

APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose

1. To seek approval of the Annual Report for 2025/26 and the Annual Programme for 2026/27 (**Paper 3.2A**).

Background

2. To facilitate an appropriate level of scrutiny by others [section 5](#) of the Scottish Civil Justice Council and Criminal Legal Assistance Act 2013 (*“the Act”*) requires the Council to prepare an ‘annual report’ on its activities during each financial year along with a programme to convey its objectives and priorities for the coming year:

s5 - Annual programme and report

- (1) *The Council must prepare an annual plan setting out its objectives and priorities for each yearly period beginning on 1 April before the start of that period (“the programme”).*
 - (2) *The Council must prepare an annual report on its activities as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each yearly period ending on 31 March (“the report”).*
 - (3) *The report must include a summary of the recommendations made (if any) by the Council during the period covered by the report.*
 - (4) *The Council must lay a copy of the programme and the report before the Scottish Parliament.*
 - (5) *In complying with the duty in subsection (4), the Council may combine the programme for the coming year with the report for the ending year.*
3. The key points to note are:
 - ACCOUNTABILITY - under subsection 5 (4) a copy of the programme and the annual report for the SCJC must be laid before the Scottish Parliament, with subsection 5 (5) then enabling that information to be provided within the one combined report.
 - FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS – under subsection 5 (3) the annual report must include any formal recommendations made (if any) to the Lord President and/or Scottish Ministers.
 - TIMING – under subsection 5 (2) the combined report should be prepared “as soon as reasonably practicable” after the end of each year.

Content of the Report

4. The draft Annual Report for 2025/26 and the Annual Programme for 2026/27 (**Paper 3.2A**) is attached. To provide comparability with previous reports the information required is provided in the following format:
- A **Foreword** by the Lord President as Chair.
 - An **About Us** section – which conveys the standing information on the Council, its committees and the arrangements made for policy and legal support.
 - A **Key Achievements** section - which provides a narrative on the progress delivered within the 2025-26 reporting period which included:
 - Three sets of new rules being proposed to the Court of Session for consideration and approval;
 - Five public consultations being run and analysed to inform the development of policy positions; and
 - No formal recommendations being made to the Lord President that proposed changes to the wider civil justice system.
 - An **Annual Programme** section – which summarises the key activities to be progressed within the coming year (2026-27). As noted in paper 3.1, the content of this Annual Programme has been organised in line with the proposed Strategic Themes set out within the draft SCJC Strategic Plan. Further revisions to the annual work programme may be required, following discussion and any amendment of that draft Strategic Plan.

Next Steps

5. Subject to any changes that may arise from consideration by members, this combined report will be tabled with the Scottish Parliament and published online via the Council's website.

Recommendation

6. **Subject to any typographical or stylistic amendments, members are invited to consider and approve the publication of the combined Annual Report for 2025/26 and the Annual Programme for 2026/27 (Paper 3.2A).**

Scottish Civil Justice Council Secretariat
June 2026