

JUSTICE SUB-COMMITTEE ON POLICING

CAPITAL RESOURCES FOR POLICE SCOTLAND IN THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET 2020-21

SUBMISSION FROM UNISON SCOTLAND

Capital expenditure in the Estates, Fleet and ICT business areas all have potential impact on our police staff members who work in and with the resources provided by this budget.

The difficulty faced by our members in Police Scotland is that the question 'how much does it cost to deliver an effective police service?' has been replaced with "how much money do we have to run policing?"

Police Scotland's aging estate is a developing health and safety risk to our members. Currently it seems there is only sufficient money available in the capital budget to make repairs as and when they are deemed as pressing as opposed to needed. This is now becoming practice in the majority of premises across the country. A stark example of this highlighted recently by our colleagues at the Scottish Police Federation, is the Oban police station. This shows the level of neglect and disrepair that premises will be allowed to reach when maintenance budgets are inadequate.

£4.3m has been allocated for Estates to spend in 2019/20. This is woefully insufficient to repair and maintain the inherited legacy properties across Scotland. This represents a significantly increased the health and safety risk.

Similarly, the organisations aging fleet provision creates more pressure on our members to repair ailing vehicles which will cost more in terms of part and maintenance as the vehicles get older.

There was insufficient funding provided in 2019/20 to deliver the full business case for a modern and capable ICT infrastructure. As such there is every likelihood that our members will struggle on working with ageing technology. As well as the strain this puts on our members, this will not help to deliver the most effective public service in an increasingly technology dependent society.

When there is an operational and reputational risk, as there often is in Police Scotland, it seems that capital spending takes a back seat in terms of priorities. Police staff are doing their best to make it work with what they've got but with the fifth lowest capital expenditure of all the UK Police Forces for UNISON it is clear and simple, there is not adequate funding from the Scottish Government for Police Scotland.