



**SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD
MEETING: MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, EDINBURGH**

Present: Rt Hon Lord Carloway, Lord President (Chair)
Rt Hon Lady Dorrian, Lord Justice Clerk
Rt Hon Lady Smith
Dr Joe Morrow CBE QC
Dr Kirsty Hood QC
Professor Hugh MacDougall
Colonel David McIlroy
Simon Catto
Joe Al-Gharabally
Eric McQueen

Attended: Noel Rehfisch, Corporate Secretary, SCTS
Karen Lawrie, Secretariat Business Manager (Minutes)

Apologies: Sheriff Principal Duncan Murray
Sheriff Grant McCulloch

1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting of 4 December 2017

1.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising and Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.

2.2 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Financial Results and Forecast Outturn 2017-18 (SCTS/Feb18/01)

3.1 The Board considered a report on the financial performance to the end of December 2017. The total budget for 2017-18 stood at £109.6m, following the agreement of budget transfers with the Scottish Government to reflect levels of activity in Tribunals and reductions in retained fines income.

3.2 The Board agreed that the £0.25m reserve should be directed toward the costs in relation to fee paid sheriffs. Any additional resources that become available would be directed towards estates maintenance

4. Spending Review (SCTS/Feb18/02)

4.1 The Executive reported that the 2018-19 budget allocation for SCTS had been set at £117.7m in the Budget (Scotland) Bill introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 26 January. The priorities and pressures that would be faced over the coming year were discussed.

4.2 The Board acknowledged that the settlement would present significant budgetary challenges over the coming year. The work under way by the Executive to finalise plans and identify efficiencies to ensure business could be managed within budget was welcomed. It was agreed that

longer-term options to manage court and tribunal business effectively in the face of ongoing financial restraint should be developed over the course of the year.

5. SCTS People Strategy (SCTS/Feb18/03)

5.1 The draft People Strategy 2018-23 was presented for approval. It had been reviewed and approved by the People Committee. The strategy had been developed in partnership with SCTS Staff, and through workshops involving senior officials, the PCS Union and People Committee members. The strategy made clear the SCTS commitment to maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce, supporting Scotland's judiciary and providing excellent customer service across the tribunals, courts and Office of the Public Guardian. It also outlined the purpose and priorities of the SCTS, detailing four key themes through which improvements would be taken forward to maintain and develop staff, ensuring SCTS remained fit for the future.

5.2 The Board commended the draft strategy and approved it for publication. The People Committee would maintain oversight of the implementation of key activities detailed in the strategy.

6. Unified Communications Development Programme (SCTS/Feb18/04)

6.1 A proposal to replace current telephony systems with a modern, unified communications system during 2018-19 was considered. The SCTS currently maintained a number of legacy systems across the estate based on six different technology sets. The proposal would introduce a single communications platform that would improve resilience and reduce maintenance, while enabling modern communications functions such as screen-to-screen video conferencing and instant messaging.

6.2 The Board considered and approved the proposal, acknowledging that careful management would be required to deliver the project alongside a range of other digital investment priorities and change initiatives.

7. Devolution of Reserved Tribunals (SCTS/Feb18/05)

7.1 The Board reviewed the current position on plans to devolve the administration of reserved tribunals to SCTS. Limited progress had been made since the last meeting. The required transitional funding had not been identified in the draft Scottish budget for 2018-19. The draft Orders in Council, required to effect the change, were yet to have been produced. The Board noted the current position and agreed that clarity should be sought on the likely timescale of the transfer process.

8. Integrated Case Management System – Progress Report (SCTS/Feb18/06)

8.1 The Board assessed the current position of the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS). The first phase of the "Civil Online" portal, that would allow online case tracking for simple procedure cases, was scheduled for implementation in March 2018. Robust testing had been completed internally and with external users.

8.2 Development of phase 2 (which will provide for the online submission of simple procedure cases and support the introduction of the Simple Procedure Special Claims Rules) was progressing well. The roll-out of phase 2 would be preceded by a 6-month period of training and testing to ensure that the system and all those using it are ready for its implementation. Go-live of phase 2 was currently scheduled for early 2019.

8.3 The close monitoring of the ICMS programme by the Audit and Risk Committee was welcomed. The ARC would continue to scrutinise progress on the delivery of ICMS and seek assurance that the project was delivering to plan.

9. Inverness Justice Centre (SCTS/Feb18/07)

9.1 Progress on the development of the Inverness Justice Centre was reviewed. The main construction contract had been signed by the designated Board members in January. The project had now moved into its construction phase. The overall programme remained on track to deliver an operational justice centre by the end of 2019.

9.2 The Board praised the Property and Services Team for their considerable efforts in managing this programme of work alongside the significant levels of routine business for which they were responsible.

10. Draft 2018-19 Business Plan (SCTS/Feb18/08)

10.1 The draft Business Plan for 2018-19 was reviewed. Board members were invited to comment on the proposed outcomes outlined in the draft. Members commended the overall layout of the document. The final version of the Business Plan, incorporating the organisational budget for 2018-19, would be submitted to the Board for approval at their March meeting.

11. SCTS Committee Update (Oral)

11.1 The Audit and Risk Committee Chair provided an update on discussions at the January meeting, at which the audit plans for Internal and External Audit had been reviewed. The Committee had discussed their annual appraisal, recording a high level of engagement in the work of the Committee.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 The Chair advised that recruitment for the vacant Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Board positions was underway and would be concluded in advance of the next meeting.

13. Papers for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting Only

13.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- Court Programming
- ICT High Level Risks
- the SCTS Decision Tracker

No matters were raised by exception.

14. Date of the Next Meeting

14.1 Monday 26 March 2018 in Parliament House, Edinburgh.

15. Annual Review of Corporate Risk

15.1 Following the meeting the Board held their joint annual workshop with the Audit & Risk Committee to review the risks in the SCTS Corporate Risk Register. The workshop considered the existing risks and those that may arise over the coming 2-3 years. A number of key risks faced by the SCTS were assessed including: the implications of Brexit; the organisation's approach to learning and development; and the need to consider how best to manage ongoing public sector financial constraint. The Board agreed that the risks should be kept under regular review to ensure that new or emerging risks were identified before they had a major impact.