



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 4, No. 69, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 16 January 2025

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

The meeting opened at 11.40 am.

- 1. General Questions:** Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.
- 2. First Minister's Questions:** Questions were answered by the First Minister (John Swinney).
- 3. Scottish Human Rights Commission's Spotlight Project into Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands and Islands:** The Parliament debated S6M-15705 in the name of Rhoda Grant—That the Parliament welcomes the Scottish Human Rights Commission's spotlight project into Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands and Islands; understands that it was commissioned in April 2023 and undertook a targeted programme of work to assess the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights for people living across the Highlands and Islands, which concluded in early 2024 and published its report, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands and Islands, in November 2024; believes that this report has been widely welcomed by community groups, charities and organisations across the Highlands and Islands; is concerned, in particular, by the Commission's urgent calls to tackle the rooflessness, hunger and access to health issues across the Highlands and Islands; is further concerned that, according to the report, across all rights examined, there is not a single human right that meets all the conditions of adequacy under international law, and notes the calls on the Scottish Government to act on this report and review its current policies to address the concerns raised by this report.

4. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Net Zero and Energy, and Transport were answered by Cabinet Secretaries.

5. Ministerial Statement: The Deputy First Minister (Kate Forbes) made a statement and answered questions on Scottish Government's Response to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry Module 1 Report.

6. Inquiry into the A9 Dualling Programme: Jackson Carlaw, on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, moved S6M-16085—That the Parliament notes the conclusions and recommendations of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee's 2nd Report, 2024 (Session 6), Inquiry into the A9 Dualling Programme (SP Paper 669), including the recommendation that a dedicated committee should be established to provide oversight and maintain momentum on scrutiny of long-running, multi-session infrastructure projects, such as the A9 dualling programme.

The motion was agreed to (DT)

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

8. Improving Access to Health and Social Care in Rural Scotland: The Parliament debated S6M-14408 in the name of Tim Eagle—That the Parliament considers that people living in remote and rural areas face unique challenges when it comes to accessing health and social care; understands that the recruitment and retention of staff, poor infrastructure, and the inability to access certain services are all common issues that impact health and social care in rural and remote areas; notes what it sees as the failure of the Scottish Government to deliver infrastructure investment in the Highlands and Islands region and elsewhere, including the failure to deliver a new Belford Hospital in Fort William, complete upgrades to Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin, and build a replacement hospital for the Isle of Barra, among other delayed projects; understands that many communities in rural areas face a reduction of services, such as the reduced access to NHS dentistry in Dunoon and loss of care home beds across the Highlands and Islands region; believes that all of these factors contribute to the wider issue of rural depopulation, and notes the calls for the Scottish Government to properly invest in health and social care in rural and remote areas and deliver better health outcomes for residents.

9. Motion without Notice: Tim Eagle moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

The motion was agreed to.

The meeting closed at 6.21 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
16 January 2025

Appendix

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

Subordinate Legislation

Negative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 16 January 2025 and is subject to the negative procedure—

Building (Fees) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025 (SSI 2025/6)
laid under section 54(5) of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003

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