



# MINUTES

## SCS ESTATES, HEALTH, SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2013, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, EDINBURGH

### Present:

Sheriff Iona McDonald, Non-Executive Member, SCS Board (Chair)  
Trevor Warne, Non-Executive Member  
John Mark Di Ciacca, Non-Executive Member  
Norman Fiddes, Non-Executive Member  
Robert Milligan QC, Non-Executive Member, SCS Board (Items 9 - 12 only)

### Also Attended:

David Currie, Director Property and Services, SCS  
David Fraser, Director Operations Delivery, SCS  
Neil Cook, Chief Finance Officer, SCS  
Craig McCorkindale, Director Civil Courts Reform, SCS – (item 1 only)  
Margaret Peattie, Secretariat Business Manager, SCS (Minutes)  
Elaine Wilson, Secretariat, SCS

### Apologies:

Sheriff Principal Derek Pyle

## 1. Workshop Session

1.1 Before the formal agenda meeting, the Committee had a workshop session on justice reforms and the likely impact on estates. The Chair welcomed Craig McCorkindale, Director Civil Courts Reform, who would lead the session.

1.2 The Committee received a presentation outlining the programme of justice reforms going through Parliament, the likely timeframe for delivery of the aims and objectives and the vision for the SCS court estate over the next 10 years. This was followed by a discussion on the challenges in delivering a cost effective, proportionate, accessible and efficient court structure.

1.3 The Committee welcomed this opportunity to discuss the reform programme which gave context to the requirements for the court estate and set out the likely timeframe. In thanking Craig, the Chair asked that the Committee be kept informed of progress and any changes to the programme milestones. It was agreed that an update should be provided periodically with the next one to be submitted to the first meeting after the Courts Reform Bill passes stage 2 of its progress through the Scottish Parliament.

**Action: The Executive to provide the Committee with an update on the Courts Reform programme after the Bill passes stage 2 of its progress through Parliament.**

## **2. Minutes of the Meeting on 18 September 2013**

2.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

## **3. Matters Arising (including feedback from SCS Board)**

3.1 There were no matters arising and action points from the last meeting were cleared.

### ***Update on Estates Matters from the SCS Board***

3.2 The Chair reported on estates matters considered by the SCS Board at its meeting in October when it had re-allocated £1.3 m of the budget to the estates for backlog maintenance prioritised by the Committee and accepted the Committee's recommendations to approve the Business case for Aberdeen. The outcome of the spending review had seen the SCS forecast Capital budget increased by £3m in each of the next two years.

3.3 The Board had also considered the business case for a merger with the Scottish Tribunals Service had been reached and it was anticipated that the Scottish Government would make an announcement shortly.

## **4. Budget Report (SCS/EST/Nov13/18)**

4.1 The Committee received a report on budget performance to the end of October 2013. Estates projects were making good progress and there were no issues of concern that would impact on the delivery of allocated resources. It was noted that SCS was on track to deliver within forecast capital budget spend and would re-allocate on a priority basis where any variances arose.

## **5. Court Structures (SCS/EST/Nov13/19)**

5.1 The Committee received an oral update on Court Structure progress. The first phase of court closures was nearing completion and the Transitional Arrangement Group was confident that no unforeseen issues had emerged in local areas during the implementation. Video conferencing facilities had been put in place in those areas where courts were closing.

### ***Estates Disposal Strategy***

5.2 Proposals for the disposal of court buildings arising from implementation of the court structures programme were submitted for consideration. Buildings which were part-owned or owned by SCS would be disposed of as soon as practical after closure to achieve running cost savings and the Committee considered the options set out in the paper. For those properties which were leased, the Executive would terminate these in line with the terms of individual contracts.

5.3 Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** the proposals for the estates disposal strategy.

## **6. Estates Project RAG Report (SCS/EST/Nov13/20)**

6.1 The Project RAG report was reviewed. The Committee discussed whether this should be incorporated into the Budget Report but agreed that the current format of the report provided visibility on activity across the project portfolio. It was suggested that any new business plans should be added in when the report was being refreshed.

## 7. Gateway Review of Parliament House Project

7.1 The Committee heard that the final Gateway review had now been completed and that the project had been rated “Green” as it had been in two earlier reviews. In its report the review team had been complimentary about the project team’s management of this significant programme of work, which was phased over 5 years and carried out around the operation of a complex court building.

7.2 Improvements to environmental control had been put in place and it was agreed that it would be helpful to have an update on the overall impact on running costs that this had made after one year of operation. This would be submitted to the Committee when ready.

7.3 The Committee commended all involved in delivering this substantial project ahead of time and within budget and welcomed the positive outcome of the Gateway review.

## 8. New Business Cases (SCS/EST/Nov13/21)

8.1 A Business case for estates improvement at Forfar Sheriff Court was presented for discussion. The Committee considered the proposals to provide a long term solution for delivering optimal court services there and accommodate the staff and business from Arbroath. Funding was available in the current financial year and the Committee **approved** the business plan and allocated the required budget provision.

## 9. Strategic Review

9.1 The Committee heard that a proposal to restructure the Property & Services Unit had been passed to the SCS Executive Team for approval. If agreed, the restructure would provide an element of succession planning and career development for the team. The Executive would report to the Committee at its next meeting.

## 10. Committee’s Annual Report to the SCS Board (SCS/EST/Nov13/22)

10.1 The Committee considered the report and agreed that this should now be submitted to the SCS Board for consideration at its December meeting.

## 11. Committee Appraisal (SCS/EST/Nov13/23)

11.1 The summary of responses submitted by members was discussed. It had been suggested that the Project RAG report should be the first item on the Agenda to inform the discussion at Committee meetings. In discussion it was **agreed** that a summary of risks be presented in the form of a dashboard to enhance the information in the RAG report and a draft would be prepared for the next meeting.

11.2 It was also **agreed** that the Committee should be kept informed of any legislative changes impacting on estates matters as part of members continuing development. To that end the Chair invited external members visit to a court to see a court building in operation and the challenges of managing a diverse court estate.

***Action: Secretariat to liaise with members and arrange date for them to visit a court early next year.***

11.3 External members offered to input into discussions on strategy development outwith the context of formal meetings and the Executive would look for opportunities for this type of engagement.

## **12. Any Other Business**

### ***Committee Membership***

12.1 In closing, the Chair intimated that Robert Milligan would step down from the SCS Board at the end of the year and that this would be his last Estates Committee meeting. She thanked him for his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee since it was established in 2010.

12.2 The SCS Board carried out an annual review of its Committee structure in December and would consider who from among its members will succeed Robert on the Estates Committee as part of that review.

## **13. Date of the Next Meeting**

13.1 Tuesday 25 February 2014 at 3.00 pm in Parliament House.

Scottish Court Service  
November 2013