



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Public Audit Committee

Patricia Ferguson
Chair, Scottish Affairs Committee

7 September 2026

Dear Patricia

Thank you for your [letter of 1 July](#) and your kind words on my new role as Convener of the Public Audit Committee.

Concerning Operation Branchform and your suggestion of joint scrutiny between your committee and ours, the Committee carefully considered your letter and raised the issue with the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) at our Business Planning Day; and there are several factors that would preclude such an undertaking—

- The remit of the AGS – this necessarily informs our response, the work of the AGS being central to the Committee's own remit, its focus being on how public money is spent and not on the funding of political parties.
- Future work of the AGS – there is no indication that the AGS's current or future audit work will cover any of the issues raised in your letter; and
- Other regulatory bodies – the work of the Crown Office and Police Scotland is covered by HM Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland and HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, respectively.

That said, were the future work or outputs of the AGS to cover any relevant issues, the Committee could then consider those as part of our regular scrutiny work.

On the wider question of interparliamentary engagement, I understand that you have also written to the Presiding Officer, as well as all the Parliament's Committees, and I will leave that aspect of your letter for the consideration of the Conveners Group.

Yours sincerely

Neil Bibby MSP
Convener

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