



MINUTES

SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING: Monday 24 August 2020 – via WebEx

Members Present:

Sheriff Grant McCulloch, Non-Executive Member SCTS Board (Chair)
Colonel David McIlroy, Non-Executive Member SCTS Board
Donald Wooley, Non-Executive Member
Tom Gorman, Non-Executive Member
May Dunsmuir, President of the Health and Education Chamber, First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, Non-Executive Member
Aileen Gomes, Non-Executive Member
Morna Rae, Non-Executive Member SCTS Board

Attended:

Richard Maconachie, Chief Finance Officer, SCTS
David Currie, Director Property & Services, SCTS
Tara McNamara, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

Yvonne Taylor, Director Operations Delivery, SCTS

1. Welcome & Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Colonel David McIlroy. Members were advised that Colonel McIlroy would take up position as chair of the Committee from the next meeting on 26 October 2020.

1.2 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting was held via video conference.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting (SCTS/EST/Feb20/Mins)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2020 were approved. The Committee had agreed not to meet in June due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Matters Arising (including feedback from SCTS Board)

Outstanding Action Points

4.1 Outstanding action points were discussed or addressed under substantive agenda items during the meeting.

Feedback from SCTS Board

4.2 The Chair highlighted discussions from the June and August 2020 meetings of the SCTS Board which had a bearing on Estates matters.

5. COVID-19 Update (SCTS/EST/Aug20/10)

5.1 Members reviewed a paper which summarised the latest position on the impact of COVID-19 on the SCTS. The paper provided a detailed timeline which outlined the step by step journey SCTS had taken from 23 March, following announcement of lockdown, to 19 June 2020.

5.2 The Executive provided further background which highlighted the pace of progress and the coordinated approach taken to ensure that appropriate arrangements were and remained in place throughout the pandemic.

5.3 The Committee acknowledged and congratulated all staff involved for their ongoing response to the pandemic and their dedication and innovation in identifying and developing solutions to ensure the continuation and recovery of court business.

6. Draft – Annual Report to SCTS Board

6.1 The Executive sought input from members on matters to be included within the Committee's annual report to the Board. Members were advised that, due to the cancellation of the June meeting, a draft would be prepared and circulated for consideration and sign-off at the meeting on 26 October 2020.

6.2 Members discussed and agreed that the report should include details on the efficiencies that had been achieved throughout the year; the impacts on the estate including the growing use of digital solutions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and an acknowledgment of key achievements. Members also agreed the report should highlight areas that had required to be re-prioritised.

Action: The Executive to incorporate members' comments into a draft report and circulate in advance of the October meeting.

7. Review of Risk – Project RAG Report (SCTS/EST/Aug20/11)

7.1 The Executive presented the Estates projects RAG report and provided members with an update on the overall position of current Estates projects. Projects marked 'amber' were discussed, and assurances provided that the projects were being managed effectively.

8. Sustainability Report – 2019-20 (SCTS/EST/Aug20/12)

8.1 The Executive presented a report to the Committee which outlined the work carried out during 2019-20 to ensure SCTS achieved the targets set for carbon reduction across the estate. Members were advised that SCTS had exceeded the CO2 annual savings target and retained certification to the Carbon Trust Triple Standard for carbon, waste and water. Members commended the Executive for the ongoing work to deliver carbon reduction across the estate, highlighting that each year had exceeded the targets set.

8.2 Members discussed and agreed that the Scottish Government's (SG) climate change goal to achieve carbon neutral status by 2045 would require significant investment and commitment. The Executive advised that SCTS did not intend to invest in further sustainability improvements until an understanding of the future target operating model for Courts and Tribunals was established, which would provide clarity in terms of physical distancing measures and accommodation requirements for the year ahead.

9. Estates Budget – End of Year Report 2019-20 (SCTS/EST/Aug20/13)

9.1 The Estates Budget report for 2019-20 was presented. Members were advised that, as in previous years, projects had been carefully planned and commissioned to draw on the capital and revenue funding available ensuring financial risks to the estates budget were appropriately managed and that any late release additional funding could be used effectively

9.2 Members were advised that the Estates Financial Programme Manager was scheduled to retire in November. A secondment from Finance Procurement Unit (FPU) was underway to ensure adequate training and codifying of current processes was in place prior to departure. Members recorded their thanks to the Financial Programme Manager, and commended his effective work over a number of years.

10. Budget Report & Forecast for 2020-21 (SCTS/EST/Aug20/14)

10.1 The Committee discussed the Estate budget proposals for 2020-21. Members acknowledged the continued constrained financial climate and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had created additional financial pressures. The Executive highlighted that the current allocation summary and use of PSU budgets would be subject to change, in line with the response requirements of the pandemic. A submission would be made to Scottish Government in due course to seek financial assistance in respect of COVID-19 costs.

10.2 The Executive confirmed their continued commitment to utilise available resources as effectively as possible and would continue to seek opportunities to supplement the allocation. Members approved the budget allocation proposals, recognising this would be a demanding time for PSU. They also commissioned PSU to prepare a list of 'shovel ready' projects to enable SCTS to utilise available funding.

11. Remote Jury Centres (SCTS/EST/Aug20/15)

11.1 *The record of this discussion was considered confidential and exempt from publication.*

12. Inverness Justice Centre Update (SCTS/EST/Aug20/16)

12.1 The Committee received an update on the development of Inverness Justice Centre (IJC). Members were advised that the IJC formally opened on 30 March 2020, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions in place both the media event and formal closing ceremony of the existing Sheriff Court at Inverness Castle were deferred.

12.2 The Executive highlighted that the IJC was used throughout the pandemic and operated as one of 10 hub courts, utilising and taking advantage of the spacious design high-quality digital facilities. These facilities held one of the first virtual summary trials which took place on 9 June and has received very positive feedback.

12.3 Members were advised that snagging and defect rectification works remained ongoing, having been delayed due to lockdown. A final Gateway Review Exercise would take place in due course and would be shared with the Committee. Members welcomed the update and commended the Executive and all those involved in the successful opening of the IJC.

13. Aberdeen Masterplan (SCTS/EST/Aug20/17)

13.1 *The record of this discussion was considered confidential and exempt from publication.*

14. Major Capital Projects Update

14.1 Members were informed of the progress being made on major estates capital projects underway within SCTS:

- Kirkcaldy Annexe - formally opened on 29 July 2020, following completion of the 2 year refurbishment project. Snagging and defect rectification works were ongoing, which had been delayed due to lockdown.
- Dundee Annexe - due to the recent events, development options for Dundee Sheriff Court were being re-assessed in order to establish long term requirements.
- Glasgow Tribunals Centre (GTC) – HMCTS continue to migrate into the GTC. The Evidence by Commissioner Facilities were being assessed to consider how best to operate them in line with physical distancing requirements. Options being considered included the removal of furniture in order to ensure distancing could be maintained.

14.2 Members acknowledged the updates provided and were content with progress and management of projects to date.

15. Edinburgh Justice Sector Property Rationalisation (SCTS/EST/Aug20/18)

15.1 *The record of this discussion was considered confidential and exempt from publication.*

16. Estate Wide Capital Investment Plan (SCTS/EST/Aug20/19)

16.1 *The record of this discussion was considered confidential and exempt from publication.*

17. Arbroath Sheriff Court

17.1 The Executive provided members with an update following further communications received from the Chair of the Arbroath Community Council Trust (ACCT), in relation to funding.

17.2 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, limited progress had been made following the last update. It was agreed that the Executive would proceed with the previous proposal, discussed at the February meeting, writing to Scottish Government (SG) officials to highlight the financial impact SCTS continued to absorb and seek guidance on the next steps required in order to proceed to advertising the Courthouse on the open market.

ACTION: The Executive to write to Scottish Government Community Officials, detailing concerns raised by the Committee regarding the time extensions already granted to the ACCT by SCTS, and highlighting the burden incurred in relation to the transfer of the building to the ACCT.

18. Jury Room Accommodation

18.1 The Executive provided an update on the ongoing analysis of Jury Room Accommodation. Members were advised that, due to the suspension of Jury Trials and restrictions now in place to achieve physical distancing requirements there will be no Jury Rooms used for the purposes of accommodating Jurors for the foreseeable future. Solemn criminal cases were now recommencing with the establishment of Remote Jury Centres.

19. Any Other Business (AOB)

19.1 This was Sheriff Grant McCulloch's last meeting as Chair. The Committee and Executive thanked him for all his support, effort and work over the last 8 years as both a Board and Committee member and as Chair of the Committee since 2018.

20. Date of Next Meeting

20.1 The next meeting would be held on 26 October 2020.

21. SCTS Estates Committee Appraisal Exercise 2019-20

21.1 A summary of members' responses to the appraisal questionnaire was discussed in a members' only session following the formal meeting. Members reviewed their assessment of the Committee's performance and the support received from the organisation over the past year.

21.2 Members were largely content with the operation of the Committee and agreed that holding occasional meetings in different venues including site visits across the estate continued to be of benefit, as this provided members with first-hand experience of projects, progress and local issues.

21.3 It was agreed that creative thinking was required in order to identify ways to continue with occasional site visits and meetings hosted in different venues, whilst complying and operating within the current Public Health Scotland guidelines.

SCTS Estates, Health & Safety, Fire and Security Committee
August 2020