

Criminal Justice Committee
Wednesday 4 March 2026
9th Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

Reflections on the budget proposed for 2026-27 and Scottish Spending Review

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. Following pre-budget oral evidence taking from the Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) in November 2025, the Committee agreed to invite the police back to give oral evidence on the budget resource allocation they are set to receive for 2026/27.
2. These allocations were announced in the [justice portfolio of the Scottish Budget](#) on 13 January 2026.
3. The Committee agreed to question certain organisations on the impact the 2026/27 budget allocations would have for each organisation as set out in the justice portfolio.
4. The Committee also wished to consider the implications of longer-term funding provision these organisations as set out the [justice portfolio section of the Scottish Spending Review 2026](#).
5. The Spending Review sets out the Scottish Government's indicative spending plans up to financial year 2028/29 for resource spending, and up to financial year 2029/30 for capital spending.

This evidence session

6. The focus of today's session is to assess the impact the 2026/27 budget allocations will have for the levels of service, and the major issues facing Police Scotland which they outlined in their pre-budget scrutiny.
7. The Committee also wished to hear from the Chief Constable as to whether she considers the longer-term provisions in the Spending Review as being adequate to properly address the recruitment, retention, maintenance, modernisation and development of Police Scotland to meet the expected service demands of policing over the next decade.
8. At this evidence session the Committee will hear from-
 - **Chief Constable Jo Farrell**, Police Scotland
 - **Deputy Chief Constable Alan Spiers**, Police Scotland, and

- **Sarah Roughead**, Chief Financial Officer, Police Scotland.

9. An additional written submission was provided by Police Scotland in support of today's session. This is included in **Annex A**.

Scrutiny to date

10. Police Scotland originally provided a written pre-budget [submission](#) as part of the Committee's call for views in September 2025. The Committee took pre-budget [oral evidence](#) from Police Scotland and the SPA on 19 November 2025.

11. As part of the Call for Views on the budget, the Committee also received written pre-budget submissions from the-

- [Association of Scottish Police Superintendents](#)
- [HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland](#)
- [Police Investigations and Review Commissioner](#)
- [Scottish Police Authority](#)
- [Scottish Police Federation](#).

12. In its report on its pre-budget scrutiny of the 2026/27 budget, the Committee considered the pre-budget evidence from Police Scotland at [paragraphs 27 to 85](#).

13. The Committee set out its conclusions and recommendations on the budget requests by the Police Scotland and the SPA in [paragraphs 208 to 234](#) of its pre-budget report.

14. On 14 January 2026, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs made a [written response](#) to the Committee on the conclusions and recommendations in its pre-budget scrutiny report of the 2026/27 budget.

Action

15. **Members are invited to discuss the 2026/27 budget allocations and the proposed funding in the Scottish Spending Review with the witnesses at today's meeting.**

Clerks to the Committee
March 2026

Annex A: Police Scotland Submission to the Criminal Justice Committee - Reflections on Proposed 2026-27 Budget and Scottish Spending Review

Dear Convener

Reflections on the budget

Thank you for the invitation to provide reflections on the draft budget, which was outlined by the Scottish Government on 13 January.

Police Scotland provided [written evidence](#) to assist the committee's pre-budget scrutiny for 2026-27 and, along with Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs, and Head of Finance Lynn Brown, I provided oral evidence on 5 November 2025.

This letter should be read in conjunction with that evidence.

Broadly, I outlined a minimum cash terms revenue uplift requirement of £104.9m for 2026-27 to fund an agreed pay award, non-pay inflation, new legislation, and other unavoidable cost pressures as well as additional employer National Insurance contributions. A further cost of £5m has been incurred because an inflation guarantee in the 2025-26 pay award has been triggered.

Police Scotland also outlined the case for an additional £33.7m investment to strengthen community policing, counter terrorism, online harm, non-recent investigations and public inquiries, ongoing digital and cyber priorities and a roll out of criminal toxicology across the organisation.

We requested capital expenditure of £93.9m.

I am grateful for the committee's pre-budget scrutiny report published in December, which highlighted the savings achieved by police and fire reform and made the case for reinvestment of those achievements.

I recognise a £90.3m revenue uplift and £86.3m to support the delivery of our capital programme as part of the draft budget announcement.

Ring-fenced funding for the Retail Crime Taskforce as well as the ongoing review of case files relating to group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation was also outlined.

Detailed planning is ongoing to set a budget for Police Scotland for 2026-27 that prioritises and maintains the safety and security of the people of Scotland in the context of intensifying demand driven by poverty, geopolitics, cybercrime and civil unrest.

I provided an update on these matters to the Scottish Police Authority during the public session of their Board in February and we continue to engage with the

Authority and the Scottish Government as we progress to a setting a balanced budget ahead of 2026-27.

The allocation outlined presents an extremely challenging position which I will manage, but it will inevitably have consequences, some of which I outlined during my update to the Authority.

Yours sincerely

Jo Farrell KPM
Chief Constable

End