

BUSINESS PLAN



2023-24

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Foreword

Eric McQueen

Chief executive

It is my privilege to introduce the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) annual business plan. This plan sets out our key business outcomes and the environment in which SCTS will operate in 2023-24.

While the pandemic created many challenges it also transformed the landscape in which we now operate. The justice system in Scotland moved rapidly to accommodate increased remote and digital working in response to challenges. The way in which a range of our services are now provided improves accessibility for the public and the media, whilst affording increased round the clock access and information for all those who need it. We are proud about what we have achieved and we must now build on that progress to realise future ambitions.

Over the coming year, our work will be driven by our four key reform areas: criminal justice; civil justice; tribunals and OPG and corporate. We will work to embed new ways of delivering change and developing our skills to succeed, whilst building a more sustainable business model.

The continuation of our criminal court [recovery programme](#), which launched in September 2021 is a critical element of our work over the coming year. The programme has been successful to date with scheduled trials being reduced by over 66%. The additional trial courts, combined with excellent levels of collaboration across justice organisations, the legal profession and the 3rd sector, have increased case conclusion levels to above pre -COVID capacity. We are confident that the summary case backlog will be cleared by March 2024. Solemn business is more challenging. The number of indictments registered continues to rise, mostly notably in relation to alleged sexual offending. From April 2023 we put in place six additional High Courts and six additional Sheriff solemn trial courts. Modelling predicts that outstanding High Court trials will recover to a new baseline level by March 2025 and sheriff solemn by March 2026.

A key component in the transformation of our criminal justice system is the implementation of the Lord Justice Clerk's Review into the management of sexual offence cases. The review recommendations seek to establish a specialist court, underpinned by pre-recording of evidence and enhanced trauma informed approaches that will improve the experience for complainers. The Trauma Informed Justice Skills and Knowledge Framework was formally approved by the Victims Taskforce in December 2022. In turning the framework into action an SCTS Leaders Programme will be rolled out, equipping our staff to continue providing a high-quality, compassionate service, in a trauma-informed way.

Within the civil business, we will continue to enhance ICMS to provide a single case management system for all civil business. This will include a fully digital case file for all cases in the Court of Session and the provision of an end to end digital service for the majority of all civil business in the sheriff courts, enabling online initiation of new actions, viewing case documentation and case tracking. The advent of technology means that we can also open up the courts to a wider audience – without the need for physical attendance. We are developing permanent arrangements for the live streaming of cases within the appellate division of the Court of Session.

In the Office of the Public Guardian and Accountant of Court our new business model will be focused on delivering responsive, efficient and easily accessible services to support incapable vulnerable people. This will be supported by a new case management system with external facing channels to provide access to information and services to the public, legal profession, financial institutions and NHS.

Tribunals reform will continue during 2023-24, with further migrations into the First-Tier Tribunal for Scotland Chamber structure and related expansion of the Upper Tribunal for Scotland, supporting the vision of providing judicially-led tribunals that are modern, efficient and user-focused.

I commend the outcomes set out in this plan – and the staff of SCTS who will make them a reality, keeping us focused on our purpose - supporting justice.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Who we are

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) is a non-ministerial office established by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. Its statutory function is to provide administrative support to Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG). SCTS has a presence in many of Scotland's communities where court and tribunal business is conducted daily. In total the estate comprises 71 buildings made up of courts, vulnerable witness suites, tribunals and offices. We operate from 51 distinct locations across Scotland's six sheriffdoms, together with 13 remote video witness sites. Tribunals also make use of some 70 further venues across Scotland for hearings.

In addition to administering Scotland's courts and tribunals, SCTS supports the OPG and Accountant of Court (AOC). The OPG provides guidance and undertakes investigations to protect vulnerable people under the terms of the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000. The Public Guardian is also the Accountant of Court.

SCTS also provides the staff and administrative support to the:

- Scottish Civil Justice Council - which drafts rules of procedure for the civil courts, and advises the Lord President on the development of the civil justice system; and
- Scottish Sentencing Council - which is responsible for preparing sentencing guidelines, and for publishing guideline judgments and information about sentences imposed by the courts in Scotland.

The purpose of SCTS is **supporting justice**. We fulfil that purpose by providing the people, buildings and services needed to support the judiciary, courts, devolved tribunals and the OPG. This Business Plan covers the 2023-24 financial year. It aligns with our Corporate Plan 2023-26 which sets out our strategic priorities and objectives for that three year period. For each year of the corporate plan, SCTS prepares a business plan. This plan explains the environment within which SCTS will be operating for the year ahead and sets the outcomes we aim to deliver across our four key reform areas: Criminal, Civil, Tribunals/OPG and Corporate. We report on performance against key performance indicators in our [Board Scorecard](#). We also prepare and publish an Annual Report and Accounts, a Business Plan Delivery Report and a range of official statistics on our work.

The services we deliver provide access to justice. We put users at the centre of design and delivery, aspiring to meet their changing needs and expectations - using technology to improve the service we offer. To help us achieve the outcomes in this plan, each business unit within SCTS produces its own annual plan, setting out more detailed priorities and activities on which they will focus. All our work is underpinned by our core values of **respect, service and excellence**:

Our values and behaviours

RESPECT	SERVICE	EXCELLENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be courteous• Be open and fair• Work as one team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver a professional service• Learn in all we do• Set an example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovate• Collaborate• Be accountable

Our operating environment

Our strategy

Our strategy map illustrates our purpose, values and strategic priorities. It also illustrates how these priorities support the wider outcomes set in Scotland's [National Performance Framework](#).

SCTS Strategy Map



In order to deliver successfully on these priorities the way in which we approach our business is critical. Whilst independent, we work collaboratively with the Scottish Government, the Justice Board for Scotland, and a broad range of justice agencies. The [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#) document provides a common focus for all involved in the delivery of criminal and civil justice. Our work supports the delivery of its outcomes and goals (which are summarised at [Annex A](#)).

Our operating environment

Our work in context

Scotland's courts, tribunals and the OPG have continued to experience significant growth and development over the past year. As we move into a new planning period, we will continue to deliver the business and improve our services — to create a more just, resilient, accessible and efficient system, that reflects users' changing needs and expectations.

Over the past year we have delivered both the essential day-to-day business of the courts, tribunals and OPG and developed a range of significant innovations and new approaches including:

- Making significant progress on the criminal court recovery programme. Since its introduction we have seen a 66% reduction in the number of additional scheduled trials that accrued during the pandemic.
- Commencement in September 2022 of an 18-month summary case management pilot in Dundee, Hamilton and Paisley sheriff courts aimed at reducing the number of unnecessary hearings in cases. The pilot focusses on facilitating early disclosure of evidence, increasing the percentage of cases resolved at an earlier stage and limiting the number of trial diets where no evidence is led – reducing the level of witnesses cited. In the 12 months to March 2022, there were over 36,000 not guilty pleas in summary sheriff court cases - representing over 70% of pleas entered. In the same period, only 5,503 complaints were called where evidence was led.
- The opening of a new evidence by commission suite in Edinburgh in October 2022 which has already supported over 200 hearings, including a pilot remote suite-to suite witness broadcast – which allowed vulnerable witnesses to give evidence in a supportive environment.
- Maintaining a flexible hybrid-hearings model across the Court of Session, sheriff court civil business and Tribunals, using secure video and teleconference solutions, where appropriate, and in-person hearings - together providing a more resilient, accessible service.
- Commencing live-streaming of Court of Session Inner House cases, improving openness and transparency for hearings in which there will be a significant public or media interest.
- The hearing of over 5,500 custody cases by video-conferencing, using secure state-of-the-art technology.
- Introducing an online caveats portal in both the Court of Session and Sheriff courts, providing improved digital service access. Since its introduction in July 2022, over 2,000 caveats have been successfully submitted through the portal.
- Expanding the Social Security Chamber following the launch of Adult Disability Payment, and the transfer of experienced staff from His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service to SCTS.
- Facilitating over 50,000 Power of Attorney registrations online.
- Introducing a Hybrid Working Policy that allows our staff more choice to work flexibly where this meets business needs – encouraging a better work-life balance. On average 20% of our staff are working remotely each day.
- Hosting over 50,000 meetings using the Cisco Webex secure video-conferencing platform, supporting flexible business delivery across the organisation.
- Generating savings in excess of £0.75m through improved procurement practices.
- In excess of 140,000 civil and criminal cases, and in excess of 11,000 tribunal cases registered in 2022-23.

Criminal justice reform

Key reform areas

Scotland's courts and tribunals provide the forum in which citizens can assert their rights. By implementing our reforms, sharing information and building on advances in technology, we help to shape and improve the performance of the system. Click [here](#) for a summary of the Scottish Government's Strategy for Justice.

The justice system in Scotland continually develops in response to wider changes in society. Policy developments, environmental changes, new legislation, and the financial climate influence delivery across our operating environment. Strong partnerships across the justice sector and third sector are essential if new policies are to be effective.

Our high-level priorities are set out in the Corporate Plan 2023-26. We also have key corporate strategies covering people, estates and digital development, setting our priorities in these core supporting areas. Some of the key policy and legislative developments that will have a bearing on our work in 2023-24 are outlined below.

Criminal reform

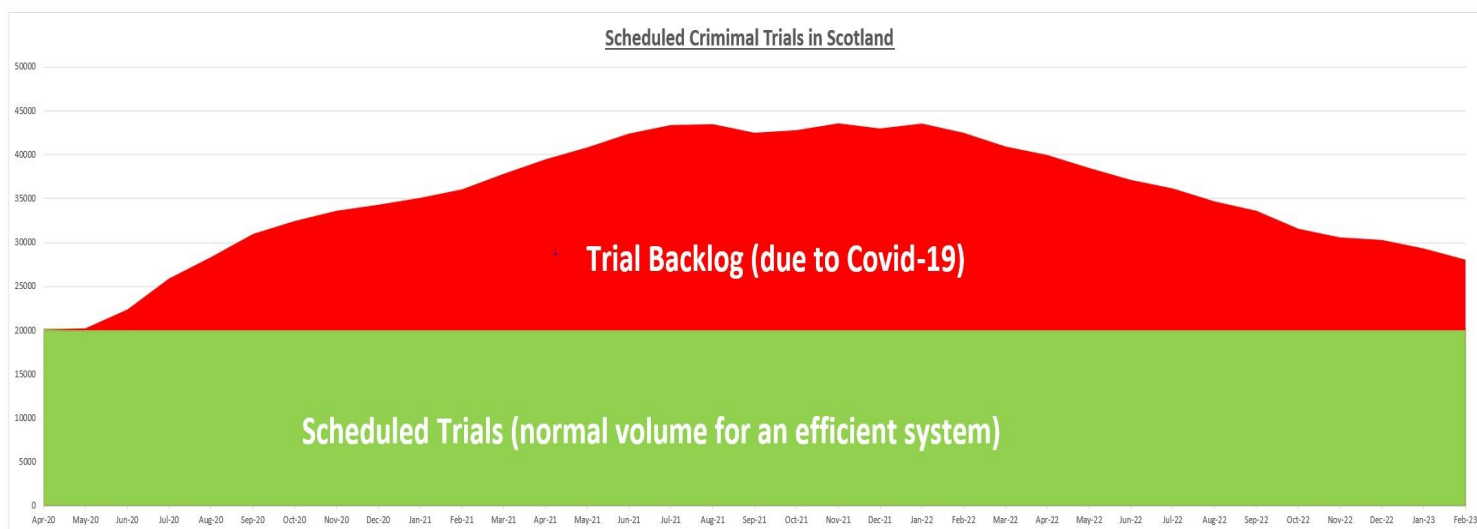
Addressing criminal case backlogs

The global pandemic created unprecedented challenges across all of society. As we start to emerge from the pandemic, recovering from its impact is a major focus for most organisations. For SCTS, the most significant impact was on criminal cases, where a significant backlog of cases had accrued, despite our innovative use of technology that created remote jury centres, enabling trials with 15 - person juries to resume in a safe and secure environment while the pandemic was ongoing.

A recovery programme was launched in September 2021 in partnership with key agencies and partners across the justice sector. Supported by funding from the Scottish Government, four additional High Courts; two additional Sheriff solemn courts; and 10 additional Sheriff summary trial courts have been operating since September 2021.

The additional trial courts, combined with excellent levels of collaboration across justice organisations, the legal profession and the 3rd sector, have increased case conclusion to above pre-COVID levels. Since the introduction of the recovery programme, we have seen a 66% reduction in the number of additional scheduled trials that accrued during the pandemic.

The overall aim of the criminal court recovery programme is to return the number of scheduled trials to around 20,000, which reflects the timescales and system capacity required to ensure that cases are properly prepared for trial.



Criminal justice reform

Key reform areas



Addressing criminal case backlogs

The [criminal court recovery modelling](#) the SCTS has carried out indicates that the summary court backlogs will be cleared by March 2024. From April 2023, the SCTS will scale back the 10 additional summary trial courts in operation. Solemn business is more challenging given the continued increase in business levels. Therefore, we will switch resources from the 10 additional summary trials to solemn trials. An additional two high court and six sheriff solemn courts will be put in place. With this additional resource in place for solemn business, High Court cases are projected to reach the revised baseline by March 2025 and Sheriff Solemn by March 2026.

Management of Sexual Offences review

A key component of transforming our criminal justice system lies in the implementation of the recommendations of the Lord Justice Clerk's Review: [Improving the Management of Sexual Offence Cases](#). That review proposed the implementation of a specialist court for sexual offence cases; adopting the routine pre-recording of evidence in such cases and embedding trauma-informed practices and procedure into all aspects of the process.

The Scottish Government have established a Governance Group, bringing partners from across the justice system together - to champion shared ownership of, and consider approaches to, implementing the recommendations of the review. A Working Group was specifically established to consider the creation of a national specialist court for serious sexual offences. That working group published its [report](#) in November 2022 – calling for legislation to allow such a court to be established.

Where changes in legislation are not necessary, substantial progress has been made, notably in the creation of facilities to support the pre-recording of evidence of children and vulnerable witnesses as part of an effort to reduce potential trauma in the trial process. In October 2022 designated facilities for the taking of evidence by commission in Edinburgh were put in place. Similar facilities are already available in Glasgow and in Inverness. The Judicial Institute, with input from leading experts, has developed trauma-informed training for the judiciary. The Trauma Informed Justice Skills and Knowledge Framework was formally approved by the Victims Taskforce in December 2022 with a national launch date set for the spring of 2023. A draft Leaders Programme has been prepared for staff in SCTS and will be rolled out in the first quarter of this business plan period, equipping our staff to respond in a trauma-informed way.

Criminal justice reform

Key reform areas

Summary case management

A Summary Case Management (SCM) pilot which seeks to reduce the number of unnecessary hearings commenced in Dundee, Hamilton and Paisley Sheriff Courts in September 2022. Key evidence will be released to the defence prior to or at the first calling in all domestic abuse cases (it is anticipated that the lessons learned may lead to the same approach being adopted in other types of summary sheriff court criminal business). These pilots build on the Evidence and Procedure Review Pilots. The defence will no longer be required to lodge written records. These are replaced by a judicial case management note. Legal aid changes have been made to support the pilot.

The pilots will run for 18 months with continual evaluation taking place. Over the course of this year we will take lessons learned from these pilots and implement improvements, where evidence demonstrates that this will improve either the efficiency or effectiveness of the system – whilst supporting the administration of justice.

Virtual custody cases

The use of live video links from police custody units to allow individuals with COVID-19 symptoms to appear virtually in court from custody was introduced in March 2020. A national virtual court working group was set up to take forward the possible expansion of virtual appearance, not only for the accused but other parties involved in the custody process. This ultimately resulted in the piloting of the concept, principally in Falkirk, in 2021, where the vast majority of non-COVID-19 custodies, did not appear physically in court.

Virtual custodies provide many benefits. They removed the need for the majority of accused, particularly vulnerable accused, to be transported from Police Custody Units (PCUs) to court. They created a more supportive environment for accused, allowing the dedicated support services for them to be focused at PCUs. They allowed personnel/staff (particularly from Criminal Justice Social Work) a degree of flexibility facilitated by the opportunity to use virtual interviews.

Virtual domestic abuse court model

Virtual domestic abuse trials represent another area that has the potential to transform the way we do business delivering real benefits to complainers without compromising the rights of the accused. In January 2022 the Virtual Trials National Project Board issued its [report on the piloting of virtual summary trials](#) which recommended that specialist online courts be set up to manage domestic abuse cases.

The new model places an increased focus on the needs of complainers and witnesses who are particularly susceptible to trauma caused by having to attend court and give evidence in potentially close proximity to the accused and their supporters. The new model has, at its foundations, a recommendation for all complainers to give their evidence away from the court building, via live link, supported by Victim Support Scotland or other support agencies as applicable.

The model proposes the use of increased judicial case management by designated specially trained sheriffs, specialist prosecutors, and support for solicitors to undertake trauma informed training. Importantly evidence from the police and medical professionals will also be given remotely. This enables them to continue with their essential duties as opposed to travelling to, and waiting in, court and the costs associated with that. It also aims to enable support services to be effectively focused, for the development of bespoke community remedies such as the Caledonian programme, and a problem solving approach to bail, remand and sentencing. The approach proposed in the new model has been agreed in principle by the Criminal Justice Board and by third sector organisations representing victims and witnesses.

Over the course of this year we will work with other justice agencies to put the steps in place to test and evaluate the new model in Aberdeen, ahead of a potential wider roll out across Grampian, Highland and Islands.

Criminal justice reform

Key reform areas

Criminal justice - legislative agenda in 2023-24

The **Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019** introduced a presumption that child witnesses in the most serious criminal cases (in the High Court initially) should have their evidence pre-recorded, to minimise the potential trauma of court appearances. Work to develop purpose-built facilities for the taking of evidence in advance of trial has continued over the last few years. We will continue to support the phased commencement of the Act, which will see an increase in the range and number of cases in which evidence is captured in this way.

The **Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Bill** was introduced in 2022 and aims to refocus how imprisonment is used - ensuring as much as possible the use of custody for remand is a last resort for the court and to give a greater focus to the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals leaving custody. The Bill places a number of new requirements on the court, including requiring justice social work to be given an opportunity to provide information to the court when it is making decisions about bail; changing the test the court must apply when making decisions about bail, requiring the court to record the reasons for refusal of bail and allowing time spent on electronically monitored bail to be counted as time served against a custodial sentence.

All of these may impact significantly on the length of time it takes to handle cases. They are also likely to increase the number of applications the court receives for variation and amendment of bail orders and may also increase the number of prosecutions for breach of bail offences. Bail appeals may also increase initially due to the change in the test the court must apply when making decisions on bail. We will work with the Scottish Government as these proposals are developed and monitor their impact on the criminal court system

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, aims to modernise existing laws that protect certain groups from hate crime; pulling them into a single Act and building on the current groups that are protected. We will continue to work with the Scottish Government and justice partners to ensure that the Act is implemented effectively.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 extended provisions within the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 to Scotland, providing a more flexible, efficient and effective method for dealing with minor road traffic offending. It removed the requirement for individuals to produce their driving licence in court proceedings and when paying endorsable fixed penalties. It also removed the legislative barrier for online payment of endorsable fixed penalties. We continue to work with justice agencies to develop digital processes to enable online payment of these fixed penalties, which will increase convenience for those paying fines whilst improving efficiency for the system as a whole.

The programme for government 2022-23 announced a **Criminal Justice Bill** which will propose abolition of the not proven verdict, make changes to jury numbers and provide anonymity to complainers in sexual offence cases. We also expect this Bill to take forward some of the changes proposed in the Scottish Government consultation "Improving victims' experiences of the justice system" including the establishment of a victims' commissioner; introducing statutory references to trauma informed practice; and legislative changes to realise a number of the reforms in the Lord Justice Clerk's review—including the creation of a specialist court for sexual offences and introduction of independent legal representation for complainers in sexual offence cases. These are likely to have a significant impact on the SCTS and we will work with the Scottish Government and justice partners to ensure that they are developed and implemented effectively.

Civil justice reform

Key reform areas

Digital case management

Our civil **Integrated Case Management System** (ICMS) continues to develop, increasingly enabling online case management and administration through the Civil Online portal. Full digital case management and processing can take place in simple procedure cases and an increasingly broad range of business can now be conducted online - with the submission of bulky paper case files largely a thing of the past. This significant progress has been accelerated in response to COVID-19 and many of the innovations introduced will remain in place, as we adapt to a model where civil business is processed using the optimal balance of virtual and traditional processes - supported by effective digital case management platforms and high quality online hearing options.

Meeting service user needs

We will continue to expand the use of ICMS in the Court of Session by providing a digital case file which can be accessed by staff and the judiciary and expand digital services to solicitors by enabling them to view case details and track a case online. In the sheriff court we will significantly increase the use of Civil Online by enabling more actions to be raised digitally. There are a range of benefits that will be realised from the transformation of the way in which we manage civil business, from reducing the number of queries/requests dealt with by court staff; providing consistency of process for solicitor firms who litigate in both the Court of Session and Sheriff Courts; and quicker access to case information for solicitors, alongside improved system and data security.

As we develop new digital services we will ensure they are delivered in line with [Digital Scotland Service Standards](#). A key element of meeting the service standards is providing a service that everyone can use. This includes those with disabilities, those who have no access to the internet and those who may lack the skills or confidence to use it.

Increasing transparency

We continue to strive to improve access to, and the transparency of, the courts. The advent of new technology means that we can open up the courts to a wider audience – without the need for physical attendance. In November 2021, an appeal hearing in the Court of Session was live-streamed for the first time, attracting viewers from across the globe. A permanent solution will be implemented within the Court of Session to stream cases being heard by the Appellate Divisions. Live streaming will not be appropriate for all hearings. A decision will be made based on the circumstances of the particular case.

Adapting our services as the law develops

Each year the Scottish Government publishes its Programme for Government, detailing the legislation it will introduce in the coming year and beyond. It includes a legislative programme for the next parliamentary year to drive forward change and improvement. The Scottish Civil Justice Council (SCJC) prepares draft rules of procedure for the civil courts and advises the Lord President on the development of the civil justice system in Scotland.

SCTS supports the changes made by Government and the SCJC. We aim to keep our systems up to speed with legislative change. Our dedicated legislation and information team ensure the SCTS understands and is able to respond to legislative changes, regulations and business practices impacting the courts – based around management information, analytical services as many changes can require quite significant planning and development to successfully deliver.

Civil justice reform

Key reform areas

Civil Justice - Legislative agenda in 2023-24

The **Children (Scotland) Act 2020**, along with the **Scottish Government's Family Law Modernisation Strategy**, will make substantial changes to how family proceedings operate in Scotland's courts. The Act aims to ensure that: the views of the child are heard in contact and residence cases; that provisions are in place to further protect victims of domestic abuse and their children; and that the best interests of the child are at the centre of contact and residence cases and Children's Hearings. We will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Government and partners to ensure these proposals can be implemented effectively.

The **Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021** introduces new domestic abuse protection notices and orders. It also creates a new ground on which a social landlord can apply for recovery of a house from a perpetrator of domestic abuse with a view to transferring the tenancy to the victim or, where the perpetrator and victim are joint tenants, to end the perpetrator's interest in the tenancy and enable the victim to remain in the family home. The SCTS will continue to work with the Scottish Government and other justice partners to ensure these provisions, which have the potential to require a number of new court processes and significantly impact on court programming, can be implemented effectively.

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill** will incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. It will impact on courts, tribunals and the SCTS as a public authority. The Bill provides that public authorities must not act in a way incompatible with the UNCRC and enables any person to bring proceedings against a public authority in a civil court or tribunal for acting, or proposing to act, in an incompatible manner. It also gives courts the power to strike down or declare as incompatible with the UNCRC requirements any legislation that cannot be interpreted consistently with the UNCRC. The Bill requires amendment following the UK Supreme Court decision that certain parts of it fell outwith the competence of the Scottish Parliament. We will monitor the Bill as it returns and progresses through Parliament, and will work with the Scottish Government to fully understand the implications of the revised Bill so that it can be implemented as effectively as possible.

The programme for government also announced a **Bankruptcy and Diligence Bill** which will bring forward recommendations to introduce improvements to current insolvency solutions and debt recovery processes. As well as helping to improve the lives of people struggling with debt, it will provide for more efficient recovery processes. We expect the Bill to make changes to the operation of conjoined arrestment orders, removing the role of the SCTS in the collection and disbursement of payments.

Following the Scottish Government consultation "Improving victims' experiences of the justice system" we anticipate legislation which will extend the use of **special measures in civil cases** to non-evidential hearings. This could potentially have a significant impact on the SCTS, particularly in relation to court programming and the availability of special measures equipment.

A number of changes to **court rules** are due to be implemented during the course of the year. Rules which amend the Simple Procedure Rules 2016 were approved by the Scottish Civil Justice Council (SCJC) in 2022. These were developed following an operational review by the Access to Justice Committee. The rules will come into force in May 2023 and we continue work to ensure IT system changes and operational guidance are in place. The SCJC also approved rules which will further develop active case management in family actions. These will come into force in September 2023 and we continue work to ensure that they can be implemented effectively.

The SCJC are considering further changes to court rules, including modes of attendance at civil court hearings. Rules, practice notes and guidance are under development which will set out a general presumption as to the types of hearings generally considered suitable for an in-person hearing and for attendance by electronic means. A forum will be established to monitor the changes and to initiate more regular improvements in court practice. The SCJC has also recommenced work on Simple Procedure Special Claims Rules and has been considering amendment to the Inner House Rules. We will work with the SCJC over the coming year to ensure that these and any other rule changes can be implemented successfully.

Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution will feature in the reform of all areas of civil law. SCTS is supportive of measures designed to make most effective and efficient use of judicial resources; and which improve access to justice for those seeking to resolve disputes in Scotland.

Tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian reform

Key reform areas

Tribunals expansion

Tribunals reform will continue during 2023-24, with further migrations into the First-Tier Tribunal for Scotland Chamber structure and subsequent expansion of the Upper Tribunal for Scotland, supporting the vision of providing judicially-led tribunals that are modern, efficient and user-focused.

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland comprises the Housing and Property (HPC), Health and Education, Tax, Social Security and General Regulatory (GRC) Chambers. The Local Taxation Chamber (LTC) was created on 1 April 2023 to take on responsibility for the work of the Valuation Appeal Committees, which heard appeals against local authority decisions on non-domestic rates, and of the Council Tax Reduction Review Panel.

The transfer of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (MHTS) into the Mental Health Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal has been delayed but is expected during 2023. The GRC will expand in 2023-24 to include jurisdictions covering police appeals and transport-related functions including low emission zones, workplace parking and licencing and parking contraventions. Bus Services appeals directly to the Upper Tribunal for Scotland will be introduced. In year, we expect changes to the rules of procedure for the Pensions Appeal Tribunal Scotland, which it is anticipated will impact on application timescales; in turn shortening existing timeframes and affecting workload.

Ensuring that the judiciary, staff, systems and resources are in place to manage increasing case volumes remains a key priority. There is continued, sustained growth in volumes of applications in the MHTS, and caseloads have increased in the HPC, particularly for applications relating to rent, evictions and landlords seeking access to properties post-pandemic. Rent and eviction applications are expected to decrease for a period following legislation introduced by the Scottish Government (SG) in October 2022 to help with the cost of living crisis. In the GRC, the Parking and Bus Lane Appeals jurisdiction is experiencing application increases as local Councils reintroduce parking fines and work through backlogs - though these are yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. Caseloads for the new LTC are uncertain and we will be monitoring activity throughout the year.

As new welfare benefits are devolved to Scotland, the work of the Social Security Chamber will increase significantly. We continue working closely with the SG to ensure that sufficient resources — both staff and judicial — are available to support the expansion. Using SG workload assumptions, we anticipate in excess of 12,000 applications in 2023-24.

Proposals for the devolution of the administration of reserved Tribunals to SCTS remain on hold, pending agreement of any transfer between the UK and Scottish Government. In spite of this the tribunals' landscape continues to develop and expand, under the leadership of the President of Scottish Tribunals and the Lord President.

Hybrid hearings

In collaboration with tribunals' judiciary, throughout 2022 we began gradually reintroducing in-person hearings where appropriate whilst embedding hybrid hearing models within some jurisdictions. This increases flexibility by accommodating both digital (video and teleconference) and in-person attendance. We will continue developing the tribunals hearing strategy to make best use of digital initiatives, expanding in-person proceedings and hybrid models to ensure our service users and judiciary have the right support and flexibility to deliver the best outcome. We will continue to improve and, where possible, unify methods for gathering and evaluating user feedback across jurisdictions.

Tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian reform

Key reform areas

Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) reform

Digital transformation

Transformation activity across the OPG aims to deliver a digital first, responsive, user-centred service that is efficient and easily accessible for users. This shift is being supported by development of a new modern case management system, which will improve efficiency, resilience and security.

In particular, we aim to launch an online, secure 24/7 Power of Attorney public register, on which members of the public can amend the details of existing powers of attorney, lodge guardianship documents and accounts through a web portal; and through which information can be securely shared with those agencies who need to know about registered powers; and which allows for SCTS to continuously improve the information it provides and the quality of service.

Legislative change

Following [publication](#) in September 2022 of the review into mental health and incapacity law in Scotland, it is anticipated that Scottish Government will propose changes to both the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. A further consultation is now required with legislative reform expected thereafter. Any reform will have a significant impact on the work of the OPG.

Further amendments to the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 are expected this year. This could vary how funds owed to or belonging to children in Scotland are managed. These are currently overseen by the Accountant of Court's Office. The responses to the consultation on the Judicial Factors Bill were published in August 2020: paused during the pandemic, this work may resume with a direct impact on the work of the Accountant of Court.



Corporate reform

Key reform areas

Our people

Our people are fully committed to supporting the judiciary and providing a first class service to the public. The skills, dedication and compassion of our staff underpin all that we do. They are delivering a front line service, supporting vulnerable and diverse users who often find themselves in a difficult, unfamiliar and anxious situations as they seek the services of the court or tribunal.

The wellbeing of our staff is paramount. We are committed to creating a more open and supportive culture within our organisation, enabling our staff to function at their maximum capacity, without prejudice or discrimination. Our Wellbeing initiative supports our core values of respect, service and excellence – recognising that our people are our greatest asset.

As an organisation SCTS promotes collaboration and values its diverse workforce. We encourage and support personal growth and work/life balance. We embrace the different perspectives of our people and offer the skills, experience and support for them to succeed in their current roles, whilst developing for the future.

As we look to the future, strong succession planning, aligned with tailored leadership programmes will be key to developing the next generation of leaders. We aim to ensure that talent is recognised and nurtured so that we can continue to grow our future leaders and plan effectively for succession. We have adapted our approach to learning, providing blended learning approaches – combining online and in-person training – to ensure that we maintain the skills required to administer an increasingly complex system with the balance of openness, expertise and compassion for which our people are known. A range of flexible work patterns, supported by our Hybrid Working policy, will help to develop a more flexible and adaptive workforce. Improvements to our people systems will improve our ability to plan and free up more time to deliver a first-class service.

The SCTS is committed to mainstreaming equality and diversity. An Equality Advisory Group (EAG), which includes external subject matter experts, was established in 2011. The EAG provides advice and guidance to the organisation on new and existing policies, procedures and providing fresh insight about developments in the equality sector. As per section 3 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, the SCTS publishes a bi-annual Mainstreaming Equality report, detailing the progress the organisation has made towards achieving its Equality Outcomes.



Corporate reform

Key reform areas

Responding to the climate challenge

Over the past decade SCTS has had a strong track record on carbon reduction. CO₂ emissions have more than halved since the organisation became a non-ministerial office in 2010. SCTS holds the Carbon Trust Triple Standard (which provides external verification that the organisation is making progress to reduce energy use, carbon emissions, waste and water consumption).

Good practice in sustainability has been adopted across a number of areas including physical improvements to the built estate, the installation of photovoltaic arrays, embracing remote working, investing in electric vehicles/charging infrastructure and embedding electronic payment systems across the business. The organisation is fully committed to the net zero agenda and the Board has committed to the 2045 target set by the Scottish Government. As an organisation that is obliged to deliver its business in a range of locations across Scotland, often from historic and listed buildings, the challenge of making sustained progress towards this target is significant.

In recognition of this fact the Board has commissioned a revised sustainability strategy and associated action plans that will be developed during 2023 – guiding the organisation on its journey to achieving the net zero challenge. A Board level champion has been appointed to support this work and a new oversight group will be established to ensure clear leadership and regular review of progress.

Our systems and infrastructure

Technological capability is changing the way in which we work and where we work. The traditional way of doing business is becoming outdated, with many that use our services demanding the ability to submit documents electronically, take part in hearings virtually and keep up to date on the progress of cases through digital communication channels - improving accessibility and efficiency. Changes to the way we deliver our business allow us to rationalise, innovate and improve our services.

Over the course of the coming year we will continue on our digital journey. We will prepare for the introduction of a new finance system and the rollout of elements of our people systems – automating recurring tasks, improving intelligence and compliance. We will also invest in a range of externally facing digital systems – our Civil Online case management portal, our core website and wider web estate and our digital expenses payment system. In taking forward digital innovation, we will continue to ensure that cyber security considerations are embedded in the development of new systems from the outset.



Our data

As an organisation SCTS recognises the value of information and the importance of strong information governance and controls. Our approach to information governance delivers improvements to our information management practices – as set out in the [SCTS Records Management Plan](#). We will continue to invest in the professional development of our Information Governance team, recognising the need for expert advice and support in this field – as the range and sensitivity of data managed by the organisation on a daily basis continues to grow.

Our financial environment

Budgets and investment

The Scottish Government's baseline budget for SCTS has been set at £147.6m in 2023-24. In addition to that baseline allocation in-year funding from the Scottish Government is estimated to be £46.4m (detailed at Annex B) giving a total net budget of £194m.

Further detail on the 2023-24 financial plan is provided at [Annex B](#) (p27-28)

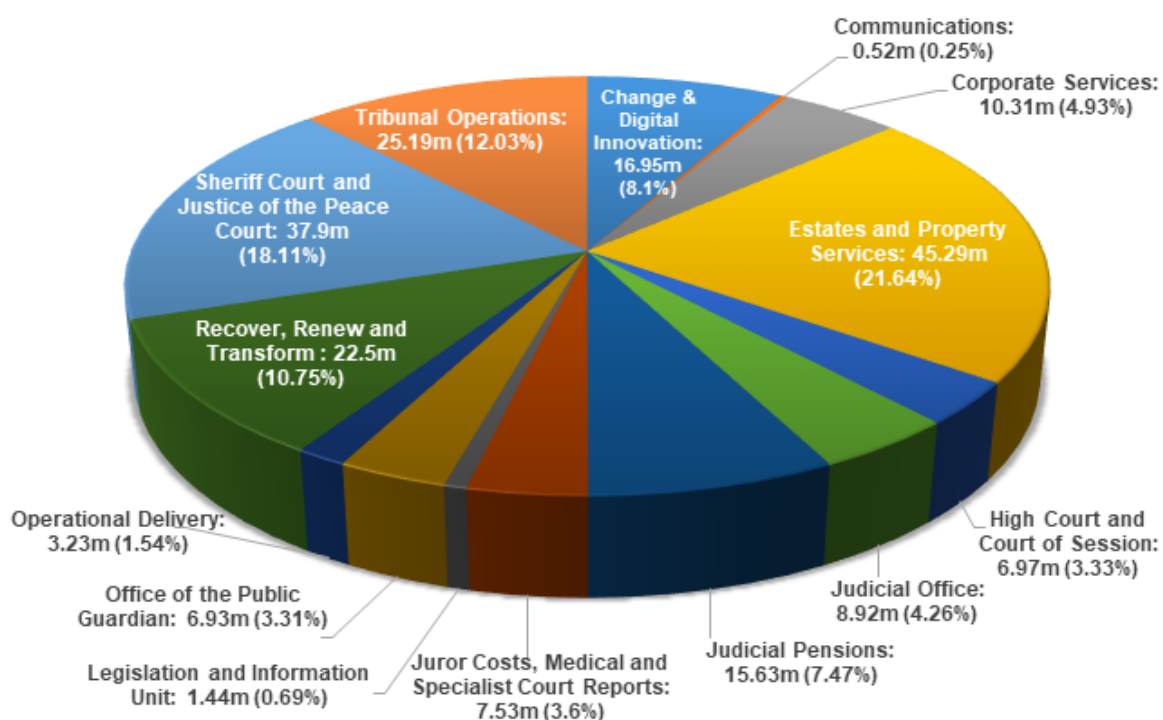
SCTS remains committed to delivering high quality services and promoting reform to ensure that Scotland's courts and tribunals continue to meet the expectations of the public within the challenging financial environment and resources available. Our baseline budget supports this work. Most of the in-year funding will support the ongoing court recovery programme and associated initiatives which are part of the Scottish Government's recovery, renewal and transformation (RRT) programme. In-year funding will also be used to meet anticipated levels of growth in the business of the devolved tribunals.

Funding of up to £2m in respect of civil fees and fines has been committed by the Scottish Government to offset against projected shortfalls and an additional £2m of funding has also been provided to ensure that we continue to maintain a safe environment for our service users, with enhanced hygiene and ventilation remaining in place across all SCTS premises.

Where do we invest our resources?

When income and depreciation are taken into account, the organisation will have £209.3m with which to fund its activities this year. Figure 1 shows how SCTS allocates its resources by business area. Over 84% of the total gross expenditure, excluding depreciation, is invested directly in supporting front line operations – most significantly in our people. The cost of maintaining a historic estate accounts for 22% of total funding. In line with strategic objectives, SCTS continues to innovate and digitise its service with around £17m invested in our Change and Digital Innovation function, targeted on strengthening digital infrastructure and innovation whilst maintaining and improving core services. The projected full-year capital budget of £14.2m (will allow work to commence on the development of a new case management system for OPG and for completion of the Glasgow Sheriff Court atrium roof project. £1.5m of anticipated in-year funding will support the Edinburgh Justice Campus project and ongoing tribunal digitisation.

Figure 1 - 2023-24: Total spend by area (£209.3m)



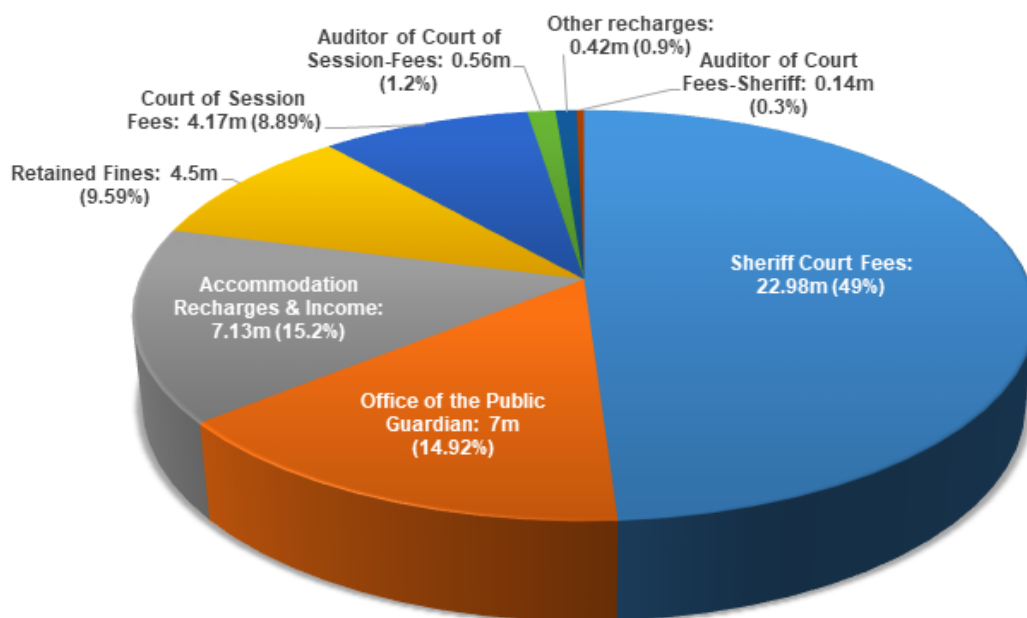
Our financial environment cont.

Fees and income

Income

Total gross income for 2023-24 is projected to be £46.9m, of which 74% relates to civil fees. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of this income by category. Support of up to £2m has been committed by the Scottish Government to underwrite the risk of a fees and fines income shortfall; this has been offset within the budget presented in Annex B SCTS also provides accommodation and associated services which are recharged to a number of other public bodies, notably the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

Figure 2 — SCTS gross income 2023-24: £46.9m



Tables summarising the financial allocation for 2023-24, broken down by both service area and cost category, can be found at [Annex B](#) (pages 27-28).

Workload trends

Business volumes

While business was paused during the early stages of the pandemic, a significant backlog of cases had accrued.

A [recovery programme](#) was launched in September 2021. Four additional High Courts; two additional Sheriff solemn courts; and 10 additional Sheriff summary trial courts have been operating since September 2021.

The programme has been successful to date with scheduled trials being reduced by over 66%. The additional trial courts, combined with excellent levels of collaboration across justice organisations, the legal profession and the 3rd sector, have increased case conclusion levels to above pre -COVID capacity.

The latest [criminal court recovery modelling](#) the SCTS has carried out indicates that the summary court backlogs will be cleared by March 2024. From April 2023, the SCTS will scale back the 10 additional summary trial courts in operation. Solemn business is more challenging given the continued increase in business levels (indictments registered rose by 20% in 2022-23 when compared to 2019-20). Therefore, we will switch resources from the 10 additional summary trials to solemn trials. An additional two high court and six sheriff solemn courts will be put in place. These increased resource levels are intended to support the recovery of case backlogs, to a revised baseline of circa 20,000 outstanding criminal cases, by March 2025 in the High Court and by March 2026 in the Sheriff solemn courts.

In 2023-2024, we are projecting that the number of indictments being registered will rise by 25% for High Court business, and 23.5% for Sheriff Solemn. With the additional court capacity in place to deal with solemn business we project a significant rise in the number of evidence led trials taking place (High Court and Sheriff Solemn projected to rise by 21.5% and 53% respectively). Summary criminal business continues to represent the highest volume of our work. We expect volumes to remain broadly stable over the coming year.

We continue to publish [monthly statistics](#) on criminal case throughput and outstanding case levels, providing the most up to date position on case volumes, throughput and backlogs.

Court of Session and sheriff civil court business levels remained steady throughout the pandemic - as innovative approaches allowed business to continue. We anticipate that business in both jurisdictions will operate at largely the same levels in 2023-24 as it did in 2022-23, though these are still somewhat below pre-pandemic levels. However, the number of proofs proceeding has recovered to around the level held in 2019-20 (c.500). In the Sheriff civil courts, case registrations do, however, continue to be below their pre-pandemic position.

Office of the Public Guardian

Both the level of submission and registration of Powers of Attorney (POA) and Guardianship orders continued to rise in 2022-23. This growth is expected to continue through 2023-24. Tackling backlogs accrued during the pandemic will be a key focus in the early part of 2023-24, in respect of POA registrations, financial guardianship annual audits and associated work.

Tribunals

Growth in business volumes continues to be experienced across a number of chambers. Applications to the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland have increased as well as those in the Housing and Property Chamber (HPC). As new welfare benefits are devolved to Scotland, the work of the Social Security Chamber will increase significantly.

We continue working closely with the Scottish Government to ensure that sufficient resources - both staff and judicial - are available to support the expansion.

[Annex C](#) provides summaries of key business volumes for 2020-21 and 2021-22

It also provides a forecast of 2022-23 volumes and a projection of anticipated business volumes in 2023-24 (p29-32)

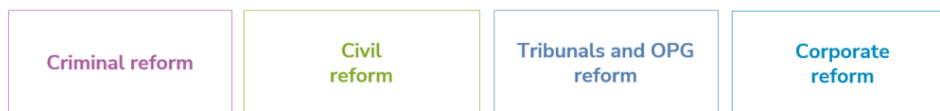
Business outcomes and key reform areas 2023-24

Strategic priorities, key reform areas and monitoring performance

Our key reform areas

Our key business outcomes for the year 2023-24 are listed on pages, [22 to 25](#). We organise these under our key reform areas - Criminal, Civil, Tribunals and OPG and Corporate.

We organise delivery of our business under these reform areas



Our strategic priorities underpin our work. Activity under each reform area is aligned with our seven strategic priorities. Planning this way helps ensure we are able to maintain focus on the day to day business of running the courts and tribunals whilst delivering the significant reform agenda set by the Board—assuring that how we organise our work is effective.

SP1	A well supported judiciary	Scotland's judiciary are equipped with support from the right people, systems, technologies and processes to ensure they dispense justice effectively
SP2	Satisfied service users	We inspire confidence through the delivery of a high-quality customer service
SP3	Skilled and motivated people	We support our people to provide excellent customer service - focusing on their performance, learning, resilience and wellbeing
SP4	Sustainable buildings and business	We provide a high-quality, safe and secure environment for Scotland's courts and tribunals, and take further action to reduce our environmental impact without compromising our core services
SP5	Digital services	We maximise the opportunities provided by technology to improve processes, access to information and the quality of service we provide
SP6	Efficiency and best value	We have financial stability that enables us to improve our services in an effective, economical and sustainable manner
SP7	Purposeful collaboration	We work with justice bodies to deliver significant change and improvement for Scotland's justice system - through collaboration, communication and reform

Monitoring performance

The SCTS Board scrutinises progress against this plan quarterly, alongside consideration of the [Board Scorecard](#) which reports on operational performance against the key indicators listed at [Annex E](#). This plan is supported by more detailed unit plans produced by each business area of the SCTS, which are used by Directors to manage progress in their areas.

As per section 3 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, the SCTS publishes a bi-annual Mainstreaming Equality [report](#), detailing the progress the organisation has made towards achieving its Equality Outcomes.

The identification and effective management of risk is necessary to ensure that risks to achieving our priorities are identified, assessed, addressed and reviewed. The key corporate risks identified by the SCTS Board are summarised at [Annex D](#). These were reviewed by the Board in February 2023 and are kept under regular review throughout the year. Actions to control and mitigate them are monitored by both the SCTS Executive Team and the SCTS Board's Audit and Risk Committee.

Plan on a page

Business outcomes 2023-24

Timescale Apr 23 - May - Jun - Jul - Aug - Sept - Oct - Nov - Dec - Jan - Feb - Mar 24

Click in any of the reform icons below to see the outcomes in full



Criminal Reform

Continuation of Criminal Court recovery programme, measuring progress against modelled analysis

Develop and implement virtual custody courts

Finalise domestic abuse trials court model, testing approach for potential roll-out in GH&I

Supporting the implementation of recommendations from the review of sexual offence cases

Support the judiciary in minimising the number of summary cases set down for trial



Civil Reform

Extend ICMS to cover all Court of Session case types and migrating all live cases

Increase the number of cases in which electronic documents can be lodged via Civil Online

Assess measures required to provide assisted digital support

Ensure case management systems and processes keep pace with changes in law or procedure

Enhanced live streaming of cases of significant public interest



Tribunals and OPG Reform

Support transfer of Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland into the First-Tier Tribunal

Develop Tribunals' case management system to support expansion of business in the Social Security Chamber

Establish a Tribunals hearing strategy - delivering a sustainable and resilient business model

Develop and launch first phase of a new OPG case management system

Quarterly monitoring of OPG backlogs, reducing waiting times for Power of Attorney applications



Corporate Reform

Work with SG to develop new finance system, enhancing tracking and reporting on spend and budgets

Migrate recruitment and performance management systems to iTrent

Publish a new sustainability strategy setting out our approach to net zero

Establish a new learning platform and revised training and development framework

Delivery of Equality Outcomes, promoting awareness and understanding to improve service delivery

Generate in excess of £0.5m savings through improved procurement practices

Criminal justice reform

Business outcomes 2023-24



Supporting justice by developing a world class service for criminal court users – providing optimum digital solutions to support staff, the Judiciary and partners in the delivery of fair, accessible, effective and efficient criminal justice, inspiring confidence in all who use it

Business Plan outcomes 2023-24		Aligned strategic priorities
1.	We will continue to reduce criminal case backlogs, delivering additional court capacity through the court recovery programme, measuring progress against modelled analysis and publishing monthly data reports to illustrate progress made (Monitor quarterly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Sustainable buildings and business Purposeful collaboration
2.	We will work in collaboration with justice organisations to develop and implement virtual custody courts (February 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied service users Digital services Efficiency and best value Purposeful collaboration
3.	We will finalise the process for the management of a domestic abuse court model, testing and exploring the approach for such cases in Aberdeen, prior to a potential rollout across Grampian, Highland and Islands (January 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied service users Digital services Purposeful collaboration
4.	We will continue to support the work of the judiciary in implementing the recommendations of the review of the management of sexual offence cases, developing a supportive, trauma-informed approach and supporting the Scottish Government in the development of legislation (March 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Digital services Efficiency and best value Purposeful collaboration
5.	We will continue to support the summary case management pilots, by supporting the judiciary to minimise the number of summary cases that are set down for trial unnecessarily, reducing late pleas of guilty and decisions on discontinuation of cases—delivered through judicial case management and early disclosure of evidence (March 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Efficiency and best value Purposeful collaboration

Civil justice reform

Business outcomes 2023-24



To support the judiciary in the delivery of world class civil justice by leading and inspiring user-centred change to create more efficient and accessible services for all

Business Plan outcomes 2023-24		Aligned strategic priorities
1.	We will continue to enhance our civil case management system – completing its coverage of all case types in the Court of Session and migrating all live cases (October 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Digital services
2.	We will increase the number of cases in which we can accept electronic submission of civil case documentation (Ongoing throughout 2023-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied service users Skilled & Motivated People Digital Services
3.	We will assess the measures required to provide assisted digital support to those that need it to use our civil case management system, considering both service accessibility and support in its use - in line with Digital Scotland Service Standards (December 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well Supported Judiciary Satisfied service users Purposeful collaboration
4.	We will ensure that our case management systems and processes keep pace with changes in law or procedure promoted by the Scottish Government or the Scottish Civil Justice Council – including the refresh of simple procedure rules (Ongoing throughout 2023-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Digital services Purposeful collaboration
5.	We will build our capacity to provide video access and live streaming of significant civil hearings where it is in the public interest – installing facilities to support this approach in two courtrooms within the Court of Session (June 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied service users Digital services Efficiency and best value

Tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian reform

Business outcomes 2023-24



To provide high quality access to justice for Tribunals users and protection for vulnerable people and their families through the power of attorney and guardianship systems - by developing efficient, fair, user-friendly and responsive services

Business Plan outcomes 2023-24		Aligned strategic priorities
1.	We will, in collaboration with the Scottish Government, support the transfer of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland into the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (December 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Purposeful collaboration
2.	We will develop our case management system to manage the expansion of business in the Social Security Chamber (Ongoing throughout 2023-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Digital services
3.	We will establish a new tribunals hearing strategy, making best use of hybrid, virtual and in-person hearings to enhance access to justice whilst delivering a sustainable and resilient business model (September 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Digital services
4.	We will develop and launch the first phase of a new case management system in the Office of the Public Guardian (February 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Efficiency and best value
5.	We will continue to address case backlogs in the Office of the Public Guardian, reducing waiting times for the processing of Power of Attorney applications (Monitor quarterly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Efficiency and best value

Corporate reform

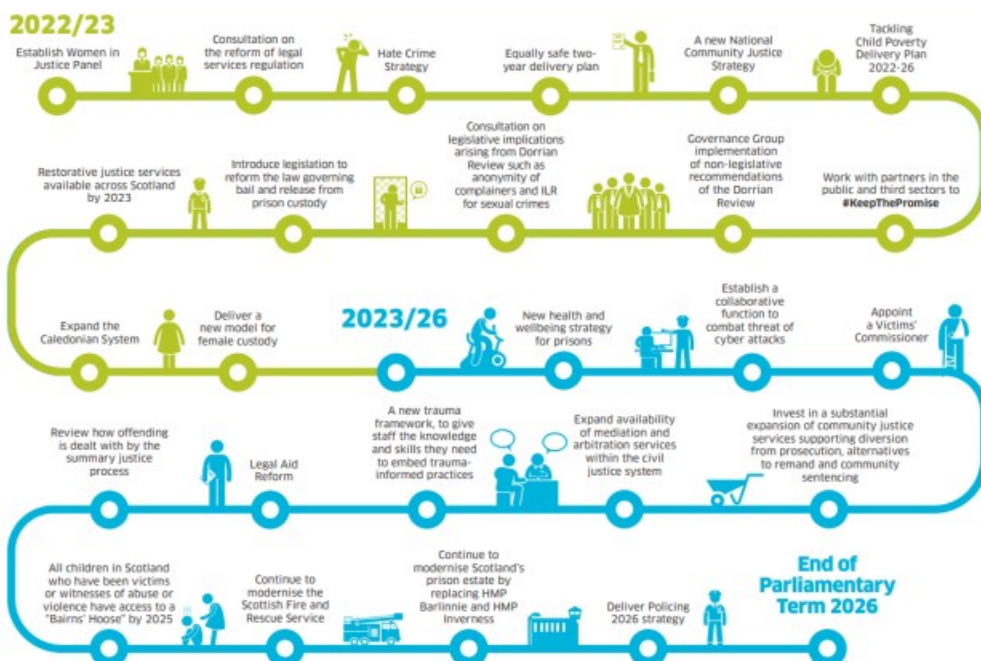
Business outcomes 2023-24



To give our people the systems, processes, facilities and skills to deliver the best possible service, allowing justice to be done fairly, effectively and efficiently

Business Plan outcomes 2023-24		Aligned strategic priorities
1.	We will work with the Scottish Government as they develop a new finance system for public bodies – enhancing our tracking and reporting on spend and budget management (Ongoing throughout 2023-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied service users • Digital services • Efficiency and best value • Purposeful collaboration
2.	We will improve both access to and the quality of our people services and data by migrating our recruitment and performance management system onto iTrent (our new people services system) (September 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied service users • Skilled and motivated people • Digital services • Efficiency and best value
3.	We will review our approach to sustainability – publishing a new strategy that sets out our approach to Net Zero whilst continuing to make low carbon investments across the SCTS estate, supported by initiatives such as the Scottish Central Government Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme (December 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled and motivated people • Sustainable buildings and business • Efficiency and best value • Purposeful collaboration
4.	We will establish a new digital learning platform and a revised training and development framework that provides access to knowledge and support when and where required (January 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied service users • Skilled and motivated people • Digital services • Efficiency and best value
5.	We will promote equality, diversity and inclusion through the delivery of our Equality Outcomes, promoting awareness and understanding of equality and diversity, to improve services (Ongoing throughout 2023-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied service users • Skilled and motivated people
6.	We will generate savings in excess of £0.5m through improved procurement practices (March 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency and best value • Purposeful collaboration

Annex A - The Vision for Justice in Scotland



Annex B - Summary financial plan

2023-24 - Financial summary by cost category

Cost Category (£000s)	2023-24 Budget Bill	In Year Funding	2023-24 Total Budget
Pay	73,080	7,708	80,778
Other Staff Costs	525	1	526
Rent & Rates	13,023	-	13,023
Accommodation	14,981	2,003	16,984
Building Maintenance	6,789	200	6,989
Judicial Costs	1,811	1,174	2,985
Judicial Pensions	14,906	728	15,634
Tribunal Members fees	7,132	6,824	13,956
Office & Other	9,823	1,040	10,863
Supplies & Services	1,938	298	2,236
Training	413	25	438
Travel	656	15	671
Court Recovery RRT	0	22,500	22,500
Business Costs	145,077	42,516	187,593

Total Operational Costs	7,186	342	7,528
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Total Revenue Expenditure	152,263	42,858	195,121
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Fees for Civil Cases	(34,854)	-	(34,854)
Rents Receivable	(7,129)	-	(7,129)
Recharges	(422)	-	(422)
Retained Fines	(4,500)	-	(4,500)
Fees and Fines Underwrite	0	2,000	2,000
Total Receipts	(46,905)	2,000	(44,905)

Net Revenue Expenditure	105,358	44,858	150,216
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Capital			
Buildings	5,100	1,200	6,300
Furniture & Fittings	-	-	-
Digital Infrastructure	7,600	296	7,896
Total Capital Expenditure	12,700	1,496	14,196

Non Cash Ringfenced (Depreciation)	29,588	-	29,588
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Total Net Expenditure	147,646	46,354	194,000
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A commentary on the financial environment and budget can be found at pages 17-18 of this plan

Annex B - Summary financial plan

2023-24 - Financial summary by service area

Budget 2023-24 - Financial Summary by Service Area			
Service Area (£000s)	Revenue	Capital	Total
Change & Digital Innovation	12,009	4,940	16,949
Communications	521	-	521
Corporate Services	10,198	112	10,310
Estates and Property Services	38,991	6,300	45,291
High Court and Court of Session	6,973	-	6,973
Judicial Office	8,924	-	8,924
Judicial Pensions	15,634	-	15,634
Juror Costs, Medical and Specialist Court Reports	7,528	-	7,528
Legislation and Information Unit	1,438	-	1,438
Office of the Public Guardian	4,334	2,600	6,934
Operational Delivery	3,202	25	3,227
Recover, Renew and Transform	22,500	-	22,500
Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court	37,902	-	37,902
Tribunal Operations	24,967	219	25,186
Total Direct & Operational Costs	195,121	14,196	209,317
Receipts	(44,905)	-	(44,905)
Total Net Expenditure before depreciation	150,216	14,196	164,412
Non-Cash Ring Fenced DEL Depreciation	29,588	-	29,588
Total Net Expenditure	179,804	14,196	194,000

A commentary on the financial environment and budget can be found at pages 17-18 of this plan

Annex C - Key business volumes and planning assumptions

Supreme Courts, Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts, Office of the Public Guardian

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 (Forecast)	2023/24 (Projection)
High Court				
High Court judge days	2,227	4,201	4,653	5,510
Indictments registered	851	823	1,056	1,320
Trials Evidence Led	278	577	629	765
High Court: criminal appeals lodged	281	450	512	510
Court of Session				
Court of Session judge days	1,240	1,369	852	850
Cases registered	882	1,012	910	910
Proofs proceeding	63	90	55	60
Court of Session: civil appeals/reclaiming motions	188	151	111	110
All-Scotland Courts				
Sheriff Appeal Court – criminal appeals lodged	273	323	276	280
Sheriff Appeal Court – civil appeals lodged	132	189	219	220
Personal Injury Court: registrations	2,944	3,321	3,945	3,950
Sheriff Courts				
Sheriff Court sitting days	18,391	27,610	29,563	29,000
Sheriff Courts: Summary				
Complaints registered	54,110	55,506	56,223	60,000
Trials Evidence Led	2,721	5,503	6,279	6,500
Sheriff Courts: Solemn				
Sheriff and jury indictments registered	4,851	5,759	5,831	7,200
Sheriff and jury trials where evidence led	197	907	1,041	1,600
Sheriff Courts: Civil				
Ordinary Cause registered	18,091	21,144	21,259	21,500
OC Proofs and Debates proceeding	216	463	509	500
Summary Cause/Small Claims/Simple Proc reg'd	20,502	26,923	34,169	34,000
SC Proofs Proceeding	85	316	314	320
JP Courts				
Complaints registered	16,932	23,557	23,213	25,000
Trials Evidence Led	349	518	1,005	1,500
Office of the Public Guardian				
Powers of Attorney registered	37,999	57,819	58,975	69,000
Guardianship Orders registered	1,912	2,763	2,951	2,900
Access to funds orders registered	182	179	185	180
Intervention orders registered	379	505	567	550

Annex C - Key business volumes and planning assumptions

Upper Tribunal, First-tier and other Tribunals the SCTS administers

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 (Forecast)	2023/24 (Projection)
Upper Tribunal for Scotland				
Receipts	30	43	28	221
Disposals	38	30	47	241
Hearing Days	18	36	32	189
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber)				
Property Factor				
Receipts	218	201	230	204
Disposals	196	189	174	235
Hearing Days	116	136	137.5	129
Rent & Repairs				
Receipts	129	166	172	163
Disposals	96	164	209	197
Hearing Days	89.5	262	154	167
Third Party				
Receipts	13	31	58	60
Disposals	18	28	44	75
Hearing Days	38.5	64	74	61
Right of Entry (Cases are disposed of by decision rather than hearing)				
Receipts	81	161	172	168
Disposals	51	138	204	203
Decisions	26	80	145	149
Letting Agents				
Receipts	66	47	70	66
Disposals	78	52	67	72
Hearing Days	59	42	49.5	50
Private Rented Sector				
Receipts	1,960	2,760	3762	2736
Disposals	2,304	2,497	3297	2681
Hearing Days	323	326.5	265.5	371
Case Management Discussion Days	1,225	1,340	1,430	1,379

Annex C - Key business volumes and planning assumptions

Upper Tribunal, First-tier and other Tribunals the SCTS administers

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 (Forecast)	2023/24 (Projection)
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Health and Education)				
Additional Support Needs				
Receipts	83	133	210	215
Disposals	125	131	182	213
Hearing Days	58	45	54	47
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Tax Chamber)				
Tax				
Receipts	2	10	10	12
Disposals	7	8	11	12
Hearing Days	4	13	7	12
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Social Security)				
Social Security				
Receipts	46	54	113	12,190
Disposals	42	57	51	9,540
Hearing Days	9	11	20.5	3,879
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (General Regulatory Chamber)				
Charity Appeals				
Receipts	0	0	0	1
Disposals	0	0	0	1
Hearing Days	0	0	0	1
Parking and Bus Lane Appeals (Function transfers to Transport Appeals in 2023)				
Receipts	819	727	1,042	-
Disposals	909	670	736	-
Hearing Days	41	34	38	-
Transport Appeals (SCTS assumes responsibility Summer 2023)				
Receipts	-	-	-	2,100
Disposals	-	-	-	1,776
Hearing Days	-	-	-	170

Annex C - Key business volumes and planning assumptions

Upper Tribunal, First-tier and other Tribunals the SCTS administers

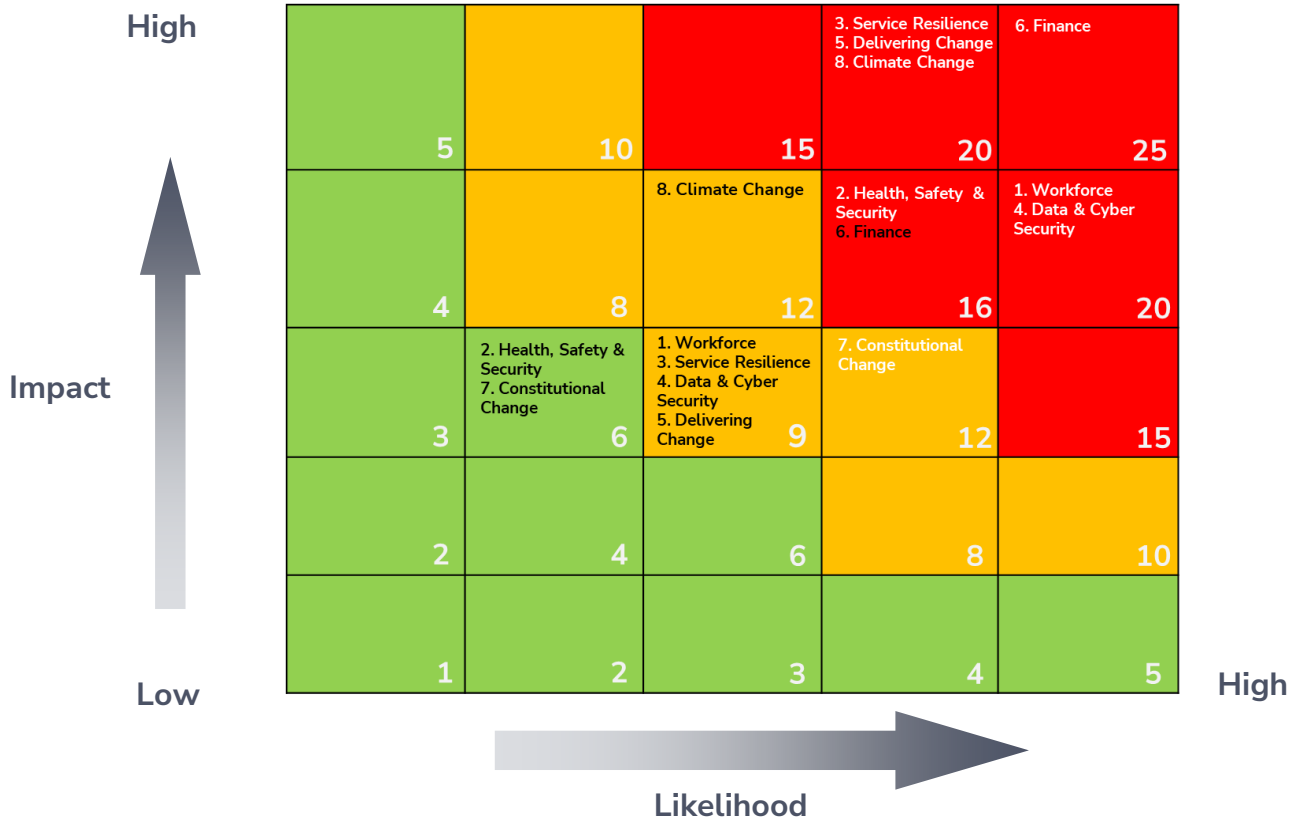
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 (Forecast)	2023/24 (Projection)
Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland <i>(Functions scheduled to transfer to First-tier Tribunal (Mental Health Chamber) in 2023)</i>				
Receipts	5,057	5,105	5,253	5,195
Disposals	4,812	4,741	4,980	4,987
Hearing Days	3,227	3,351	3,824	4,058
Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (Excessive Security)				
Receipts	34	32	24	30
Disposals	34	28	22	30
Hearing Days	30	29	18	30
Land Tribunal for Scotland <i>(Responsibility transferred to the Supreme Courts from 10 January 2022)</i>				
Receipts	2,059	545		
Disposals	214	223		
Hearing Days	16	34		
Pensions Appeals Tribunal For Scotland				
Receipts	191	172	150	142
Disposals	215	232	268	245
Hearing Days	43	47	63	62
Council Tax Reduction Review Panel <i>(Functions transfer to the Local Taxation Chamber in 2023)</i>				
Receipts	42	48	43	-
Disposals	47	45	49	-
Hearing Days	8	25	26	-

¹Case volumes not available at time of publication

Annex D - Key strategic risk categories and corporate risks

Strategic risk categories identified and mapped by the SCTS Board

(White text = Untreated Risk, Black Text = Treated Risk)



Strategic risk category	Principal corporate risk monitored by SCTS Board and Audit and Risk Committee
Workforce wellbeing and skills	Failure to maintain a skilled, motivated, resilient and adaptable workforce to support daily business, medium-term recovery and longer-term change
Health, safety and security	Significant Health and Safety or security breach caused by accidents or intentional acts
Service resilience and continuity	Essential business and services compromised due to critical incident(s)
Data and cyber security	Significant data/system loss caused by failure in information management controls or cyber-attack.
Change management	Ineffective planning and/or delivery of change impacts on delivery of core business or reform programme
Finance and resourcing	Financial pressures impact on delivery of core business or reform programme
Constitutional and regulatory change	High-profile constitutional issues and regulatory changes require effective intervention from the courts and/or impact on business delivery/reform
Climate change	Failure to meet Scottish Government's ambitious Climate change targets (net zero by 2045)

Annex E - Strategic priorities by reform area 2023-26

SCTS strategic objectives

SP1	A well supported judiciary	Scotland's judiciary are equipped with support from the right people, systems, technologies and processes to ensure they dispense justice effectively
SP2	Satisfied service users	We inspire confidence through the delivery of a high-quality customer service
SP3	Skilled and motivated people	We support our people to provide excellent customer service—focusing on their performance, learning, resilience and wellbeing
SP4	Sustainable buildings and business	We provide a high-quality, safe and secure environment for Scotland's courts and tribunals, and take further action to reduce our environmental impact without compromising our core services
SP5	Digital services	We maximise the opportunities provided by technology to improve processes, access to information and the quality of service we provide
SP6	Efficiency and best value	We have financial stability that enables us to improve our services in an effective, economical and sustainable manner
SP7	Purposeful collaboration	We work with justice bodies to deliver significant change and improvement for Scotland's justice system—through collaboration, communication and reform

SCTS key reform areas

Criminal justice reform	Supporting justice by developing world class services for criminal court users—providing optimum digital solutions to support staff, the judiciary and partners in the delivery of fair, accessible, effective and efficient criminal justice, inspiring confidence in all who use it
Civil justice reform	To support the judiciary in the delivery of world class civil justice by leading and inspiring user-centred change to create more efficient and accessible services for all
Tribunals and OPG reform	To provide high-quality access to justice for Tribunals' users, and protection for vulnerable people and their families through the power of attorney and guardianship systems—by developing efficient, fair, user-friendly and responsive services
Corporate reform	To give our people the systems, processes, facilities and skills to deliver the best possible service, allowing justice to be done fairly, effectively and efficiently

Annex E - Corporate Plan 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities

Criminal justice reform		Strategic priority alignment
Supporting justice by developing a world class service for criminal court users – providing optimum digital solutions to support staff, the Judiciary and partners in the delivery of fair, accessible, effective and efficient criminal justice, inspiring confidence in all who use it		
1.	We will reduce criminal case backlogs and waiting times by delivering additional court capacity to support recovery and address unacceptable periods of delay	Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Purposeful collaboration
2.	We will minimise disruption to victims and witnesses, whilst protecting the rights of the accused, by supporting the judiciary to minimise the number of summary cases that are set down for trial unnecessarily, reducing late pleas of guilty and decisions on discontinuation of cases - delivered through judicial case management and early disclosure of evidence	Satisfied service users Sustainable buildings and business Digital services
3.	We will support implementation of the recommendations made in the Lord Justice Clerk’s Review – “Improving the Management of Sexual Offence Cases” – by effectively managing the growing level of complex cases and providing a supportive trauma-informed approach	Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Purposeful collaboration
4.	We will enable greater use of evidence by commission, reducing the risk of re-traumatisation and allowing the best possible evidence to be heard, while safeguarding the rights of the accused	Satisfied service users Sustainable buildings and business Digital services
5.	We will build on our use of technology to increase flexibility and resilience in the management of criminal business – exploring the possibility of deploying a specialist virtual domestic abuse court model; making best use of virtual approaches for custody and procedural business and expanding our capacity to host remote evidence by Police and Expert witnesses in our sheriff courts	Satisfied service users Digital services Efficiency and best value Purposeful collaboration

Civil justice reform		Strategic priority alignment
To support the judiciary in the delivery of world class civil justice by leading and inspiring user-centred change to create more efficient and accessible services for all		
1.	We will transform our civil justice systems, developing a fully digital end-to-end service across all civil business types – increasing flexibility, efficiency and resilience. This will enable all case documentation to be submitted and viewed online; the tracking of case progress and receipt of notifications when new documents are available	Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Sustainable buildings and business Digital services Efficiency and best value
2.	We will ensure that civil business is effectively managed, evidence can be presented digitally and assisted digital support allows those services to be accessible to everyone by developing our court hearing technology to enable hybrid or fully virtual hearings in all appropriate cases	Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Sustainable buildings and business Digital services Efficiency and best value
3.	We will improve access to, and the transparency of, civil courts through the implementation of public video access or live streaming in appropriate hearings	Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Digital services Efficiency and best value
4.	We will support the Scottish Civil Justice Council and the Scottish Government by adapting our systems to deal with changes to transform the civil justice system in Scotland	Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Sustainable buildings and business Digital services Efficiency and best value

Annex E - Corporate Plan 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities

Tribunals and OPG reform		
To provide high quality access to administrative justice for Tribunals users and protection for vulnerable people and their families through the power of attorney and guardianship systems - by developing efficient, fair, user-friendly and responsive services		Strategic priority alignment
1.	We will continue to manage the expansion of the Scottish Tribunals to create a responsive, efficient and fair system that makes best use of technology, judicial and staff resources	Well supported judiciary Efficiency and best value Purposeful collaboration
2.	We will improve access to the specialist jurisdictions across Scotland's devolved tribunals by establishing a hearings strategy that makes best use of digital case management, in-person and virtual proceedings	Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Digital services Efficiency and best value
3.	We will provide a platform for transforming and modernising the Office of the Public Guardian by launching a new case management system that will improve accessibility, efficiency and resilience, and help reduce backlogs and delays	Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Digital services Efficiency and best value
4.	We will develop and implement a strategy for OPG/AoC to enhance its public role in increasing the protection available to those with incapacity, promoting greater take-up of PoAs, improved investigations and proactively supporting improvements to the legislative framework	Well supported judiciary Efficiency and best value Purposeful collaboration

Corporate reform		
To give our people the systems, processes, facilities and skills to deliver the best possible service, allowing justice to be done fairly, effectively and efficiently		Strategic priority alignment
1.	We will enable our people to focus on higher quality work and provide improved service by upgrading our core systems and ways of working in finance and HR, automating recurring tasks, improving intelligence and compliance	Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people Digital services Efficiency and best value
2.	We will continue to invest in the skills, wellbeing and talent of our people to improve knowledge and creativity by modernising our systems to ensure our people can access information and learning required to support their day to day work, supporting new ways of working, and sustaining a diverse, talented, trauma-informed workforce	Well supported judiciary Satisfied service users Skilled and motivated people
3.	We will enable the public and staff to securely access services when and where they want – conducting cash-free, paper-free transactions by enhancing our web presence and the range of services available through it, as online access to our services continues	Satisfied service users Sustainable buildings and business Digital services Efficiency and best value
4.	We will develop detailed plans to reduce our carbon footprint to address the challenging reduction targets set for the public sector – assessing how our business model could achieve net-zero by 2045, whilst investing in our facilities and supporting all who use them to make low carbon choices	Sustainable buildings and business Digital services Efficiency and best value Purposeful collaboration

Annex F - Summary of key performance indicators

Performance against the KPI measures is monitored quarterly by the SCTS Board, using its Performance Scorecard published on our website, assessing a range of measures relating to delivery of our seven Strategic Priorities. These are summarised below.

1. A well supported judiciary

- 1a Judicial satisfaction levels (Assessment of most recent judicial attitudes survey plus qualitative assessment by SCTS Executive Team)

2. Satisfied service users

- 2a User satisfaction levels (based on quantitative survey and assessment data, including SCTS Court User Survey Data)
- 2b Percentage of summary criminal cases disposed of within twenty-six weeks (based on official justice system statistics)

3. Skilled and motivated people

- 3a Employee engagement levels (based on staff turnover, absence levels, complaints and grievance monitoring and survey data)
- 3b Delivery of development activities (based on proportion of staff who have engaged in and completed key learning and development activities)

4. Sustainable buildings and business

- 4a Maintaining the estate (assessment of investment levels to ensure backlog maintenance is being managed effectively)
- 4b Sustainability and carbon reduction (assessment of the extent to which the organisation is meeting agreed carbon reduction targets)

5. Digital services

- 5a Automated and online transactions (assessment of the proportion of online fines transactions and payments made via automated systems)
- 5b IT resilience and service (assessment of the resilience of core SCTS systems available for use when required)

6. Efficiency and best value

- 6a High Court business recovery (assessment of measures aligned to [COVID-19 Criminal Court Recovery Modelling](#))
- 6b Sheriff Court solemn business recovery (assessment of measures aligned to Sheriff solemn [COVID-19 Criminal Court Recovery Modelling](#))
- 6c Sheriff court summary business recovery (assessment of measures aligned to Sheriff summary [COVID-19 Criminal Court Recovery Modelling](#))
- 6d Justice of the Peace Court business recovery (assessment of three operational indicator aligned to business recovery)
- 6e Civil and miscellaneous business waiting times (assessment of 10 indicators measuring waiting times for civil and appellate business and guardianship orders administered by Office of the Public Guardian)
- 6f Effective Tribunals Operations (assessment of 21 key operational indicators measuring effective administration)
- 6g Delivering on our change programme (assessment of the delivery status on progress the SCTS is making towards meeting its outcomes)

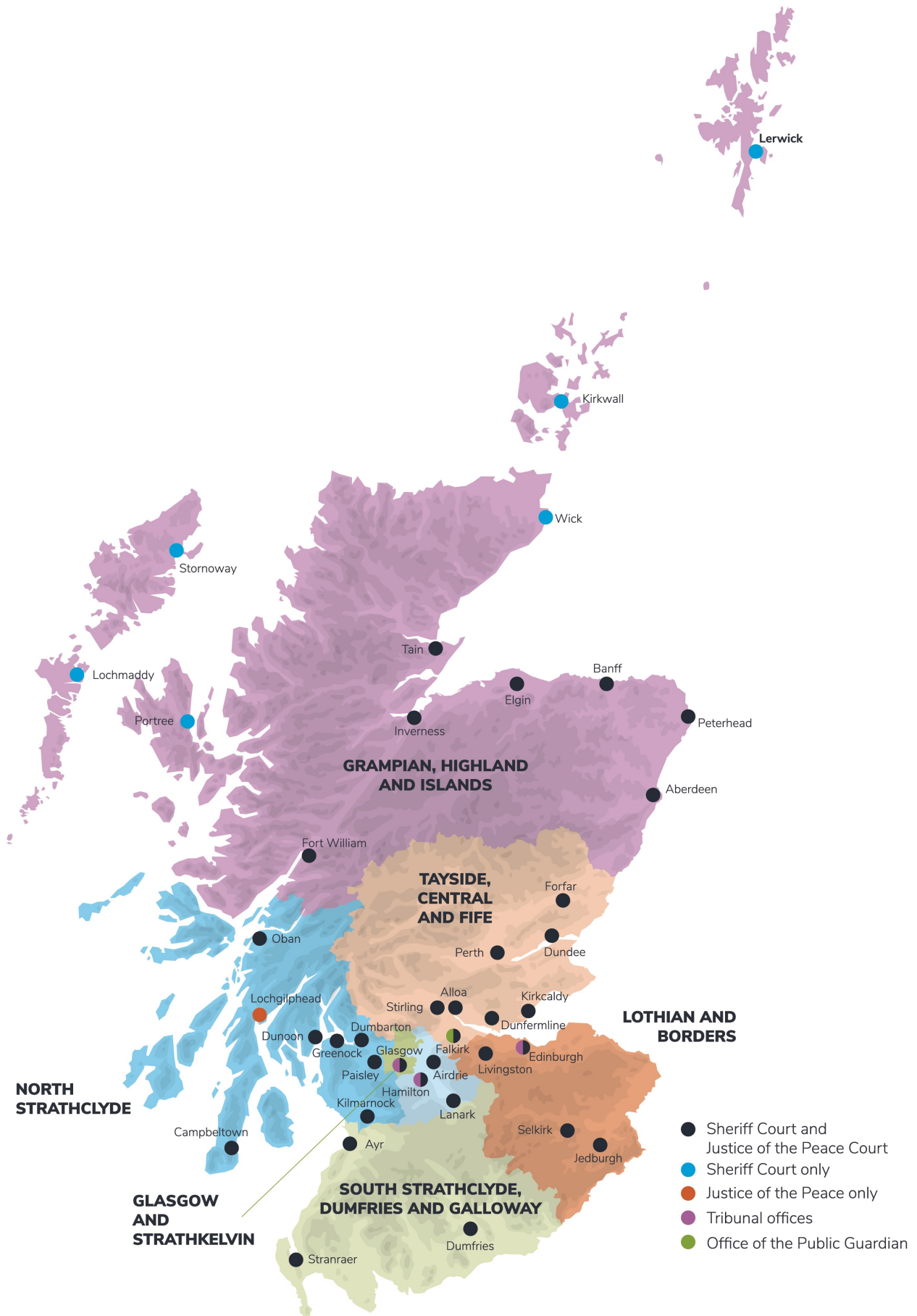
7. Purposeful collaboration

- 7a Sufficient and effective collaboration (analysis of the overall quality and quantity of collaboration between the SCTS and key partner agencies)

8. Financial indicators

- 8a Expenditure profile (comparison of actual expenditure with profiled expenditure to the year end to ensure robust budgeting)
- 8b Fines and fees income (comparison of actual fines and fees income received with profiled income to the year end to ensure robust profiling)

Annex G - Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service locations



Further information

SCTS website

www.scotcourts.gov.uk

SCTS Reports and Data

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/reports-data

SCTS Board

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/the-scottish-court-service-board

Office of the Public Guardian

www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk

Scottish Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/about-scottish-tribunals>

Other Courts and Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/other-courts-and-tribunals>

Judicial Office for Scotland

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/judicial-office-for-scotland

Scottish Government

<http://www.gov.scot>

Scottish Civil Justice Council

www.scottishciviljusticecouncil.gov.uk

Scottish Sentencing Council

<https://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk>

Justice Strategy for Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/vision-justice-scotland/>

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