



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 4, No. 83, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 26 February 2025

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, and Parliamentary Business and then Justice and Home Affairs were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and a Minister.

2. Scottish Enterprise Funding for Arms Companies: Lorna Slater moved S6M-16571—That the Parliament notes with concern that at least £8 million of Scottish Enterprise grants have been awarded to 13 companies involved in arms dealing and manufacturing since 2019, including £700,000 to Leonardo and £500,000 to Raytheon Systems; further notes that a number of these businesses have directly supplied weapons and equipment to Israel during its assault on Gaza; understands that, despite this, no company has failed the current Scottish Enterprise human rights due diligence checks; believes, therefore, that the current due diligence process at Scottish Enterprise is failing to ensure that Scotland upholds its international obligations, and calls on the Scottish Government to end all public funding to companies complicit in the arms trade with Israel.

The Minister for Business (Richard Lochhead) moved amendment S6M-16571.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16571 in the name of Lorna Slater (Scottish Enterprise Funding for Arms Companies), leave out from first “notes” to end and insert “reiterates its unwavering support for the ceasefire in Gaza, for the calls for all efforts to be made to ensure an extension of the ceasefire, for humanitarian aid to reach people in Gaza, and for the remaining hostages to be released; recognises and supports the humanitarian assistance that the

Scottish Government has provided to the people of Gaza; calls for recognition of a Palestinian state and a two-state solution; recognises that Scottish Enterprise does not provide funding for the manufacture of weapons or munitions; notes that Scottish Enterprise operates a human rights due diligence process in the awarding of any funding; recognises that responsibility for issuing licences for the export of arms is reserved to the UK Government; calls for the suspension of arms exports to Israel, and does not believe that any public funding should be going to supply arms to Israel.”

Craig Hoy moved amendment S6M-16571.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16571 in the name of Lorna Slater (Scottish Enterprise Funding for Arms Companies), leave out from “with concern” to end and insert “that Scotland is home to a wide range of defence, aerospace and security companies that collectively play a vital role in supporting the UK in its endeavours to assist in its international duties to maintain peace, including via its membership of NATO; understands that the defence, aerospace and security sectors support more than 30,000 jobs, including 1,500 apprentices, and contribute £3.2 billion to Scotland's economy; welcomes Scottish Enterprise funding that supports these vital sectors and the jobs and investment that they provide; reiterates Israel's right to defend itself, and acknowledges that policy decisions regarding the arms trade are reserved to the UK Parliament.”

After debate, amendment S6M-16571.3 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 35, Abstentions 21). As a result, amendment S6M-16571.1 was pre-empted.

Daniel Johnson moved amendment S6M-16571.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16571 in the name of Lorna Slater (Scottish Enterprise Funding for Arms Companies), insert at end “; acknowledges that across the UK, arms export licences have been suspended for items with a clear risk that they may be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law; calls on Scottish Enterprise to review its human rights due diligence checks to ensure that they take account of where products' end use is, and that they fully comply with legal obligations under the Export Control Act 2002 and international law, and recognises the contribution of the defence sector in Scotland and the role that Scotland-based businesses have played in defending democracy and freedom.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 85 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 8, Abstentions 26).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 83 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 35, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament agreed—

That the Parliament reiterates its unwavering support for the ceasefire in Gaza, for the calls for all efforts to be made to ensure an extension of the ceasefire, for humanitarian aid to reach people in Gaza, and for the remaining hostages to be released; recognises and supports the humanitarian assistance that the Scottish Government has provided to the people of Gaza; calls for recognition of a Palestinian state and a two-state solution; recognises that Scottish Enterprise does not provide funding for the manufacture of weapons or munitions; notes that Scottish Enterprise operates a human rights due diligence process in the awarding of any funding; recognises that responsibility for issuing licences for the export of arms is reserved to the UK Government; calls for the suspension of arms exports to Israel, and does not believe that any public funding should be going to supply arms to Israel; acknowledges that across the UK, arms export licences have been suspended for items with a clear risk that they may be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law; calls on Scottish Enterprise to review its human rights due diligence checks to ensure that they take account of where products' end use is, and that they fully comply with legal obligations under the Export Control Act 2002 and international law, and recognises the contribution of the defence sector in Scotland and the role that Scotland-based businesses have played in defending democracy and freedom.

3. Cheaper Rail Fares: Mark Ruskell moved S6M-16572—That the Parliament believes that rail fares in Scotland must be cheaper; regrets the decision by the Scottish Government to end the off-peak all-day pilot in September 2024, despite an increase of passenger demand by 6.8% and an average 17% cost saving to passengers; understands that expensive and complex ticketing deters passengers from choosing to travel by train; acknowledges that, in order to fulfil the Scottish Government's ambition of reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030, rail services and public transport must be cheaper and more accessible, and calls, therefore, on the Scottish Government to reverse the 3.8% increase to rail fares coming into effect from 1 April 2025, to permanently remove peak-time rail fares, and to simplify public transport fares, through the introduction of integrated ticketing, as soon as possible.

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport (Fiona Hyslop) moved amendment S6M-16572.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16572 in the name of Mark Ruskell (Cheaper Rail Fares), leave out from first “fares” to end and insert “and bus fares must be affordable to encourage the use of public transport; welcomes that rail passenger numbers, since the off-peak all-day pilot ended, have continued to grow, with demand in each four-week period being an average of 4.5% more than the same period in 2024, when the trial was in place; notes that the Scottish Budget for 2025-26 includes provision for a pilot of a £2 bus fare cap; recognises that the results of the off-peak all-day pilot mirror the results of Transport for London's similar trial, which also saw no significant increase in travel as a result of lower fares; further recognises that reinstating off-peak fares all day from 1 April 2025 would cost up to £40 million of resource funding, which would require a commensurate reduction elsewhere in the Transport portfolio's resource budget; recognises that not implementing a fares rise in 2025 would require an additional £11 million, which would require a commensurate reduction elsewhere in the Transport portfolio's

resource budget, and believes that any further consideration of off-peak fares all day should take account of the Transport Scotland and Transport for London research, be part of future budget planning and must also consider progress on bus affordability, availability and reliability across Scotland.”

Sue Webber moved amendment S6M-16572.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16572 in the name of Mark Ruskell (Cheaper Rail Fares) insert “; notes that the operation of ScotRail has cost £600 million more compared to when it was in private hands, and that rail fares also increased by 8.7% in the 2024-25 financial year; calls on the Scottish Government to deliver value for money for taxpayers, which is a significant concern for rail users; urges the Scottish Government to increase access to ScotRail by opening new railway stations, in areas such as Winchburgh, Cove and Newtonhill, and calls on the Scottish Government to consider how a nationalised rail service can provide for all people in Scotland.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 28, Against 85 (including 3 proxy votes), Abstentions 4).

Claire Baker moved amendment S6M-16572.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16572 in the name of Mark Ruskell (Cheaper Rail Fares), insert at end “; recognises that ScotRail requires investment and sustainable funding, but believes that passengers should not carry the burden of this while services are underperforming.”

After debate, amendment S6M-16572.3 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 64 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 55, Abstentions 0).As a result, amendment S6M-16572.2 was pre-empted.

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 65 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 54, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament agreed—

That the Parliament believes that rail and bus fares must be affordable to encourage the use of public transport; welcomes that rail passenger numbers, since the off-peak all-day pilot ended, have continued to grow, with demand in each four-week period being an average of 4.5% more than the same period in 2024, when the trial was in place; notes that the Scottish Budget for 2025-26 includes provision for a pilot of a £2 bus fare cap; recognises that the results of the off-peak all-day pilot mirror the results of Transport for London’s similar trial, which also saw no significant increase in travel as a result of lower fares; further recognises that reinstating off-peak fares all day from 1 April 2025 would cost up to £40 million of resource funding, which would require a commensurate reduction elsewhere in the Transport portfolio’s resource budget; recognises that not implementing a fares rise in 2025 would require an additional £11 million, which would require a commensurate reduction elsewhere in the Transport portfolio’s resource budget, and believes that

any further consideration of off-peak fares all day should take account of the Transport Scotland and Transport for London research, be part of future budget planning and must also consider progress on bus affordability, availability and reliability across Scotland.

4. Appointment of Member of the Standards Commission for Scotland: Claire Baker, on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, moved S6M-16561—That the Parliament agrees, under section 8 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, that Malcolm Bell be appointed as a member of the Standards Commission for Scotland.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

5. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-16587—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 4 March 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's Renewable Future

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 5 March 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Deputy First Minister Responsibilities, Economy and Gaelic; Finance and Local Government

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Achieving a Fair Balance in the UK's Economy

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 6 March 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate: COVID-19 Day of Reflection

followed by Portfolio Questions: Net Zero and Energy, and Transport

followed by Criminal Justice Committee, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee and Social Justice and Social Security Committee Debate: The People's Panel Report on Reducing Drug Harm and Deaths in Scotland

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.15 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 11 March 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 12 March 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 13 March 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Social Justice

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 3 March 2025, in rule 13.7.3, after the word “except” the words “to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or” are inserted.

The motion was agreed to.

6. Referral of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-16588—That the Parliament agrees that the Local Government Finance (Scotland) Order 2025 [draft] be considered by the Parliament.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

7. Designation of Lead Committee: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-16589—That the Parliament agrees that the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

8. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 as noted above.

9. Northern Corridor Community Forum's Evidence-based Report: The Parliament debated S6M-16389 in the name of Fulton MacGregor—That the Parliament acknowledges the publication of the 2024 Northern Corridor Community Forum's publication, Northern Corridor Community Forum - Evidence Based Report, which, it believes, offers a comprehensive statistical and literary analysis of the challenges facing the Northern Corridor area in North Lanarkshire, encompassing the communities of Glenboig, Gartcosh, Moodiesburn, Chryston, Stepps and Muirhead; commends the report for its detailed findings on critical issues such as housing, economic development, infrastructure, local amenities and community wellbeing; notes the report's identification of what the authors see as the urgent need

for modernised and enhanced infrastructure to support these communities; understands that, while the area is open to appropriate new housing developments, there is significant concern about the unprecedented scale of private housing projects, which threaten the long-term sustainability of the communities; notes the report's call for a more constructive and collaborative relationship between the Community Forum and North Lanarkshire Council to rebuild democratic trust and ensure that local decision-making reflects the needs, desires and plans of the people who live and work in the area, and further notes the view that implementing the report's recommendations will prioritise actions to foster inclusive economic growth, improve accountability in local governance and enhance the living and working conditions for residents and workers across the Northern Corridor.

The meeting closed at 5.57 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
26 February 2025

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

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 26 February 2025—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 14th Report, 2025 (Session 6): Delegated powers in the Scottish Languages Bill (as amended at Stage 2) (SP Paper 744)

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 26 February 2025 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Additional support for learning: A report prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS/2025/2) laid under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

A joint assurance review on the acquisition, retention, use and destruction of DNA for criminal justice and police purposes in Scotland (SBC/2025/01) laid under Section 20(2) Scottish Biometrics Commissioners Act 2020

Northern Lighthouse Board Annual Report and Accounts to 31 March 2024 (SG/2025/38) laid under Section 218 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995

Published by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000 or 0800 092 7500

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot

Live chat on parliament.scot

You can write to us in any language or contact us
using the Text Relay service or in British Sign

Language through contactScotland-BSL.

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

The Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website -
www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information.