

The Telegraph

Police Scotland 'to axe 1,300 staff and officers' if SNP refuses to increase funding



Police Scotland will axe 1,300 officers and staff, which would harm public safety, if SNP ministers refuse to increase funding in their upcoming Budget, the force warned.

The force has told the SNP government that a "flat cash" funding settlement for the 2025/26 financial year would result in a "significant slowdown in police officer recruitment".

But Scotland's police officer numbers have already dropped to the lowest level in 15 years, with the total having declined by nearly 400 in the year to June 30. The force had 27 fewer officers than in March 2007, just before the SNP took power.

Police Scotland have previously announced it was rolling out a pilot in the north east of Scotland whereby some 'minor' crimes were not investigated if they were deemed to require excessive manpower.

'Damage to Frontline'

The force's submission to the committee said: "If funding is not sufficient, there would be significant operational consequences and both officer and staff numbers would reduce in a way that would damage our frontline capacity."

It said the Scottish Government had "asked us to model two scenarios", the first on a flat cash settlement. This means the force would receive the same money as this year, with no increase to take account of inflation.

The force would have to "absorb" the cost of the annual pay increase, the submission said, meaning "savings" would have to be made elsewhere. This would "severely" damage planned reforms to improve the service, it warned.

The second modelled scenario of a three per cent cut "would have severe operational consequences, causing a significant disruption to frontline services and would compromise our ability to deliver effective policing services across Scotland."

A Scottish Government spokesman said: "Work is underway on the 2025/26 budget, which will be published on Dec 4.

"We will continue to work with Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority to identify options to address current financial challenges, whilst protecting service delivery to ensure we continue to have a safe, protected and resilient country."