

# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service



**2024-2027**

April 2024

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

---



**Rt. Hon. Lord Carloway, Lord President  
SCTS Board Chairman**

I am pleased to introduce the new Sustainability Strategy for the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service. This Strategy sets out how our work to support justice can be done in a way that uses our resources most efficiently and makes a substantial contribution to tackling climate change and to protecting Scotland's environment.

SCTS recognises and welcomes the critical leadership role that public sector bodies must take in reducing emissions and meeting the challenge of climate change. The SCTS Board has committed to becoming a net zero organisation by 2045, to meet our statutory obligations. We have appointed champions at both Board and executive team level to lead our work on sustainability.

SCTS has already made good progress in reducing emissions. The improvements we have made to the built estate, including the installation of solar panels and LED lighting, have helped make significant reductions. But there is more to do. Courts and tribunals business is delivered from a range of locations across Scotland, often from historic and listed buildings. This makes sustained progress towards the net zero target significantly challenging. Recognising the challenges, this strategy refocuses our efforts on net zero and identifies further opportunities to improve our overall environmental performance. It recognises the threat posed by the effects of climate change and sets out requirements to ensure that our service is resilient in the face of this threat.

Our work to deliver the goals which are set out in this strategy will be underpinned by our values of respect, service and excellence. These highlight the importance of working together, learning and innovation. We will only succeed if we all play our part in making sustainability part of the core business across the organisation. Staff throughout SCTS will be encouraged and empowered to identify opportunities, support each other, share successes and learn from others.

Our purpose is supporting justice. This strategy will help to ensure that we do this in the most sustainable way possible.

## INTRODUCTION

---

### Sustainable development

Sustainable development was described by the Brundtland Commission in 1987<sup>1</sup> as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, and decades of work since then have led to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Scotland committed to the SDGs in 2015 and the [National Performance Framework](#) shares the same aims as the SDGs “*to encourage transformational social, economic and environmental change to achieve increased wellbeing and a more peaceful and prosperous future, recognising our assets and their relevance to future generations as well as our use and distribution of resources*”<sup>2</sup>

### Climate emergency

Scotland declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set more stretching targets for [net zero](#), recognising the impacts to society, livelihoods and economies from the warming already experienced and that to come. The Scottish Government has prioritised a just transition; getting to a net zero and climate resilient economy in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice. This makes net zero a key element of our sustainability journey at the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS).

### The role of SCTS

At SCTS our purpose, values and behaviours support many of the social elements of sustainability and will support this just transition. We have made excellent progress in reducing our emissions but there is more to be done and we recognise that there are improvements to be made in the way we communicate and coordinate sustainability activities across the organisation. In addition, sustainable development is about the future and we must ensure that our function is resilient in the face of future change whether financial, climatic or the way that we work.

Sustainability is a strategic priority identified in the SCTS Corporate Plan for 2023-2026.

Strategic Priority 4: 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”*

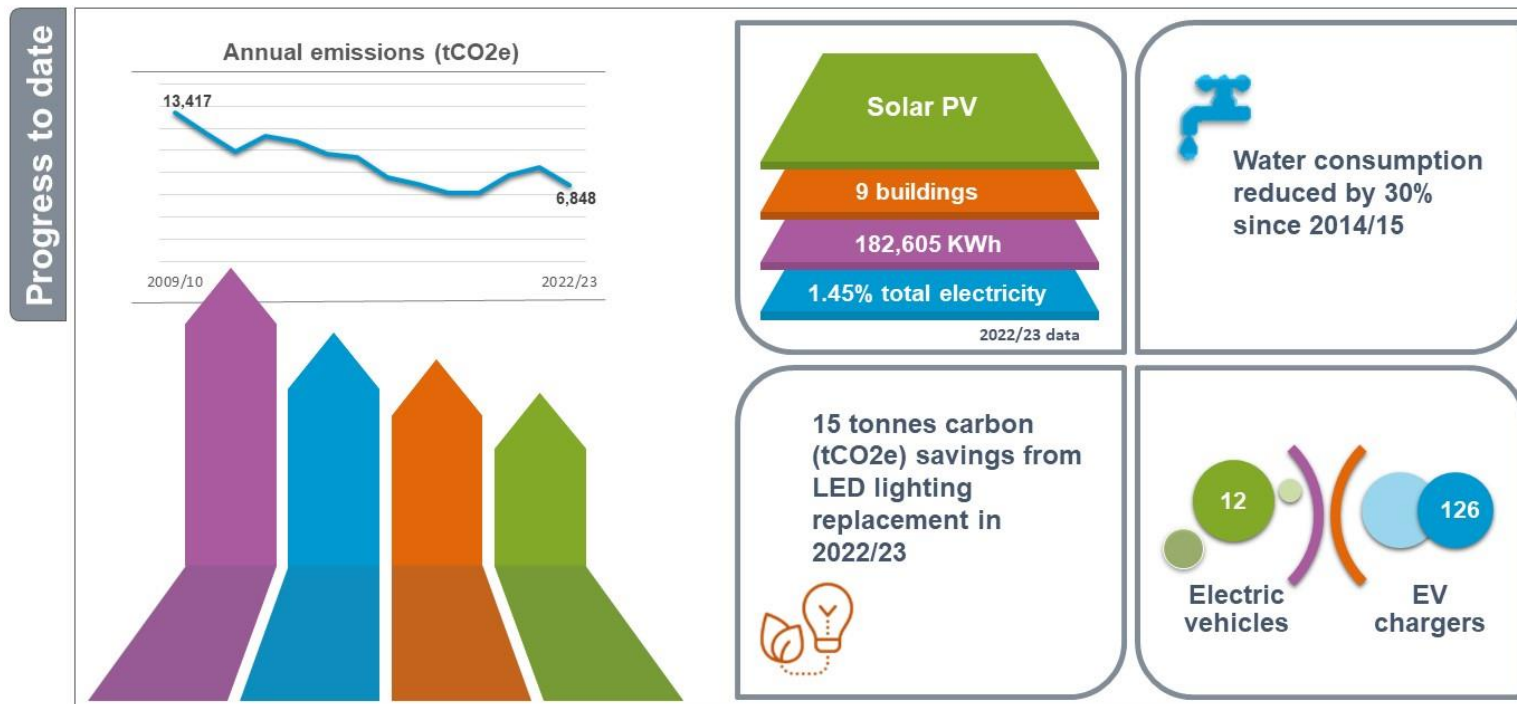
---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (1987). Report of the world commission on environment and development: Our common future. Oslo, Norway: United Nations General Assembly, Development and International Co-operation: Environment

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government (2020) [Scotland and the Sustainable Development Goals](#): A national review to drive action.

## WHERE WE ARE

Over the past decade SCTS has had a good track record on carbon reduction, based around the carbon management plan that was set in 2010 (when SCTS became a non-ministerial office). Between 2010-11 and 2017-18 we achieved 5% year on year reductions in our consumption of gas and electricity. Recognising that this was becoming increasingly challenging the Board re-set the target to 2.5% from 2018-19. This remains the target reviewed quarterly in the SCTS Board Scorecard (indicator 4b). Good progress was made in relation to the revised target until the onset of the pandemic – which led to increased ventilation and associated heating costs.



The Board scorecard for Q2 2023-24 notes that we are continuing to exceed the annual reduction target, and are currently 14% ahead of the target. Much of this progress relates to work done on our estate and, in response to a changing policy environment and the challenge of the transition to net zero, it is time to further embed sustainability across the organisation.

# VISION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AT SCTS



*We will use available resources responsibly and embed sustainable practices in all our activities in order to support justice and achieve our net zero ambition.*

Our vision recognises that sustainability cuts across most of our strategic priorities and hence across many areas of the business.

Existing strategies across the business have identified related priorities and the importance of working together to address these priorities has been addressed within the goals of this strategy.

## OUR GOALS

---

We have identified four main goals. Goals 1 and 2 will be the main means by which we collect the data to measure our progress. Goal 3 is essential to embedding sustainability across the organisation. Goal 4 allows us to plan for the future.

- 1 To continue our progress on the path to net zero direct emissions by 2045.
- 2 To be a resource efficient organisation, reducing spend and waste and maximising recycling.
- 3 To communicate, engage, learn and contribute together.
- 4 To future proof our delivery of services through our efficient and resilient estate and digital technologies.

## How we will meet Goal 1

To continue our progress on the path to net zero direct emissions by 2045

Scotland is committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by:

- 75% by 2030
- 90% by 2040
- net zero by 2045

The SCTS Board has agreed the 2045 target date for net zero.

Additional interim targets are:

- zero direct emissions from buildings by 2038
- reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030
- reducing transport carbon emissions by 56% by 2030
- phasing out petrol and diesel cars and new petrol or diesel light commercial vehicles in public bodies by 2025
- phasing out new petrol or diesel vehicles in public sector fleets by 2030

Public bodies are expected to show leadership in reducing emissions quickly and to align with the 2045 target we should aim to meet the interim targets.

**We will:**

### **1.1 Improve the level at which carbon management is embedded within our activities. We will do this by:**

- Reviewing our existing strategies, plans and policies and developing a programme of action to address outstanding issues and improvements
- Reviewing our current target of a reduction in emissions by 2.5% per year
- Embedding carbon and net zero considerations into our decision making processes
- Understanding the carbon impacts of our digital transition
- Working in partnership with key suppliers to identify further opportunities for carbon reduction

### **1.2 Reduce our consumption of energy, seeking out innovative solutions where possible. We will do this by:**

- Creating a pipeline of projects
- Understanding the energy and emission savings associated with projects in the pipeline
- Applying for grant funding where available to help cover the costs of delivery
- Researching and understanding new technologies and the role they can play
- Promoting behaviour change to reduce energy demand

### **1.3 Generate our own energy, seeking out innovative solutions where possible. We will do this by:**

- Creating a pipeline of projects
- Understanding the energy and emission savings associated with projects in the pipeline
- Applying for grant funding where available to help cover the costs of delivery
- Researching and understanding new technologies and the role they can play

### **1.4 Reduce our emissions from business travel and employee commuting in order to meet transport sector milestones. We will do this by:**

- Improving the collection of business travel data
- Using our business travel data to inform our policies and decision making
- Investigating how to improve active travel provision at our sites
- Promoting sustainable and active travel

## How we will meet Goal 2

To be a resource efficient organisation, reducing spend and waste and maximising recycling

The Scottish Government's ambition is to make Scotland a zero waste society with a circular economy – minimising waste, maximising resource efficiency and keeping materials and products in circulation for as long as possible.

This has the benefits of saving money and reducing emissions.

A resource which is often overlooked in terms of efficiency is water. Saving water reduces emissions from purification and supply as well as in the treatment and disposal of waste water. Saving hot water further reduces emissions in heating the water.

Paper use has also been identified as a resource with significant opportunities for reduced consumption.

### We will:

#### 2.1 Implement a water management programme. We will do this by:

- Continuing to use our water consumption data to understand our water usage, identifying high water use and potential leakage and continuing to act quickly on leakage
- Identifying opportunities for water efficiencies
- Developing a pipeline of water efficiency projects

#### 2.2 Seek further opportunities to minimise the waste we produce and maximize our recycling. We will do this by:

- Undertaking waste audits to understand behaviour
- Improving the information we provide in relation to waste and recycling
- Analysing our waste and recycling data to understand where further actions can be taken
- Working through our procurement function to drive further efficiencies

#### 2.3 Seek opportunities to reduce our use of paper. We will do this by:

- Promoting the benefits presented by digital services
- Understanding where further digital support is required for a switch from paper-based processes

#### 2.4 Seek opportunities to reduce waste through our purchasing decisions. We will do this by:

- Examining our purchasing decisions from the perspective of whether to buy – what to buy – how to buy – how much to buy
- Ensuring our procurement decisions support the move to a circular economy



## How we will meet Goal 3

To communicate, engage, learn and contribute together

We will only achieve our net zero and waste targets by working together.

For the organisation this means recognising the cross-cutting nature of sustainability and inspiring our staff to use their roles to help us succeed.

We also need to work with others in order to learn from them and to seek out shared opportunities.

There is an opportunity to leverage our £70+m external expenditure to further our sustainability aims.

We should be clear in our communication about our commitment to sustainability and action on climate change.

### We will:

- 3.1 Expand channels of communication internal and external to the organisation. We will do this by:**
  - Developing a sustainability communication and engagement plan
- 3.2 Work in partnership across the organisation to embed sustainability into our ways of working. We will do this by:**
  - Introducing sustainability into staff induction
  - Introducing climate or environmental e-learning for staff
  - Ensuring all areas of the business are aligned to our sustainability goals
- 3.3 Collaborate with partners external to the organisation. We will do this by:**
  - Learning from others and sharing our learning with others
  - Working with our suppliers, service providers and service users to advance our sustainability aims
  - Supporting our smaller local suppliers to meet sustainability requirements.
- 3.4 Increase staff involvement in sustainability activities. We will do this by:**
  - Implementing a programme of engagement with staff
  - Seeking staff sustainability champions

## How we will meet Goal 4

To future proof our delivery of services through our efficient and resilient estate and digital technologies

Sustainability is inherently about the future. To continue supporting justice into the future will involve planning for what the future may bring and ensuring that our legacy is not a burden on our successors. We are preparing our service for the future through our digital rollout and we should understand the impacts of a changing climate on both this and our estate, for example, in terms of increasing temperatures and other adverse weather which could cause increasing costs and disruption. We recognise the importance of our business continuity planning in ensuring our services are resilient.

The statutory climate change reporting requirements include a provision for public bodies to report on how they are contributing to national objectives for climate change adaptation and resilience as set out in the current five-yearly Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP). Our target is to show progress on our contribution.

### We will:

#### **4.1 Improve the resilience of our built estate. We will do this by:**

- Understanding weather risks and vulnerabilities to the estate
- Developing a forward maintenance plan
- Considering changing climatic factors when undertaking upgrades to our estate

#### **4.2 Ensure that a future focus is included in all long term decision making.**

#### **4.3 Seek to understand the financial risks associated with weather and climate related hazards including impacts on supply chains, product costs, energy costs and emissions, insurance and disruption.**

#### **4.4 Consider how we can place sustainability at the centre of our planning around future ways of working.**

## HOW THE STRATEGY WILL BE DELIVERED

---

### Development of action plans

These will address in more detail how the key tasks identified for each goal will be undertaken, with milestones and responsibilities. Analysis will be based on available data. Where data is insufficient, data improvements will be identified as part of the action plans.

### Measurement and metrics

Success of the strategy will be measured by tracking our progress against net zero emissions targets including:

- Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>e (emissions)
- Increase in energy generation
- Reduction in waste to landfill
- Increase in materials recycled
- Reduction in water use

Additional metrics will developed and agreed when more detailed action plans are developed, along with appropriate tracking.

## GOVERNANCE/REPORTING/REVIEW

---

Metrics for carbon, energy and water are tracked on a monthly basis through reports submitted by the Facilities Management contractor, a sustainability report is submitted to the Estates Committee, and a quarterly KPI report is submitted to the SCTS Board via the SCTS Board Scorecard. Annual reports of emissions are submitted for the Scottish Public Bodies Duty Climate Change Reporting requirement.

Plans, projects or proposals will be communicated via the appropriate governance forums. SCTS has signed up to the Achilles carbon reduction programme. Should this identify the need for additional governance and reporting arrangements, these will be addressed as part of the programme.