

SCTS Business Plan Delivery Report 2020-21 – End Year Position

OUTCOMES		Delivery Date	Status (RAG)	Progress as at end of 2020-21 Business Year	Commentary
1. A Well Supported Judiciary (WSJ)	WSJ: O1 We will fulfil our purpose of supporting justice by managing an effective response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic , delivering the effective and efficient administration of Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian, using the SCTS Board Scorecard metrics to monitor performance .	Through 20-21 (reports quarterly)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board Scorecard for 2020-21 outlining quarterly performance against the agreed Key Performance Indicators for the organisation is published on the SCTS Board page on the SCTS website: http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/the-scottish-court-service-board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scorecard was presented to the SCTS Board quarterly, with KPIs reviewed annually.
	WSJ: O2 We will support the judiciary through the significant change to remote and virtual delivery of court and tribunal business necessitated by COVID-19, providing the systems, processes and resources required to manage business in new ways.	Ongoing to 2021	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solemn trials resumed in July 2020 with jurors located at new remote jury centres based in cinemas, increasing court capacity aimed at tackling backlogs. By February 2021, High Court and Sheriff Court solemn trial business were operating at pre-COVID levels. Since mid-2020, the majority of Supreme Courts business has been operating <u>virtually</u> with the roll-out of Sheriff Court civil <u>virtual hearings</u> from November 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete for the year. Work will continue to improve digital systems and processes, supported by the first phase of a multi-year <u>court recovery programme</u>, published in March, to reduce backlogs in 2021-22.
	WSJ: O3 We will respond to the changing nature of business faced by the criminal courts by supporting the development and implementation of recommendations arising from the Lord Justice Clerk's review of the management of sexual offence cases .	Dec 20	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cross-justice review group, chaired by the Lord Justice Clerk, examined the prosecution of sexual offences, with a final <u>report</u> published on 18 March. Recommendations include creating a new national specialist court to deal with serious sexual offences, with the presumption of pre-recorded evidence and trauma-informed procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete for the year. Implementation of the recommendations will be taken forward in 2021-22.
	WSJ: O4 We will support the operation and evaluation of pilots in Dundee, Hamilton and Paisley which will assess the benefits of new approaches to dealing with summary criminal business – involving stronger judicial case management and earlier engagement with the parties.	Throughout 20-21	Part Delivered – completion in 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final pilots were suspended due to COVID-19 (2021 lockdown), but the initial Strathclyde pilot led to the publication of <u>Practice Note 4 of 2020</u> on 11 November. It helps to reduce summary case backlogs by establishing pre-intermediate diet meetings (PIDMs) between the prosecution and defence ahead of trials – resolving cases earlier, with only fully-prepared cases proceeding to trial. During the pilot around 80% of cases resolved early, with many fewer proceeding to trial. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-justice work will continue to improve effectiveness and compliance with the Practice Note – as a greater proportion of summary business returns to courts. Summary criminal business is due to resume from 19 April with trial courts returning to pre-January lockdown loadings. Justice of the Peace courts are due to reopen to conduct criminal hearings on 7 June 2021.

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2. Satisfied Service Users	SCU: O1 We will maintain high service standards across the organisation using the Customer Service Excellence assessment programme to verify those standards and ensure that we build on best practice.	Dec 2021 (re-profiled from Nov)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer service has remained a priority whilst ensuring service users feel safe and supported when accessing the justice system during the pandemic. Due to COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions, established face-to-face CSE assessments were not viable, but new remote COVID-safe services were evaluated to ensure they were fit-for-purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete to the extent possible this year. The SCTS Business Plan 2021-22 commits to exploring new approaches to measuring service user satisfaction in the year ahead.
	SCU: O2 We will continue to focus on the service we provide to victims and witnesses by supporting the work of the Victims' Taskforce and by reviewing and developing our published service standards, to ensure they are being met and to make further improvements where possible.	Mar 21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service standards for victims and witnesses were reviewed in collaboration with justice and third sector partners. Multi-agency collaboration informed SCTS' focus on the most vulnerable during the pandemic. Increased use of remote video evidence plus new enhanced suites in key locations has improved the experience for victims and witnesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. SCTS continues supporting partners through the production of the Joint Annual Report on Standards of Services for Victims and Witnesses – the draft report was finalised in early 2021 and will be published in May 2021.
	SCU: O3 We will improve the ability of our staff to support vulnerable users by conducting an audit of current trauma awareness levels, developing resources and training on trauma awareness and support.	Feb 21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial survey of trauma awareness, skills levels and the identified need for trauma-skilled individuals was completed – results inform wider work by the victims' taskforce on developing a trauma informed workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. SCTS expects to adopt the framework in its Trauma-informed Workforce Policy and Strategy, maintaining vital support to staff.
	SCU: O4 We will develop and pilot a new digital expense payment system, providing a faster, more secure and efficient approach to pay expenses to a range of court and tribunal users.	Apr 2021 (re-profiled from Feb)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new single cloud-based Digital Expenses Payment System (DEPS) was developed, underpinned by extensive user research, with a deployment plan signed-off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. A phased roll-out from June 2021 will fundamentally transform the current system by providing an effective, fast and simple digital payment system for jurors and tribunals users.

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3. Skilled & Motivated People	SMP: O1 We will design and implement the first phase of our new People Information System , replacing legacy HR and payroll systems with a flexible, cloud-based solution.	Feb 21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New cloud-based system (phase 1) launched in November 2020 – successfully supporting salary payments and expense claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. Phase two, introducing a new recruitment model, will be delivered through 2021-22.
	SMP: O2 We will provide staff with the resources, advice and support to maximise home-working for all appropriate roles – reducing the need for staff to travel or attend the workplace where work can be carried out effectively on a remote basis.	Oct 20	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around 1,100 new laptops were deployed supporting up to 700 remote workers concurrently coupled with the provision of home office furniture. Over 30% of staff continue to work from home daily, supported by new video and collaboration tools. Wellbeing intranet Hub is maintained with a new staff mental health awareness initiative progressing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. Revised flexible working/homeworking policy is being finalised to support staff transition to a longer-term hybrid office and homeworking business model.
	SMP: O3 We will update our technical and professional learning programmes so that they can be fully delivered on-line – allowing training to take place at the right time, with the right people and during COVID-19 restrictions.	Oct 20	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Leaders Now and for the Future’ (LNF) development programme and the ‘First Line Leaders’ training initiative were both completed, virtually, during the pandemic. New online training developed – including bite-size “espresso leadership sessions” for all managers and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. Work continues to develop professional and technical skills utilising virtual solutions.
	SMP: O4 We will develop and introduce a range of remotely accessible training tools , resources and support to ensure that staff have the skills and confidence to deliver court and tribunal hearings digitally .	Dec 20	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 40 internal guidance documents covering virtual hearings and 10 external guides have been introduced to support staff with new virtual / remote business delivery. Weekly “digital clerking” training since June 2020 has helped over 300 clerks to learn new digital skills required for new ways of working during & beyond the pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete.

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4. Sustainable Buildings and Business	SBB: O1 We will retain our position as a leading public sector organisation in sustainability by retaining Carbon Trust Triple standard accreditation and meeting our demanding carbon reduction targets.	Ongoing to March 2021 (monitored quarterly)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon reduction target met for the year despite COVID-19 measures requiring air-conditioning systems to perform at 100% fresh air, which impacted costs and performance against short-term targets. Emissions were 11% below the 2016-17 baseline. Half of SCTS' vehicle fleet has been upgraded to electric. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. Investment in achieving a carbon neutral estate by 2045 will be informed by a revised business case for estates backlog maintenance. Various sustainability projects are ongoing with other bids submitted to Scottish Government's Low Carbon Fund.
	SBB: O2 We will develop proposals for future investment in the courts and tribunals estate to support the Scottish Government's planned capital spending review.	Through-out 2020-21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspension of construction activities during lockdown reduced planned development investments. However, over £750,000 was invested in estate adaptations to meet Public Health standards including physical distancing and contact tracing – ensuring SCTS buildings operated in a COVID-safe way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete for this year. Revised investment plans will be developed and submitted to Scottish Government in 2021-22, once capital and operational plans are finalised.
	SBB: O3 We will continue to invest in our estate to address backlog maintenance ensuring that our historic buildings provide a safe, secure and suitable environment in which to deliver business.	Ongoing to March 2021 (monitored quarterly)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over £6.5 million was assigned to address backlog maintenance in-year – exceeding the annual target set. Business case commissioned to update backlog maintenance costs including costs for refurbishments and achieving carbon neutral buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete.
	SBB: O4 We will explore the potential to rationalise the court and tribunal estate in Edinburgh to improve efficiency, sustainability and collaboration – developing a proposal to inform future investment.	Ongoing in 2021 (re-profiled from Feb)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft business case for future estate rationalisation was developed and appraised – initial indications suggest substantial potential savings over the longer term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. Future development and investment plans will be brought forward in 2021-22.

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5. Digital Services	DS: O1 We will introduce a new case management system in the Court of Session, commencing with personal injury cases, replacing end of life systems and providing improved analytics and resilience.	Feb 21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First release of the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) for Court of Session went live on 22 September. Supporting new personal injury actions, the system allows electronic submission of papers – acting as the first step towards full digitalisation of case management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. Further ICMS releases will be rolled-out as part of longer-term system digitisation.
	DS: O2 We will improve case management systems in the Office of the Public Guardian and devolved tribunals, re-platforming the current OPG system and scoping the development of new systems that will support online submission and end-to-end digital case management.	Jan 21	Part Delivered - completion in 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to ensure the upgrade of OPG case management systems was secured from the Scottish Government in July 2020, with scoping work completed. A tender process is on schedule with a vendor appointment expected by late spring or summer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete for the year. Work will continue through 2021-22 to improve case management systems.
	DS: O3 We will maintain investment in our core digital infrastructure – realising the benefits from the introduction of Windows 10, adding video conferencing to our unified communications system and maintaining our ability to share information securely – benchmarking against the “Cyber Essentials Plus” accreditation.	Dec 20	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital infrastructure investment accelerated during COVID-19. A range of digital video conferencing and telephone solutions are embedded to maximise virtual / remote trials, hearings or meetings etc. Dedicated cyber security specialists are progressing a continuous improvement plan linked to the National Scottish Cyber Resilience Framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete – with Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation sought by September 2021.
	DS: O4 We will work in partnership with the Crown, legal profession and 3 rd sector to extend the use of virtual hearings in appropriate cases – ensuring that the technology is in place to support high quality hearings, maintaining capacity whilst reducing the number of people required to appear in person.	Ongoing to Mar 21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of civil and tribunal business is being conducted remotely via WebEx and tele-conferencing marking a significant change in operations over the past year. Virtual summary trial pilots were successful – validating the proof of concept and enabling wider roll-out beginning with domestic abuse cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete for the year. Work to develop and expand the appropriate use of virtual hearings will continue in 2021-22, in consultation with partners.

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6. Efficiency & Best Value	EVB: O1 We will develop a website strategy , setting out our approach to consolidating the existing multi-supplier SCTS web-presence.	2021 (re-profiled from Feb 21	Part Delivered – completion in 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial scoping of the range of websites and suppliers was completed, but progress has been delayed due to the need to target resources on COVID-19 communications and other digital investment priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing web platforms have been key to communicating COVID-19 response, with over 20 million unique hits over the course of the year. As recovery continues, capacity will be released to progress website migrations and redesign.
	EVB: O2 We will develop and implement a new Procurement Strategy – delivering £250k of efficiency savings through further improvements in practice.	Mar 21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Team exceeded this year's savings target (with final figure to be confirmed post-audit). Since 2019, contract savings exceeding £1.7m have been achieved against a £500k target. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. SCTS' Procurement Team were awarded a 'Highly Commended' rating at Scotland's leading public sector procurement excellence awards.
	EVB: O3 We will recommence solemn criminal trials , scaling up capacity through the establishment of remote jury centres that support physical distancing requirements and piloting remote jury balloting to reduce the need for large numbers of potential jurors to attend court.	Dec 20	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £28.7m of the SG's £50m justice system recovery fund secured to support continued operation of remote High Court and Sheriff Court jury centres in 2021-22. Solemn trial capacity is now fully restored in both the High Court and Sheriff courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. From September 2021, the first phase of a multi-year court recovery programme will see the expansion of remote jury centres plus increased high court and sheriff court capacity (see WSJ:02).
	EVB: O4 We will continue to manage criminal business levels effectively – using the resources available to achieve the target optimum period between first calling and trial diet of 16 weeks in summary business and 8-10 weeks in domestic abuse cases wherever possible.	Ongoing to March 21 (monitored quarterly)	Complete – work ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst normal court programming resumed to a significant extent in late 2020, trials needed to be scheduled in reduced numbers to support physical distancing – leading to increased backlogs with "normal" target timescales not met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waiting times and KPIs will continue being monitored and appraised by the SCTS Board on a quarterly basis. Additional capacity to support recovery towards normal business levels will commence from September, but this will be a multi-year exercise.

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7. Purposeful Collaboration	CJB: O1 We will support the work of the Justice Board for Scotland and Scotland's six local criminal justice boards, working collaboratively to manage the response and recovery from COVID-19.	Board Meetings throughout 20-21	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close work with the Criminal Justice Board maintained a strong focus on COVID-19 response and recovery priorities, such as: solemn trials; custody management; virtual trials; community justice and prison population; and vulnerable witnesses – with essential business being maintained whenever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCTS continues to support the detailed work directed by the Criminal Justice Board plus partners and service users to ensure a system-wide approach to recovery and renewal – this includes ongoing engagement with legal professions and the 3rd sector.
	CJB: O2 We will, at the appropriate time, conduct a full debrief and lessons learned exercise from the COVID-19 pandemic , sharing this with our partners across the justice system.	Throughout 2020-21	Part delivered – will be complete in 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit provided SCTS an “exemplary” rating for its response to COVID-19. Internal ‘lessons learned’ exercise is progressing to shape future recovery work in collaboration with key agencies and partners. Completion of outcome deferred to next year as the pandemic is ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A robust and inclusive lessons learned exercise will be completed at the appropriate time in 2021-22.
	CJB: O3 We will provide administrative support to the Scottish Civil Justice Council and Scottish Sentencing Council so that they can deliver their distinct work programmes to a high standard.	Ongoing (detailed priorities in SSC & SCJC Plans)	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Councils’ work was limited due to COVID-19. SCJC approved rule changes to simple procedure mandating online submission claims via Civil Online. SSC published two related research reports on sentencing of rape and offences involving sexual assaults in Scotland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. The SSC and SCJC publish more detailed business plans and reports – these are available at: https://www.scottishciviljusticecouncil.gov.uk/ https://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk/
	CJB: O4 We will continue to work with the Scottish Government and other justice partners to oversee transitional arrangements to manage the impact of Brexit , ensuring rules of court are amended where necessary and that any operational impacts on the justice system are minimised.	Quarterly review by SCTS Brexit transition working groups	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive preparations made ahead of COVID-19 ensured the SCTS was well-placed to manage the relatively limited impacts of Brexit on the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome complete. The potential remains for legal issues or challenges to arise in future, as new cases enter the justice system – these will be addressed where necessary.

RAG Colour Status

Green – Outcome on track. **Amber** – Board to be aware - progress has not proceeded as originally planned - issue being managed by the Executive.

Red – Board to consider - may require intervention or decision. **White** – Not yet started. **Blue** – Complete.

Note – where items are marked as red or amber a short assessment of any broader impact and/or any issues that the Board needs to consider is provided.