



# MINUTES

## SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD

MEETING: Monday 23 March 2020, Parliament House, Edinburgh (and via teleconference)

**Present:** Rt Hon Lord Carloway, Lord President (Chair)  
Joe Al-Gharabally  
Sheriff Aisha Anwar  
Simon Catto  
Dr Kirsty Hood QC  
Sheriff Grant McCulloch  
Colonel David McIlroy  
Eric McQueen  
Morna Rae, JP  
Anne Scott  
Rt Hon Lady Smith

**Attended:** Noel Rehfisch, Corporate Secretary, SCTS  
Karen Lawrie, Secretariat Business Manager, SCTS

**Apologies:** Rt Hon Lady Dorrian, Lord Justice Clerk  
Sheriff Principal Craig Turnbull

### 1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting on 3 February 2020

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.

2.2 Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic the Board meeting was held by telephone conference with members calling in to the meeting.

### 3. 2020-23 Corporate Plan and Business Plan and Budget 2020-21

#### *2020-23 Corporate Plan*

3.1 A draft of the Corporate Plan setting out the SCTS purpose, values, priorities and high-level objectives for the coming 3 years had been shared with the Board in February. A sub-group of the Board had been involved in the on-going development of the plan and had approved the final draft at its meeting in February. The final draft was presented to the Board for approval.

3.2 The Board approved the Corporate Plan 2020-23. The plan would be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice for formal approval before being laid in the Scottish Parliament and published. As the plan set the high-level direction for the organisation over the coming 3 years its overall content and structure was likely to remain valid in spite of the current COVID-19 outbreak, although a review of its content would be required following a return to normal operations, to ensure it remained accurate.

3.3 The draft SCTS Business Plan for 2020-21, which set out the key outcomes which SCTS planned to deliver over the coming year and the operating budget was considered. The Board approved the plan in principle, but agreed that it may require considerable amendment to reflect the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on the capacity of the organisation to deliver normal business over the coming months.

#### **4. COVID-19 – SCTS Response and Contingency Planning**

4.1 The Board were advised of the response arrangements that had been developed and implemented in response to the rapidly changing position caused by COVID-19. Strong contingency plans were in place across the organisation. The scale of the outbreak and the measures being implemented to manage it had required all parts of the organisation to assess their operations and consider how best to support the public health response whilst maintaining the most essential services provided to support public trust and order.

4.2 Following intense activity in collaboration with other justice organisations, a scaled back operating model had been developed to ensure that essential business could be maintained in the safest and most effective manner, with other business deferred in order to minimise social contact and support the public health response. Video conferencing had been introduced between courts and seven police custody centres across Scotland, reducing the need for transportation of those in custody to courts. Work was continuing to develop the operational model should further measure be required. This work included aspects that may require emergency legislation.

4.3 Staff had been encouraged to work from home where possible, although it was acknowledged that a number of front line roles could not be carried out in this manner. Steps were being taken to develop staff rotas, to ensure that, for the limited essential business types that must continue, there would be adequate and sustainable resourcing, whilst minimising the number of staff in buildings.