



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 4, No. 79, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Tuesday 18 February 2025

Note: (DT) signifies a decision taken at Decision Time.

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Time for Reflection: Mr Adrian Ferguson, Perth Gospel Hall, led Time for Reflection.

2. Revision to Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-16518— That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the programme of business for—

(a) Tuesday 18 February 2025—

after

followed by Ministerial Statement: Community Wealth Building Progress and Future Ambition

insert

followed by Ministerial Statement: Securing a Future for Grangemouth

delete

5.00 pm Decision Time

and insert

5.15 pm Decision Time

(b) Wednesday 19 February 2025—

after

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; Health and Social Care

insert

followed by Ministerial Statement: The Promise Oversight Board Report 3: Progress and Next Steps Towards Keeping The Promise

(c) Thursday 20 February 2025

delete

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Social Justice

insert

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Social Justice

after

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Independent Review of Sentencing and Penal Policy

insert

followed by Legislative Consent Motion: Great British Energy Bill- UK Legislation

delete

5.00 pm Decision Time

and insert

5.15 pm Decision Time

Tess White moved amendments S6M-16518.1—

leave out first “5.15 pm Decision Time” and insert—

“*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Public Sector Workers’ Access to Single Sex Spaces

5.45 pm Decision Time”.

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to (by division: For 47, Against 64 (including 3 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to.

3. Topical Questions: Questions were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and a Minister.

4. Ministerial Statement: The Minister for Employment and Investment (Tom Arthur) made a statement and answered questions on Community Wealth Building Progress and Future Ambition.

5. Ministerial Statement: The First Minister (John Swinney) made a statement and answered questions on Securing a Future for Grangemouth.

6. Employer National Insurance Contributions: The Minister for Employment and Investment (Tom Arthur) moved S6M-16488—That the Parliament recognises the significant adverse impacts of the UK Government's intended changes to employer national insurance contributions (ENICs) on Scotland's businesses, third sector, public services and wider economy; believes that the impacts are likely to result in higher costs, job losses, increased prices and cause some charities and businesses to close altogether; notes the potential disproportionate impact of the changes on consumer-facing sectors of Scotland's economy, such as retail, tourism and hospitality businesses, organisations providing social care and third sector organisations commissioned to provide public services; agrees with the significant concerns expressed by 50 organisations in Scotland, including COSLA and the STUC, who, along with the Scottish Government, wrote to the UK Government describing the risk to the vital services that they provide due to these additional costs, and calls on the UK Government to reverse this decision and not raise ENICs as planned in April 2025.

Craig Hoy moved amendment S6M-16488.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16488 in the name of Tom Arthur (Employer National Insurance Contributions), insert at end “; warns that the increase to ENICs is a tax on jobs that will negatively impact employers and employees; acknowledges that, as a direct consequence of Scottish Government policy, the Scottish public sector is disproportionately exposed to increases in labour costs because the Scottish public sector is proportionately larger than in the rest of the UK and its salary costs impose a heavier burden on taxpayers; considers, therefore, that budget decisions by both the Scottish and UK governments will hurt taxpayers, consumers and workers in Scotland and will negatively impact growth, and supports common-sense Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party proposals for tax cuts to grow Scotland's economy and give workers and businesses much-needed relief.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 28, Against 92 (including 3 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

Daniel Johnson moved amendment S6M-16488.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16488 in the name of Tom Arthur (Employer National Insurance Contributions), leave out from “recognises” to end and insert “welcomes the record £5.2 billion of additional funding for Scotland delivered as a result of the UK Government's Autumn Budget; agrees with the STUC that the additional positive measures that are set out in the draft Scottish Budget 2025-26 are 'dependent on UK Government funding'; regrets that the fiscal changes called for by the Scottish Government would significantly reduce the level of funding available to Scotland's public services; understands that the First Minister has publicly advocated for a cut to Scotland's budget of £636 million; regrets that the Scottish National Party

administration's failure to grow Scotland's economy has negatively impacted the level of funding available in the Scottish Budget over many years; understands that decisions around the level of staffing in Scotland's public services are devolved to the Scottish Government, and calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that the record funding delivered by the UK Government reaches the frontline services that need it most.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 21, Against 99 (including 3 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 93 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 20, Abstentions 7).

7. Decision Time: The Parliament took a decision on item 6 as noted above.

8. Opportunities and Challenges for Scotland’s Fishing Sector in 2025: The Parliament debated S6M-16282 in the name of Beatrice Wishart—That the Parliament commends the hard-working fishermen of island and coastal communities, including in the Shetland Islands constituency; understands that, as published in the most recent Marine Economic Statistics in December 2024, fishing contributed £335 million to Scotland’s economy in 2022, including £83.3 million from Shetland; notes the dangerous nature of the open sea and the at-sea dangers of manmade infrastructure, as well as from other fishing vessels conducting dangerous procedures and manoeuvres; further notes concern in the sector about increasing competition for marine space and the calls to establish designated cable corridors as a means of addressing spatial squeeze and promoting co-operation; recognises the cultural and economic significance of fishing to Scotland; highlights fish as what it sees as a sustainable, low-carbon source of protein; understands that the Scottish Government has not held a debate on fisheries since 2022, and notes the belief that action to address spatial squeeze in Scotland's seas is in the long-term interests of the fishing sector as well as the wider Scottish economy.

The meeting closed at 6.32 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
18 February 2025

Appendix
(Note: this Appendix does not form part of the Minutes)

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 7 February 2025—

Economy and Fair Work Committee, 3rd Report, 2025 (Session 6): Report on subordinate legislation considered by the Economy and Fair Work Committee on 29 January and 5 February 2025 (SP Paper 737)

The following report was published on 18 February 2025—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 11th Report, 2025 (Session 6): Subordinate Legislation Considered by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 18 February 2025 (SP Paper 738)

Legislative Consent Memorandum

The following memorandum was lodged on 17 February 2025—

Gillian Martin, Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy:
Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Great British Energy Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (LCM-S6-48b)

Subordinate Legislation

Affirmative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 7 February 2025 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 Amendment Order 2025 [draft]
laid under section 24(2) of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002

The following instruments were withdrawn and re-laid before the Parliament on 10 February 2025—

Tied Pubs (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft]
laid under section 24(2) of the Tied Pubs (Scotland) Act 2021

Social Security (Up-rating) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft]
laid under section 96(2) of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 18 February 2025 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (Part 2 Further Extension) Order 2025 [draft]

laid under section 133(2) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Negative Instruments

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 7 February 2025 and are subject to the negative procedure—

Environmental Protection (Injurious Articles) (Fixed Penalty Notices and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 (SSI 2025/28)
laid under section 160A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Saving Provision) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 (SSI 2025/29)
laid under section 12(5)(b) of the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022

National Assistance (Sums for Personal Requirements) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 (SSI 2025/30)
laid under section 63 of the National Assistance Act 1948

National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2025 (SSI 2025/31)
laid under section 63 of the National Assistance Act 1948

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 12 February 2025 and is subject to the negative procedure—

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Scheme (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2025 (SI 2025/124)
laid under schedule 3 of the Climate Change Act 2008

Other Documents

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 7 February 2025 and is not subject to parliamentary procedure—

National Marine Plan Review: 3 Year Report on the Effectiveness of Scotland's National Marine Plan (SG/2025/20) laid under Section 61 of the Marine Coastal Access Act 2009

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 10 February 2025 and is not subject to parliamentary procedure—

The Scottish Ministers response to the Scottish Commission on Social Security Recommendations on the Up-rating Regulations 2025 (SG/2025/30)

laid under section 97(9)(a) of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018

The Scottish Ministers response to the Scottish Commission on Social Security Recommendations on the Up-rating Regulations 2025 (SG/2025/16) which was laid on 24 January was withdrawn on 10 February 2025

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 17 February 2025 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner: Strategic Plan 2024 to 2026 (SG/2025/33) laid under Section 42, clause 11 (a) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

Scottish Law Commission: Report on the Tenancy of Shops (Scotland) Act 1949 (SG/2025/23) laid under Section 3(2) of the Law Commissions Act 1965

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