and KPIs

11.1 The Executive advised that the FM Contract with OCS was meeting the agreed KPIs. 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.

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

12. Feedback from Members' Annual Appraisal

12.1 In advance of the meeting, members had completed their annual appraisal reflecting on their personal contribution and the Committee's performance during 2025-26. Members reflected that they were able to bring a wide variety of skills and knowledge to the Committee, providing valued input and challenge to discussions. They felt the Committee was working well and would continue to hold a mix of virtual and in-person meeting during the coming year. The introduction of an annual deep dive session, with a specific 'estates' focus, would be incorporated into future in-person meetings.

12.2 Members commended the high quality and detail contained in the papers and reports provided and the knowledge and openness of the Executive during discussions.

13. Draft Annual Report to the SCTS Board

13.1 Members reviewed the outline of their draft annual report to the SCTS Board. Members agreed that the content accurately reflected the work of the committee during 2025-26. A final draft would be shared for formal approval at the next meeting. The final report would be submitted to SCTS Board in November.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

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

14.2 No matters were raised by exception.

15. Date of Next Meeting

15.1 The Committee's next meeting would take place virtually on 26 October 2026

SCTS Secretariat
August 2026