



MINUTES

SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD

MEETING: Monday 2 February 2026, Parliament House, Edinburgh

Present: Lord Pentland, Lord President (Chair)
Lord Beckett, Lord Justice Clerk
Sheriff Principal Anwar, KC
Dr David Caddick MBE
Maggie Craig
Steven Dickson
Sheriff Frank Gill
Malcolm Graham
Ruth Innes, KC
Sheriff Olga Pasportnikov
Anne Scott
Lynsey Walker
Lady Wise

Attended: Noel Rehfisch, Deputy Chief Executive, SCTS
Karen Lawrie, SCTS Secretariat (Minutes)

Apologies: Dr Sophie Flemig

1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting on 24 November 2025

1.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Declarations of Interest and Matters Arising

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Finance Report

3.1 The Board considered a report on financial performance to the end of December, covering 9 months of the financial year. The total budget for the year was £219.8m.

3.2 A number of budget transfers had been successfully secured from the Scottish Government as part of the budget revision process. At present the end year forecast was projected to be 0.6% within budget. Opportunities to explore how best to utilise available resources had been considered by the Executive Team. Monitoring of expenditure would continue as the end of the financial year approached.

3.3 Members discussed Civil Fees income, the level of which was dependent on both the number and type of civil cases and applications made each year. Projected fees income for the coming financial year was based on analysis of prior year's data and developing trends. Board members discussed the circumstances in which fees might be used to encourage the submission of high quality applications and promote system efficiency. The Executive would capture proposals from these discussions to ensure the Scottish Government were aware of

them ahead of future consideration of fee levels and types. An update on this work would be provided to the Board at a future meeting.

3.4 The Board acknowledged the steps taken by the Executive to utilise the budget. They welcomed the robust forecasting and monitoring that was in place and agreed that any available resources should continue to be matched to priorities.

4. 2026-27 Budget Outcome

4.1 The [Scottish budget for 2026-27](#) was published on 13 January. Following intensive negotiations with the Scottish Government SCTS had successfully secured an above flat-cash settlement – which included the baselining of “Recover, Renew, Transform” funding, which was essential to manage growing case volumes across a number of business areas.

4.2 The revenue budget awarded was around £11m below the level requested, which would present challenges for the coming year. The Board considered how best to balance financial pressures, given that funding for public services was likely to remain challenging over the spending review period. The need to carefully consider the balance between efficiency and other reform investment, set against growing operational demands was recognised, to ensure the organisation remained sustainable in future. Members noted that service levels would need to match the level of resourcing available, within considerations of how much budget needs to be allocated to improvement activity now to strive for a more sustainable operating model in the future. The request for capital funding to support investment in the SCTS estate and digital infrastructure for the coming year had been met.

4.3 The Board noted the settlement, recognising the pressures on the resource budget and the need to plan carefully to support core operations, efficiency and reform. The detailed budget for the coming year would be presented to the next Board meeting in March, as part of the 2026-27 Business Plan.

5. Draft SCTS Corporate Plan 2026-29 and Business Plan 2026-27

5.1 The Board reviewed developing drafts of both the SCTS Corporate Plan 2026-29 and Business Plan 2026-27 noting the proposed objectives and outcomes. A range of comments were submitted, which would be included in the final drafts. The Board discussed the importance of balancing future ambition for reforms and service improvements against the challenging budget settlement and spending review outlook.

5.2 The 2026-29 Corporate Plan and the 2026-27 Business Plan and budget would be presented to the Board for approval at their March meeting.

6. OPG Transformation Update

6.1 The Board received an update on the work of the OPG transformation project. The level of power of attorney (PoA) registrations had continued to grow significantly, placing the OPG under considerable strain. Whilst the new digital system under development in OPG had improved the process for new PoA registrations, further work was required to improve it in relation to change requests for existing PoAs which would create efficiencies in processing times.

6.2 In order to address this as quickly as possible the project would continue to focus on PoA improvements (phase 1). This would lead to a delay in the delivery of phases 2 and 3 (Guardianship and Accountant of Court) and require some additional funding. This approach was assessed to be the most effective approach to manage pressures within the available budget.

6.3 The Board acknowledged the re-phasing of the project, noting the continued increase in PoA applications. Board members noted a level of political concern and Ministerial enquiries associated with the work of the OPG and current processing times. The Chief Executive reported that an external review of the project approach had been commissioned to provide assurance, which was due to be completed by the end of March.

7. People Survey Results

7.1 The high-level results of the 2025 People Survey were presented to the Board. The Board noted the completion rate and SCTS Engagement Index score of 64%. In spite of this falling by 1% from the previous year SCTS remained amongst the high performers in Scotland for both completion rates and engagement score in Scotland.

7.2 The Board briefly discussed the results and agreed that detailed analysis and follow-up activity should be conducted by the People Committee. Findings from that analysis would be presented in more detail to a future Board meeting.

8. Compensation Claim

8.1 The Board considered a claim for compensation following an incident involving an SCTS pool car. Members discussed and endorsed the proposed approach, subject to providing some flexibility with a view to securing an early settlement.

9. Cyber Security Update

9.1 Steven D'Arcy (Corporate Secretary) and Lora Crabtree (Head of Cyber Security) delivered a presentation to the Board setting out the cyber security landscape and work under way to manage risk, protect the organisation, detect events and minimise the impact of any incidents should they occur.

9.2 An overview of the [Cyber Assessment Framework](#) (CAF) was provided. SCTS had commenced work to align its cyber security activities with the framework, in order to benchmark against a recognised standard and identify priority areas for action. A summary of the work underway and planned to enhance organisational resilience was provided – recognising that some service areas were now “digitally native” and not replicated by manual processes.

9.3 The Board welcomed the information presented. They agreed that this was a critical area of focus, given the impact that a significant incident could have on SCTS operations, the service we provide to the public and maintenance of the justice system as a whole. Members commended the activity under way and agreed that it should be a regular area of focus and development for both the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. Proposals for regular Board oversight would be presented to the next Board meeting.

10. SCTS Committees

Audit and Risk Committee

10.1 The Chair of the Committee updated the Board on discussions at the January meeting. The Committee had discussed progress on the Oracle Fusion Shared Services Programme. Members had reviewed and approved proposed changes to the SCTS Risk Register, which would be presented to the Board at the joint Board and Committee Corporate Risk Workshop. A comprehensive summary of the actions underway to address the recommendations from the audit by the Information Commissioner was presented. Members were assured by the progress made.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 None

12. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only

12.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- Customer Service Excellence
- the SCTS Decision Tracker

13. Date of the Next Meeting

13.1 The next meeting would be on Monday 23 March 2026.

14. SCTS Board and Committee Workshop – Review of Corporate Risks

14.1 Board Members held their joint annual workshop with members of the Board's three committees (People, Estates and Audit & Risk) to review the risks on the SCTS Corporate Risk Register. The workshop considered the existing risks and those that may arise over the coming period. Discussion groups explored key areas of risk and opportunity faced by the organisation, focusing on the draft 2026-29 Corporate Plan outcomes in the 4 key areas of: criminal justice, civil justice, tribunals and the corporate organisation.

14.2 Members agreed that the risks in the corporate risk register remained valid and offered detailed views on the risks and on a number of the proposed objectives in the corporate plan. Feedback would be used to develop both the draft corporate plan and corporate risk register – to ensure it continued to capture the challenges and opportunities facing the organisation over the coming period.

14.3 The opportunity for Board and Committee members, to come together to discuss the proposed objectives from their varying perspectives was welcomed.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
February 2026