



# The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 4, No. 73, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Tuesday 28 January 2025

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

- 1. Time for Reflection:** Mirrin Kirkpatrick and Sarah-Jane McKeown, Holocaust Educational Trust Ambassadors, led Time for Reflection.
- 2. Topical Questions:** Questions were answered by a Cabinet Secretary.
- 3. Revision to Business Programme:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Jamie Hepburn) moved S6M-16264— That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the programme of business for Tuesday 28 January 2025—

after

*followed by* Topical Questions

insert

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Response to Storm Éowyn

The motion was agreed to.

- 4. Ministerial Statement:** The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance) made a statement and answered questions on Storm Éowyn.
- 5. Urgent Questions:** An urgent question, to ask the Scottish Government, in light of the reported details of abuse that came to light during sentencing at Glasgow High Court yesterday, what its position is on whether child safeguarding in Scotland

has failed, was answered by the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise (Natalie Don-Innes).

**6. Investing in Public Services Through the Scottish Budget:** The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray) moved S6M-16237—That the Parliament welcomes the investment in Scotland's public services through the draft Scottish Budget 2025-26; notes that £21.7 billion for health and social care investment and over £15 billion in funding for local authorities is being provided; calls on the UK Government to fully fund the additional cost of its increase in employer national insurance contributions, noting the significant impacts on public services, including social care, if it does not fund it in full; notes the importance of the public service reform programme to drive future financial sustainability, and celebrates the key role that the Scottish public service workforce plays in delivering these services across Scotland.

Craig Hoy moved amendment S6M-16237.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16237 in the name of Neil Gray (Investing in Public Services Through the Scottish Budget), leave out from “welcomes” to end and insert “notes that the performance of public services has declined despite significant funding increases and the hard work of those on the frontline; believes that this decline is due to a failure of leadership from the Scottish National Party administration; is concerned by the significant rise in senior-level civil servants and the failure to deliver meaningful public sector reform; acknowledges that, despite the decline in public services' performance, rises in Scottish income tax will see the public pay £1.7 billion more in taxation in 2025-26, and calls on the Scottish Government to start delivering value for money for taxpayers by cutting income tax to 19% for those earning up to £43,662, providing full non-domestic rates relief for pubs and businesses across Scotland and increasing the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax zero-rate threshold to £250,000, to reduce the cost of buying a home.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 26, Against 86 (including 4 proxy votes), Abstentions 1).

Michael Marra moved amendment S6M-16237.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16237 in the name of Neil Gray (Investing in Public Services Through the Scottish Budget), leave out from “calls” to end and insert “understands that the additional investment in Scotland's public services has been made possible by the UK Government's Autumn Budget, which delivered record funding for the Scottish Government and provided an additional £5.2 billion; believes that the future of Scotland's public services can only be guaranteed through measures to improve fiscal sustainability through public service reform and regrets the lack of progress being made by the Scottish Government in this area; recognises the role that workers in Scotland's public sector play in delivering vital services and regrets that the workforce and public are being failed by years of Scottish National Party mismanagement, which has created major challenges across the public sector in Scotland and left one in six people in Scotland on NHS waiting lists,

and calls for the Scottish Government to take meaningful action to reform public services so that they work for users and staff across Scotland.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 20, Against 90 (including 4 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

Gillian Mackay moved amendment S6M-16237.4—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16237 in the name of Neil Gray (Investing in Public Services Through the Scottish Budget), leave out from “notes the importance” to “sustainability” and insert “further calls on the UK Government to fully fund the increase in employer national insurance contributions in commissioned services and arm's-length external organisations; notes the importance of the public service reform programme to drive future financial sustainability; further notes the success of the four-day week pilot trialled by South of Scotland Enterprise, and calls on the Scottish Government to expand the four-day working week within the public sector workforce”.

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63 (including 4 proxy votes), Against 46, Abstentions 4).

Alex Cole-Hamilton moved amendment S6M-16237.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16237 in the name of Neil Gray (Investing in Public Services Through the Scottish Budget), insert at end “; notes that Scottish Liberal Democrat priorities have been reflected in the first draft of the Budget through the inclusion of the reinstatement of a winter heating payment for pensioners, extra funding for social care, additional funding for local healthcare to make it easier to see a GP or NHS dentist, funding for new specialist support across the country for people with long COVID, chronic fatigue syndrome and other similar conditions, the right for family carers to earn more without having support withdrawn, business rates relief for the hospitality sector, funding to build more affordable homes, enhanced support for local authorities operating ferry services, and the resumption of the work required to replace the Belford Hospital in NHS Highland and the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion in NHS Lothian; calls for further investment in drug and neonatal services, hospices, support for the young people with complex and additional needs attending Corseford College, and colleges, so that they can deliver the skills that the economy and public services need, and further calls for local authorities to receive a fair share of the money for additional employer national insurance contributions when it is received by the Scottish Government.

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 59 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 45, Abstentions 8 (including 1 proxy vote).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 67 (including 4 proxy votes), Against 46, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament welcomes the investment in Scotland's public services through the draft Scottish Budget 2025-26; notes that £21.7 billion for health and social care investment and over £15 billion in funding for local authorities is being provided; calls on the UK Government to fully fund the additional cost of its increase in employer national insurance contributions, noting the significant impacts on public services, including social care, if it does not fund it in full; further calls on the UK Government to fully fund the increase in employer national insurance contributions in commissioned services and arm's-length external organisations; notes the importance of the public service reform programme to drive future financial sustainability; further notes the success of the four-day week pilot trialled by South of Scotland Enterprise; calls on the Scottish Government to expand the four-day working week within the public sector workforce; celebrates the key role that the Scottish public service workforce plays in delivering these services across Scotland; notes that Scottish Liberal Democrat priorities have been reflected in the first draft of the Budget through the inclusion of the reinstatement of a winter heating payment for pensioners, extra funding for social care, additional funding for local healthcare to make it easier to see a GP or NHS dentist, funding for new specialist support across the country for people with long COVID, chronic fatigue syndrome and other similar conditions, the right for family carers to earn more without having support withdrawn, business rates relief for the hospitality sector, funding to build more affordable homes, enhanced support for local authorities operating ferry services, and the resumption of the work required to replace the Belford Hospital in NHS Highland and the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion in NHS Lothian; calls for further investment in drug and neonatal services, hospices, support for the young people with complex and additional needs attending Corseford College, and colleges, so that they can deliver the skills that the economy and public services need, and further calls for local authorities to receive a fair share of the money for additional employer national insurance contributions when it is received by the Scottish Government.

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

**8. Brexit Harm to Scotland, Five Years Since the UK Left the EU:** The Parliament debated S6M-16143 in the name of Clare Adamson—That the Parliament notes that January 2025 marks five years since the UK left the EU; recognises that people in Scotland voted to remain within the EU and that there was a majority vote for remain in every one of Scotland's local authority areas, and considers that, despite this, Scotland was removed from the EU against the democratic wishes of the people of Scotland; believes that Brexit has caused, and continues to cause, substantial harm to the Scottish and UK economies; acknowledges reports that there is an estimated loss of £2.3 billion every year in public revenues for Scotland as a result of Brexit; notes with concern that the Office for Budget Responsibility has reportedly estimated that Brexit will reduce the overall trade intensity of the UK economy by 15% in the long term; understands that a recent study from the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics found that goods exports from the UK dropped by £27 billion in 2022 alone as a result of Brexit; further understands that the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply revealed problems with supply chains and trade routes, exacerbated by Brexit, which could see imports cost between 5% and 20% more,

fuelling a new cost of living crisis; considers that Brexit continues to pose significant barriers to people coming to live and work in Scotland, including in vital public services; believes that Brexit is impacting young people's right to live, work and study in 27 European nations, and denying future generations a wealth of economic, social and cultural opportunities, and notes the belief that Scotland should rejoin the EU to rebuild strong ties with fellow Europeans and to ensure that businesses, students and workers in Scotland, including in the Motherwell and Wishaw constituency, can benefit from access to the world's largest single market and the rich cultural, social and economic benefits that membership of the EU brings.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm.

**David McGill**  
Clerk of the Parliament  
28 January 2025

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

**Committee Reports**

The following report was published on 24 January 2025—

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, 2nd Report, 2025 (Session 6):  
Subordinate Legislation considered by the Rural Affairs and Islands  
Committee on 22 January 2025 (SP Paper 726)

The following report was published on 28 January 2025—

Criminal Justice Committee, 2nd Report, 2025 (Session 6): Report on the  
International Organisations (Immunities and Privileges) (Scotland)  
Amendment Order 2025 [draft] (SP Paper 729)

**Subordinate Legislation**

**Affirmative Instruments**

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 24 January 2025 and are subject to the affirmative procedure—

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

Social Security Up-rating (Scotland) Order 2025 [draft]  
laid under sections 150(2), 150A(2) and 190(1)(a) of the Social Security  
Administration Act 1992

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

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 27 January 2025 and are subject to the affirmative procedure—

Community Care (Personal Care and Nursing Care) (Scotland) Amendment  
Regulations 2025 [draft]  
laid under section 23(3)(a) of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act  
2002

National Bus Travel Concession Schemes (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland)  
Order 2025 [draft]  
laid under section 52(3) of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 28 January 2025 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Provision of Early Learning and Childcare (Specified Children) (Scotland)  
Amendment Order 2025 [draft]  
laid under section 99(2) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act  
2014

### **Legislative Consent Memorandum**

The following memorandum was lodged on 28 January 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-S6-48a)

### **Other Documents**

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 24 January 2025 and  
are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

**The Scottish Ministers response to the Scottish Commission on Social  
Security Recommendations on the Up-rating Regulations 2025 (SG/2025/16)**  
laid under section 97(9)(a) of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018

**Social Security Assistance in Scotland - Up-rating for Inflation in 2025-26  
(SG/2025/17)** laid under section 86A(1)(c) of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018

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