

MINUTES

SCTS PEOPLE COMMITTEE

MEETING: Wednesday 5 November 2025 – Parliament House, Edinburgh (Hybrid)

Members Present:

Dr Sophie Flemig, SCTS Board (Chair)
Helen Meldrum, Non-Executive Member
James Saville, Non-Executive Member
Anne Scott, SCTS Board
Sheriff Wendy Sheehan, Non-Executive Member

Attended:

Steven D'Arcy, Corporate Secretary, SCTS
Malcolm Graham, Chief Executive, SCTS
Katie Leighton, PCS (SCTS Branch Chair)
Bhavna Nair, Director ELU, SCTS
Victor Vickers, Senior HR Manager, SCTS
Alastair Young, PCS (SCTS Branch Secretary)
Thomas Robinson, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

David Fraser, Executive Director Court Operations, SCTS
Ruth Innes KC, SCTS Board
Lisa Sellars, Director HR, SCTS

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2025 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 The Committee welcomed the Executive's provision of a dedicated Teams channel for Members for the dissemination of papers and resolved to conduct its business electronically in the future.

3.2 An overview of matters discussed at the October SCTS Board meeting of relevance to the Committee was provided. Board members had benefited from the opportunity to visit Airdrie, Hamilton and Livingston Sheriff Courts ahead of their formal meeting.

4. Cross-Committee Update

4.1 Members were provided with an oral update on matters arising from other committee meetings, including the work being undertaken by the Executive in response to a

consensual ICO audit of SCTS's data protection and records management arrangements earlier in the year.

5. Update on Draft People Strategy 2024-28 Measures of Success

5.1 The Committee discussed the draft measures of success the Executive had developed to evaluate progress against the HRU goals in the recently published People Strategy. Measures relating to the ELU goals in the People Strategy would be submitted for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee.

5.2 The proposed measures would form the basis for a biannual report to the Committee for the period to 2028. The Committee noted that the goals of the People Strategy were aligned with the overall strategic direction of SCTS and that the measures and reports under discussion would be used not only to inform discussions at the Committee but also to assist the Executive in managing the organisation from month to month. Members also noted the benefits of a joint HRU and ELU strategic approach.

5.3 The Committee welcomed the proposed measures and supporting detail and commended the Executive on its progress towards implementation of the People Strategy 2024-28.

6. Update on Employment Rights Bill and UK Supreme Court Ruling

6.1 Members were provided with an update on the progression of the Employment Rights Bill through the UK Parliament, which the Executive had been monitoring closely. Members noted that the Executive was well-prepared to implement the first rounds of reforms expected in spring and autumn 2026, in partnership with PCS. The reforms in question would either require only minor updates to existing policies.

6.2 The Committee noted the potential cost implications of changes anticipated in 2026 and 2027 in the context of a challenging financial situation across the public sector. Members noted the measures being taken by the Executive to prepare for and mitigate any negative effects on service delivery or budgets, both by supporting managers across the organisation with training and guidance and through a focus on enabling efficiencies across the organisation. The Executive would carry out an exercise to forecast the potential financial impact of reforms and share a further update at a future meeting.

6.3 The Committee welcomed the approach that had been adopted in relation to the April 2025 UK Supreme Court ruling on the Equality Act 2010. Members mentioned and commended the Judiciary of Scotland's recently revised Equal Treatment Bench Book (October 2025), which provided a valuable reference point from the judicial perspective.

6.4 The Committee discussed the dual responsibilities of the Executive in this context to both employees and service users, emphasising the importance of the Executive's work to promote a joined-up approach across the justice sector.

6.5 The Committee was assured that the Executive was making adequate preparations in relation to both areas of legislation. Members noted the high degree of development of the Executive's legislative implementation function, which put SCTS in an excellent position to respond to legislative changes.

7. Annual Report to SCTS Board

7.1 The Committee was content that its Annual Report adequately reflected its activities over the 2024-25 reporting period and its priorities for the year ahead and agreed to submit it to the SCTS Board for consideration at its next meeting.

7.2 Members expressed their thanks to the Executive for its work and noted that they had found the conversations that had taken place as part of their refreshed annual appraisal process particularly useful.

8. Our Path to a Trauma-Informed Organisation – Current Status and Next Steps

8.1 The Executive gave an update on the implementation of its goal of becoming a trauma-informed organisation. Excellent progress had been made in the areas of staff knowledge and individual practice, with over 90% of staff having completed mandatory foundational training. The Executive's next steps would include further work on measurement and evaluation. Members noted the Executive's plans to extend the Court User Satisfaction Survey to cover Tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian.

8.2 The Committee noted the Executive's decision to provide organisational oversight of its overall approach to trauma-informed practice by way of a dedicated steering group with representation from across the organisation.

8.3 The committee noted the update and commended the Executive on its ambition and its progress to date. Members noted the overlap with the principle of open justice, in the sense that both approaches emphasised service users' experience and perception of the justice system.

9. Engagement Session – The Potential Benefits and Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) (HRU)

9.1 Members took part in a facilitated discussion about the potential benefits and impacts of a range of modern information technologies, from digitisation to Artificial Intelligence (AI), both on the HR function in particular and the organisation as a whole.

9.2 The Committee discussed the rise in popularity and usage of AI across society and noted the effects of widespread adoption in the use of AI, for instance, in the job application process (by applicants).

9.3 The Committee considered the use of modern technologies in the workplace along a spectrum ranging from digitisation (where the Executive had made great progress) and automation (still a source of potential efficiencies in some business areas) to machine learning and AI. Members emphasised the importance of taking an organisation-wide approach to the adoption of technology in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary costs. Such an approach might attempt to map specific business needs to appropriate technological solutions or prioritise business functions by their potential to be benefited by new technologies. Members also noted the importance of promoting a joined-up approach across the justice sector.

9.4 As well as the potential for new technologies to bring efficiencies, the Committee also discussed the role of training and clear guidance and policies in the mitigation of risks associated with AI, such as those relating to data protection, transparency and misinformation.

9.5 Members noted their availability and willingness to assist the Executive in evaluating the possibility of adopting new technological approaches such as AI in future and thanked the Executive for facilitating the discussion.

10. Review/Discussion of Other Papers

10.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny/exception reporting only:

- HR Risk Register
- ELU Risk Register
- HRU Business Delivery Report
- ELU Business Plan Delivery Report
- Learning Council – Draft Minutes of October Meeting
- Employment Tribunals
- HR Measures
- Core Work Plan 2025
- People Committee Action Tracker
- SCTS Board Staff Briefing – October 2025

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Members noted the upcoming retirement of David Fraser and the successful appointment of a new Executive Director Court Operations, Paul McKinlay. Members thanked David for his contributions to the committee.

11.2 The Committee noted the Pay Award Offer that the Executive had made to PCS earlier in the week, following approval from Scottish Ministers.

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The Committee's next meeting was scheduled for 11 February 2026.

SCTS Secretariat
November 2025