The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Criminal Justice Committee

Clare Haughey MSP
Convener of the Finance and Public Administration Committee
Scottish Parliament

18 November 2026

Dear Clare,

Thank you for your letter of 12 November seeking views on whether to hold a Chamber debate on committee pre-budget scrutiny ahead of the Stage 1 debate on the Budget Bill.

As Convener of the Criminal Justice Committee, I strongly support going ahead with the debate again this year.

The Standing Orders requirement for the Bureau to schedule Chamber time for committees to debate their pre-budget reports is a core part of the Parliament's agreed budget scrutiny process. Dispensing with the debate would represent a significant departure from that process and risks diminishing the impact of the extensive evidence-gathering and scrutiny work committees have undertaken in recent weeks.

For the Criminal Justice Committee, our pre-budget scrutiny has raised urgent, substantive issues regarding funding sustainability and capital pressures across the justice sector. Having dedicated Chamber time between the publication of the Scottish Budget and the Stage 1 debate remains an important mechanism for committees to highlight their key recommendations and press the Scottish Government on how our findings have influenced its spending plans.

Regarding format, I welcome the steps piloted in January 2026 to encourage more dynamic exchanges, and I would support retaining measures that allow greater scope for interventions and cross-committee themes to keep the debate focused and distinct from the main Stage 1 debate.

Yours sincerely,

David Linden MSP
Convener, Criminal Justice Committee

Contact: Criminal Justice Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email: CriminalJustice.committee@Parliament.Scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.