

SCTS PEOPLE COMMITTEE

MEETING: Wednesday 24 August 2022 – Hybrid Meeting (in-Person/Via WebEx)

Present:

Sophie Flemig, Non-Executive Member, SCTS Board (chair)
Anne Scott, Non-Executive Member, SCTS Board
James Saville, Non-Executive Member
Sheriff Wendy Sheehan, Non-Executive Member
Sophie Flemig, Non-Executive Member, SCTS Board

Also Attended:

David Fraser, Executive Director Court Operations, SCTS
Lisa Sellars, Director HR, SCTS
Jessica MacDonald, Director, Education & Learning, SCTS
Steven D'Arcy, Interim Corporate Secretary, SCTS
Alastair Young, PCS Branch Secretary Elect
Katie Leighton, PCS (SCTS Branch Chair)
Sarah Imery, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

Professor Alan Boyter, Non-Executive Member
Ruth Innes, Non-Executive Member

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

2. Minutes of the Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2022 were approved.

3. Action Points and Matters Arising

3.1 It was confirmed that the Hybrid working policy would be shared with the Committee once the draft had been finalised.

Update from the SCTS Board

3.2 The Chair provided an overview of discussions from the June and August 2022 Board meetings.

4. Future Ways of Working including impact of digitalisation on our roles and hybrid working

4.1 The Executive provided the Committee with an update on the review of Sheriff Court operations following the digitalisation of many of its core services. The aim of the review is to gain a more in-depth understanding of the level of impact digitisation has had on staff and those

that require to use Sheriff Court services. The output of the review will inform the development of the SCTS court operational model to ensure that it continues to support the needs of the Justice System in Scotland in the most effective and efficient manner, whilst also supporting SCTS staff and their opportunities for skill development and progression.

4.2 The review commenced at the beginning of August. Information is being gathered from workshops taking place in courts across the country. As at the date of the meeting, workshops had been held at 6 court locations across 3 sheriffdoms. The initial gathering of information from the workshops would be concluded by the end of September. The output from the operational review would be expected in the late autumn.

4.3 The committee stressed the importance of finalising the SCTS Hybrid Working policy as this would be an integral part of any future operating model. The Executive confirmed that while it is clear that homeworking can have both advantages and disadvantages for individual members of staff and for the organisation, it's evident that a significant number of roles within SCTS, particularly operational and customer facing roles, need to be based at the point of need for the service, which requires employees to be working in a SCTS workplace. The Committee stressed the importance of managing expectations of staff in respect of the policy. The Executive confirmed the policy was in the final stages of development and anticipated it would be published in September.

4.4 The Committee welcomed the update, acknowledging the importance of the work being undertaken.

ACTION: The Executive to engage with the Judiciary regarding the Operational Review, in order to take into account further impact.

5. Talent and Potential

5.1 The Committee were provided with an update on the development and delivery of the Talent and Potential programme. The programme launched at the end of July with a closing date of 31 August. The course would take a blended approach to learning, training and development for the successful individuals and would run over a 12 month period.

5.2 A total of 18 places, with 9 ring-fenced for operational staff, would be available on the programme. It was emphasised that Support and feedback would be offered to those not successful in obtaining a place on the programme.

5.3 Staff on the programme would be encouraged to obtain a mentor. This would be a key feature of the course, with the aim of aligning staff with mentors to support their development during the course of the programme and in the longer term. Senior Managers would receive mentoring and coaching training, where required, to ensure there would be a sufficient number of mentors available to support staff on the talent programme.

5.4 The Committee welcomed the update and supported the programme.

6. People Survey – Two Year Action Plan

6.1 The Committee were given an oral update on the two year action plan developed in response to the last People Survey. The key themes are 'Learning and Development' and 'Leadership and Change'.

6.2 Head of Programmes from the Education and Learning Unit (ELU) leads an organisational sub-group consisting of membership from across SCTS. The Action Plan identifies five specific actions in response to the People Survey results for Learning and Development. These initiatives seek to improve engagement with learning across the organisation.

6.3 The Committee were advised of the work underway to Leadership and Change in response to the People Survey results. The Executive Director for Court Operations is the lead supported by colleagues from ELU, Communications and CDi. Three actions have been identified. These include an enhanced change communication strategy with engagement sessions undertaken by the Chief Product Owners on change in each Sheriffdom and the Supreme Court and improved resources on the intranet to update staff on changes taking place. ELU will undertake an enhanced Leadership development offer and are undertaking research to understand the current perception of change by employees.

6.4 The Committee welcomed the ongoing developments and training being offered to staff. Further updates on the People Survey action plan would be provided at future meetings.

7. Sickness Absence 2021-22

7.1 The Committee reviewed the sickness absence report for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. The report provided a detailed breakdown of absence levels and also contained a specific section dedicated to COVID-19 related absence.

7.2 Members discussed the report, noting that Mental Health and Bereavement absence continue to be a common cause for long and short term sickness within SCTS. The committee enquired whether the HR team could benefit from additional resource to support staff wellbeing. The Executive gave an overview of staff changes in the HR team that would enable further resource to be directed to supporting staff wellbeing. The Committee welcomed the clarification but requested that resourcing to support staff wellbeing be kept under review.

7.3 The Committee acknowledged that increases in Mental Health absence were not unique to SCTS. Increases were being reported across nearly all business sectors following the pandemic and that the SCTS sickness figures, were similar to other organisations experiencing an increase.

7.4 The Committee acknowledge and commended the level of detail the report contained.

8. Draft Annual Report– Two Year Action Plan

8.1 Members reviewed their draft Annual Report to the SCTS Board that summarised the work of the Committee over the period of December 2021 to November 2022 and set out the structure and priorities for the coming year.

8.2 The Executive confirmed that an additional paragraph detailing Priorities will be added before the final draft is submitted.

8.3 The Committee noted the contents of the draft report, subject to the addition of a paragraph detailing future priorities. The report would be finalised and presented at the next meeting for final approval by the Committee before being shared with the SCTS Board. The Committee thanked the Executive for the clear and concise draft.

9. Review/Discussion of Other Papers

9.1 The following papers were provided for scrutiny/exception reporting only:

- HR Risk Register
- ELU Risk register
- HR Business Plan Project Tracker 2021-22
HR Business Plan 2022-23
- HR Measures for SCTS Board
- ELU Business Plan Tracker
- Employment Tribunal Cases Update
- Learning Council Minutes
- COVID-19 Update – Operational matters

9.2 The content of these papers were noted and no matters of concern were raised.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Members discussed the benefits of in-person/hybrid meetings. The Committee agreed that a hybrid approach to meetings going forward would be beneficial for all.

11. Date of Next Meeting

11.1 The next meeting would be held on 9 November 2022 in Parliament House, Edinburgh, with option to join remotely.

12. SCTS People Committee – Appraisal Exercise 2022

12.1 A summary of members' responses to the appraisal questionnaire was discussed in a members' only session following the formal meeting. Members were content with the operation of the Committee. It was agreed that a mix of virtual and in-person meetings in the coming year would be beneficial. Members reiterated their availability to support SCTS members both within meetings and informally where required. The Committee welcomed the new format of the papers, providing more time for key discussion.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
August 2022