

**MINUTES**

**SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE  
MEETING: Monday 23 February 2026 – Virtual**

**Members Present:**

Sheriff Frank Gill, SCTS Board (Chair)  
Luke Broadbent, Non-Executive Member  
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  
Joe Lynch, Non-Executive Member

**Attended:**

Del Kaiser, Head of Health, Safety and Security, Property Services Unit (PSU), SCTS  
Karen Lawrie, Head of Secretariat, SCTS  
Kate Leer, Director Property Services, SCTS  
Craig Robertson, Head of Finance and Governance (PSU), SCTS  
Daragh Stewart, Head of Service Delivery (PSU), SCTS  
Yvonne Taylor, Principal Clerk of Session and Judiciary, SCTS  
Alice Wallace, Chief Finance Officer, SCTS  
Kyle Williamson, Head of Service Estates Development (PSU), SCTS  
Thomas Robinson, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

**Apologies:**

None

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**3. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2025 were approved.

**4. Matters Arising**

4.1 The Committee received an update on matters discussed at Board meetings in November and February.

4.2 The Executive gave an oral update on the Health, Safety and Security Works Committee (HSSWC). The HSSWC's governance structure had been strengthened, improving representation and shortening reporting timescales. Its biannual security reporting had been expanded to incorporate health and safety matters, and work was ongoing to enhance its visibility. Positive feedback on the developments had been received from external stakeholders, and Members welcomed the refreshed approach.

## **5. Quarterly Financial Report**

5.1 Members received an update on the SCTS Estates budget for 2025-26. The Property Services Unit (PSU) had been allocated a further £2.8m permitted overspend during December and January, utilising underspend in other areas. This had been used to accelerate planned expenditure on building maintenance in 2026-27.

5.2 Members were informed that investment for sustainability continued to receive strong organisational support. PSU had spent £1.5m on sustainability in year and submitted a £2m bid for 2026-27 to support the continued rollout of LED lighting and initial works ahead of the organisation's first heat pump installation. Members discussed the long-term value and return on investment (ROI) of heat pumps. The Executive advised that early feasibility work indicated a potential 10-to-12-year ROI.

5.3 The Executive confirmed that George House in Edinburgh was due to be vacated in August 2026 and that the cost of any dilapidations would fall into the next financial year.

5.4 The Committee discussed the 2026-27 budget position, which remained challenging. It was noted that the Executive Team was meeting regularly to discuss budget allocations. Engagement with the Scottish Government was ongoing.

5.5 The Executive advised that PSU maintained a portfolio of maintenance projects prioritised by risk, which would determine the next three-to-five-year maintenance cycle. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise the portfolio at a future meeting.

## **6. Capital Projects Update**

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

### **Evidence by Commissioner Suites – Phase 2**

6.2 It was noted that the Evidence by Commissioner (EBC) provision in Birnie House in South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway was now fully operational. Two further facilities in Kilmarnock and Paisley in North Strathclyde were set to be fully operational within the coming months.

### **Evidence by Commissioner Suites – Phase 3**

6.3 The Executive had identified potential space for a facility in Tayside, Central and Fife and was undertaking a search for further locations in Lothian and Borders.

### **Aberdeen Sheriff Court**

6.4 The Executive updated on the progress that had been made in relation to the demolition of the police building adjoining Aberdeen Sheriff Court and the opportunity this had created for separating the buildings' plant room, including heating systems.

6.5 The police building itself had been largely vacated, with demolition scheduled for the summer of 2026 and completion scheduled for 2027. Discussions with Aberdeen City Council (ACC) were ongoing to ensure minimal impact on court business during the demolition period.

6.6 Discussions concerning the possibility of connecting to Aberdeen's district heat network were progressing with Aberdeen Heat & Power. Ongoing liaisons with ACC were taking place in relation to the cost of and liability for the installation. The Executive advised that the future configuration could create additional usable building space.

6.7 Members were assured that PSU and local colleagues continued to manage the operational aspects of the demolition programme, with escalation to the Executive Team as required.

### **Edinburgh Sheriff Court, Level 6 Tribunals**

6.8 The Executive advised that a project manager had been appointed on a temporary, 12-month basis to support stakeholder engagement for this and other projects.

### **Project Scope and Client Expectations**

6.9 Following two late-stage change requests that had been outwith the agreed scopes of the projects in question, the Executive reported that the scopes had been developed robustly and signed off by the client. Post-completion requests were considered only where feasible and affordable. Members were advised that additional steps were being taken to support clearer client expectations, including the use of 3D visualisations, enhanced communication and greater visibility of PSU's design playbook across SCTS and the judiciary. The Executive was content that the existing scoping process was robust and clear.

## **7. Radon Gas Update**

7.1 The Executive updated on radon monitoring and mitigation across the estate. The issue of radon gas remained a key focus for the Executive. Potential risk was being managed by controlling room occupancy rates, which remained effective. Radon gas levels were continuing to be monitored on a quarterly basis in buildings most affected. It was recognised that regular testing was the key.

7.2 In some locations where elevated levels had been recorded, further mitigations were being trialled. For instance, the Executive had installed sump pumps that would draw air/gases from the sub-floor of Inverness Justice Centre and expel it away from the interior of the building. The results of the intervention would be monitored and evaluated in June 2026. Members received clarification that the sump pumps that had been installed were in a secure area not accessible to the public.

7.3 The Executive advised that it would, following continued monitoring over the coming months, consider what additional mitigations to apply in locations across the estate, if any were required.

7.4 Members were given assurance that all mitigations applied were proportionate to the level of risk, in compliance with statutory requirements and carried out in close collaboration with stakeholders including trade unions. Persistently high results would be escalated through a robust process and addressed with targeted interventions. Noting that the Executive had, at times, exceeded its statutory obligations, the Committee emphasised the importance of using resources efficiently as well as responsibly, given the challenging budgetary situation. The HSE had been made fully aware of the steps taken and were content with the response.

## **8. Sustainability**

8.1 The Executive advised that it was on track to slightly exceed its target of a 3% reduction in energy usage for 2025-26; however, greater investment would be required to maintain the rate of improvement in future years.

8.2 Members were advised that the Executive was also in the process of surveying its waste and recycling provision, as part of which it would shortly be standardising bins and signage across the estate.

8.3 The Executive explained that ideas for sustainability project bids were commonly generated through discussions with PSU's sustainability manager and energy managers employed by SCTS's facilities management contractor. Employees were also able to contribute suggestions.

## **9. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only**

9.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- SCTS/COPFS Facilities Management Contract Governance and KPIs
- Estates Projects RAG Report
- Health & Safety and Security RAG Report

9.2 The Executive advised that PSU's risk management approach was to be refreshed as part of a broader corporate review of risk.

## **10. Any Other Business**

10.1 The Executive updated Members on the refurbished staff areas in Airdrie Sheriff Court. Members commended the Executive on bringing the project to a successful conclusion.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

11.1 The Committee's next meeting would take place in person on 11 May 2026.

SCTS Secretariat  
February 2026