



## SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE BOARD

MEETING: Monday 27 March 2023, Office of the Public Guardian, Falkirk

**Present:** Lord Carloway, Lord President (Chair)  
Maggie Craig  
Steven Dickson  
Lady Dorrian, Lord Justice Clerk  
Ruth Innes, KC  
Eric McQueen  
Sheriff Jillian Martin-Brown  
Anne Scott  
Sheriff Principal Craig Turnbull  
Lynsey Walker  
Lord Woolman

**Attended:** Noel Rehfisch, Deputy Chief Executive, SCTS  
Karen Lawrie, Head of Secretariat, SCTS

**Apologies:** Dr Sophie Flemig  
Sheriff Olga Paspornikov  
Morna Rae, JP

### 1. Minutes of the SCTS Board Meeting on 6 February 2023

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.

### 3. Observations from Visit

3.1 Ahead of the formal meeting the Board toured the Office of the Public Guardian and Accountant of Court. An overview of the main areas of work: Power of Attorney; the monitoring of Guardianship accounts; and the varied duties of the Accountant of Court were provided.

3.2 The Board observed the processing of business using the current OPG case management system, which is due for upgrade. They were impressed with the dedication and positivity of the OPG staff despite the constraints of the current system.

3.3 The potential benefits and efficiencies of a new case management system for staff and users was discussed. The visit allowed the Board to consider fully the OPG business case, tabled at the meeting, having observed first hand the issues presented by the current case management system.

## **4. Finance Report**

4.1 The Board considered a report on financial performance to the end of February 2023. The total 2022-23 budget was £186.3m. This included the anticipated in-year funding transfers from the Scottish Government. Full year expenditure was currently forecast to deliver a balanced budget. The Board acknowledged that underspends identified in some areas had been directed to estates and digital services to maximise investment. Careful management would continue until the financial year-end to utilise the budget as effectively as possible.

4.2 The Board welcomed the comprehensive update and the steps taken to manage the available budget effectively.

## **5. Quarterly Performance Review and SCTS Board Scorecard**

5.1 The Board carried out its quarterly performance review. The current position on the delivery of the outcomes in the 2022-23 Business Plan and the Board Scorecard for the third quarter of 2022-23 were scrutinised.

5.2 The Board welcomed the progress made in delivering the outcomes from the 2022-23 Business Plan, noting that their final status would be reported in the 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts.

## **6. Draft SCTS Corporate Plan 2023-26 and Business Plan and Budget 2023-24**

### *2023-26 Corporate Plan*

6.1 A draft of the Corporate Plan setting out the purpose, values, priorities and high-level objectives of the SCTS for the coming 3 years had been shared with the Board in February. The Board had been involved in the development of the plan over the last year. The final draft was presented to the Board for approval.

6.2 The Board approved the Corporate Plan 2023-26. The plan would be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for formal approval before being laid in the Parliament and published.

### *Business Plan and Budget 2023-24*

6.3 The draft SCTS Business Plan for 2023-24, 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 for publication.

6.4 The Board complimented the Executive on the style and layout of both plans. They acknowledged that the majority of readers would access the documents online, but welcomed the availability of printed and plain text versions if required.

## **7. Office of the Public Guardian Business Case**

7.1 The Board considered a detailed business case that set out the plans and budget for the development of the first phase of a new case management system to support the work of the OPG. During the earlier tour of the facilities, the Board had observed the slow performance of the current system. The Government had confirmed funding to support the development of the system in 2023-24. The initial focus would be on Powers of Attorney. Further areas would be developed and introduced incrementally. The new system would allow direct user access to records and allow some changes to be made via a self-service portal.

7.2 The Board approved the Business Case, welcoming the efficiency and improved service for users that it would bring.

## **8. Edinburgh Justice Campus Business Case**

8.1 An update on the Edinburgh Justice Campus programme was presented. Phase 1 focussed on the development of space within Parliament House to accommodate the Scottish Law Commission and to improve jury facilities. Phase 1 would be completed by summer 2023.

8.2 An outline business case for phase 2 was considered. If approved by the Government, phase 2 would involve improvement works in Edinburgh Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts alongside the relocation and reconfiguration of teams currently within the building. New facilities would be developed to accommodate tribunals business currently located in other buildings in Edinburgh. The works would be split into four distinct phases which, if approved, would take place between 2024-26. The Board recognised the potential to reduce the overall estate footprint, improve co-location and contribute to the SCTS journey towards net-zero presented by the proposals in the business case.

8.3 The Board approved the phase 2 Edinburgh Justice Campus outline Business Case for submission to the Government.

## **9. Dundee Justice Hub Business Case**

9.1 The Board reviewed a Business Case seeking funding from the Scottish Government to develop a new Justice Hub in Dundee. The Justice Hub would support the High Court and the Sheriffdom of Tayside Central and Fife. It would address future accommodation needs for civil court business and include the development of a bespoke trauma-informed evidence facility, which could be used to support evidence by commission hearings and the remote taking of evidence.

9.2 The Board approved the Dundee Justice Hub Business Case for submission to the Government.

## **10. SCTS Committees Update**

### *People Committee*

10.1 The People Committee had scrutinised the analysis from the People Survey 2022 which had been delegated to them by the Board. The results of the survey provided a positive picture overall and demonstrated a good level of performance across the organisation. They confirmed that planned work on the themes of Learning and Development and Leadership and Managing Change should continue. Local Action Plans demonstrating the steps being taken to address issues raised would be presented to the Committee at their next meeting.

### *Estates Committee*

10.2 An update was provided from the Chair of the Estates Committee on the discussions at their last meeting. The Committee had toured the ongoing works related to phase 1 of the Edinburgh Justice Campus within Parliament House. They were also updated on the progress of other major Capital Projects.

10.3 The current re-tendering and procurement process and timeline for the Facilities Management Contract was reviewed. Updates on the progress of the retendering contract would be provided at future meetings.

## **12. Any Other Business**

12.1 In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked Lord Woolman and Sheriff Principal Turnbull for their contribution to the Board and its Committees during their tenures.

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

13.1 The following papers had been circulated for scrutiny:

- the SCTS Decision Tracker.

No matters were raised by exception.

### **14. Date of the Next Meeting**

14.1 The next meeting would be held on Monday 12 June 2023.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service  
March 2023