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28 May 2025

Dear Ms Dowey

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION S6W-37492 S6W-37493 and S6W-37494

The Cabinet Secretary in her response to the above PQ's indicated that it related to operational matters within the responsibility of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service corporate body. I am now writing in response to the matter raised.

S6W-37492 Sharon Dowey: To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of any safety implications for (a) court staff and (b) the public arising from the reported shift from static to dynamic policing in court buildings, as piloted at Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

SCTS carried out its own risk assessment in March 2024 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court taking into account the move to a dynamic policing model and looking at the potential hazards and risks to court users including our staff, Judiciary and justice partners. As part of this assessment additional control measures were introduced including a communication approach should an incident happen in the court room and support needed to be summoned urgently.

S6W-37493 Sharon Dowey: To ask the Scottish Government what evaluation it has conducted of the dynamic policing model pilot at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, and whether it included input from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, sheriff clerks, and other key stakeholders on its effectiveness and safety.

An implementation group was formed to define an operating model and implement a pilot of the new dynamic policing model. This group included representatives from SCTS, COPFS, Police Scotland, the Edinburgh bar association and other justice partners affected by the change. This group also included union representative of both SCTS and COPFS. An evaluation of the pilot has been undertaken and all members of the implementation group were involved in the development of the evaluation report.

S6W-37494 Sharon Dowey: To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to address reported concerns raised by court staff regarding their safety in courtrooms where the police presence has been reduced under the dynamic policing model pilot.

SCTS has engaged with its staff to address concerns prior to and during the pilot. While the majority of those who responded to questionnaires regarding the new pilot would prefer a return to the static policing model, there is no evidence to support this and in general terms the new model is operating effectively and has reduced the demand on front line police officers while ensure public order is maintained in courts. A key benefit of the new model is the introduction of a visible police presence, not just in the criminal court rooms which are sitting under the old model, but to all parts of the court building and court rooms.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre and published on the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Graham', with a horizontal line underneath.

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