

MINUTES

SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING: Monday 27 October 2025 – Perth Sheriff Court

Members Present:

Sheriff Frank Gill, SCTS Board (Chair)
Dr David Caddick, SCTS Board
Alan Cormack, Non-Executive Member
Steven Dickson, SCTS Board
Alex Green, President of the General Regulatory Chamber, First-tier Tribunal for
Scotland, Non-Executive Member

Attended:

Malcolm Graham, Chief Executive Officer, SCTS
Del Kaiser, Head of Health, Safety and Security, SCTS
Kate Leer, Director of Property Services (PSU), SCTS
Craig Robertson, Head of PSU Finance and Governance, SCTS
Yvonne Taylor, Principal Clerk of Session and Judiciary, SCTS
Alice Wallace, Chief Finance Officer, SCTS
Thomas Robinson, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

Luke Broadbent, Non-Executive Member
Joe Lynch, Non-Executive Member

1. Declaration of Interests

1.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

2. Minutes of the Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2025 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Members welcomed Alex Green to the committee. Alex had succeeded May Dunsmuir as Tribunals Member of the Committee.

3.2 The Chair provided an overview of the discussions at the October SCTS Board meeting which had a bearing on matters relating to the Estates Committee. Members of the Board had welcomed the opportunity to visit Airdrie, Hamilton and Livingston Sheriff Courts ahead of the formal meeting.

4. Estates Strategy

4.1 Members reviewed and provided feedback on a substantial draft of the Estates Strategy 2026-31. The strategy would align to the SCTS Corporate Plan 2026-29.

4.2 Members welcomed the developing strategy and acknowledged the strategic priorities for the estate, which would support the SCTS in its activities.

5. Annual Report from the Health, Safety and Security Works Committee

5.1 The Health, Safety and Security Works Committee (HSSWC) Annual Report covering the period September 2024 to August 2025 reporting period was presented

5.2 The HSSWC comprises representatives from SCTS, justice partners and trade unions to support SCTS in providing a safe working environment for all.

5.3 Key activities over the previous year had included: work relating to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) at Airdrie Sheriff Court; monitoring of radon levels across the SCTS estate, and the Edinburgh Sheriff Court policing pilot. The HSSWC was also in the process of reviewing and considering SCTS's approach to the provision of Naloxone as a health and safety measure.

5.4 The Committee were assured that health, safety and security incidents reported to the HSSWC were fully investigated, and that any necessary actions were taken following the recording of the incidents on the Health and Safety portal. Members noted that consideration was being given to the procurement of a new incident management system that would facilitate reporting and follow-up actions. There was good CCTV coverage across the estate and an audit process for locations without coverage.

5.5 Members acknowledged the steps being taken in relation to judicial security and discussed the possible introduction of multi-modular online training that had been commended. The Executive would consider this as part of the judicial security activities for the future.

5.6 The Committee accepted the HSSWC's Annual Report and recorded its thanks for their work during the last year.

6. Draft Annual Report to the SCTS Board

6.1 Members reviewed their final draft annual report to the SCTS Board. Members agreed that the content of the draft accurately reflected both the work of the Committee during the 2024-25 reporting period and its priorities for the coming year.

6.2 The final report was approved and would be submitted to the SCTS Board in November, subject to any comments from absent members.

7. SCTS Estates Finance Report 2025-26

7.1 The total 2025-26 Estates budget had been finalised at £43.2m. SCTS's financial situation remained challenging. In September 2025, a priority-based system for maintenance had been implemented to ensure best use of available budget. Critical maintenance tasks, such as repairs relating to health and safety, would be prioritised.

7.2 Members scrutinised the report provided, which provided assurance on spend against the SCTS Estates budget for 2025-26 for delivered, planned and reactive maintenance and agreed capital and revenue projects. They welcomed the Executive's commitment to review available funding throughout the year to supplement the budget where possible. The Committee were satisfied that a list of identified projects was in place to utilise late in year available budget.

8. Capital Projects Update

8.1 The Committee received an update on the capital projects currently underway.

Capital Budget

8.2 The Executive had approved the 2025-26 Capital Programme of £10.9m, comprising strategic projects (£7m) and building fabric improvements (£3.8m). The Executive noted that capital forecasts were being tightly monitored.

Evidence by Commissioner Suites – Phase 2

8.3 The Evidence by Commissioner (EBC) provision in the Sheriffdom of South Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway at Birnie House was complete and would begin operations following the completion of training. Two EBC facilities in the Sheriffdom of North Strathclyde (at Kilmarnock and Paisley) were expected to be complete by the end of the financial year.

Glasgow Tribunals Centre

8.4 The Committee noted that the works within scope of the EBC suites reconfiguration at Glasgow Tribunals Centre were due to completed by the end of October 2025.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court

8.5 The Executive noted the progress that had been made in relation to the potential impact on Aberdeen Sheriff Court operations of the demolition of the former Police Headquarters building as part of the Aberdeen City Council (ACC) led regeneration plan, given the tight timescales to which ACC were working (works were due to begin in summer 2026).

8.6 The Committee noted that the Executive were considering the opportunities afforded by connecting to the Aberdeen District Heat Network (ADHN) and the potential for a reconfiguration and/or relocation of the plant room serving the SCTS Civil Annexe building.

8.7 Members discussed the possible benefits of connecting to the ADHN, including the potential associated energy efficiencies and positive impact on Net Zero ambitions. Members recognised the complexity of the legal and financial controls required to enable connection. The Executive gave assurances that everything possible was being done in partnership with Aberdeen City Council to achieve this to protect the SCTS's interest and the wider public benefit.

Parliament House, Edinburgh

8.8 The Committee noted that works on the accommodation at Parliament House, level -4, to accommodate Tribunals (principally the Health and Education and Mental Health Tribunal Chambers) were substantially complete subject to snagging. The facilities were anticipated to be operational during November 2025.

Edinburgh Sheriff Court, Level 6 – Tribunals

8.9 This project consisted of the reconfiguration of the existing open plan office space located on level 6 of Edinburgh Sheriff Court (ESC) to provide a suite of four new hearing rooms with associated consultation spaces, waiting rooms and chambers, as well as open offices for Tribunals colleagues. Works had commenced, and completion and occupation were scheduled for mid-2026.

Edinburgh Sheriff Court, Level 6 – Remote Jury Room

8.10 An area of level 6 of ESC was being developed into a remote jury facility to replace the provision currently located at the Odeon Cinema in Lothian Road, Edinburgh, which would

generate cost savings by bringing the facility onto the SCTS estate. Completion was currently scheduled for the end of February 2026.

8.11 The governance of SCTS capital projects was discussed, from initiation at the Executive Change Board to Board scrutiny and approval as part of the budget planning process.

8.12 The Committee welcomed the informative update on capital projects and thanked the Property and Services team for their hard work.

9. Radon Update

9.1 The Executive updated Members on the steps that had been taken following the detection of elevated levels of radon gas at the Inverness Justice Centre (IJC) and the latest situation across the wider SCTS estate.

9.2 Control measures were in place at the IJC to monitor and restrict the length of time that could be spent in areas with elevated levels of radon gas. These measures ensured that SCTS staff and building users were operating in a safe working environment. Further three-month monitoring was in progress, with the results expected by mid-January 2026.

9.3 Across the wider estate, monitoring in 21 sites located in geographical areas with the potential for higher radon levels and 19 sites with occupied basement areas was in progress. Results for eight of the sites with occupied basement areas had been received to date, all of which reported low, non-actionable radon levels. There was a plan in place to share the results of all monitoring activities with staff and stakeholders via each location's Sheriff Clerk and Sheriffdom Business Manager. Following the receipt of all results, the Executive would review them with the assistance of subject matter experts and agree actions to bring about any further necessary mitigations.

9.4 The Committee thanked the Executive for its in-depth update. Members would continue to be kept informed of any further developments.

10. Sustainability

10.1 The Executive provided an update on activity and progress against the Sustainability Action Plan since August 2025. Total carbon emissions had been reduced from 6,916 to 6,207 tCO_{2e}. SCTS had obtained Carbon Reduce certification for a second year, had conducted a survey of employees' commuting habits as part of its ambition to support active travel, and was in the process of surveying internal wate stations signage across the estate as part of a project to improve waste and recycling.

10.2 The Executive had developed a series of staff engagement news articles as part of Scotland's Climate Week 2025, which was well received.

10.3 Members welcomed the continued action being taken in relation to the SCTS Sustainability Action Plan.

11. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only

11.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- Statutory Compliance/Obligations (SCTS/COPFS Facilities Management Contract Governance and KPIs)
- Review of Risk – Project RAG Report

11.2 No matters were raised by exception.

12. Any Other Business (AOB)

12.1 None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

13.1 The next meeting would take place virtually and would be held on 23 February 2026.

14. Tour of Perth Sheriff Court

14.1 At the conclusion of the meeting, Members were given a useful and informative tour of Perth Sheriff Court by the Sheriff Clerk. The committee was grateful to the Sheriff Principal for facilitating the meeting.

SCTS Secretariat
October 2025