



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 4, No. 88, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Tuesday 11 March 2025

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

- 1. Time for Reflection:** Kayleigh Brown (née Haggo), led Time for Reflection.
- 2. Topical Questions:** Questions were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and a Minister.
- 3. Supporting Households with Cost of Living Pressures and Rising Energy Bills:** The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice (Shirley-Anne Somerville) moved S6M-16750—That the Parliament notes that Ofgem's energy price cap has soared to £1,849 for the average household, which is the third increase in a row and 9.4% (£159) higher than this time last year; recognises that this will compound cost of living pressures for households across Scotland; welcomes the Scottish Government's action in the recently passed Budget (Scotland) (No. 4) Bill, including the reintroduction of universal winter fuel payments for pensioners and through energy efficiency programmes; believes that reforming energy markets and harnessing Scotland's renewable potential will bolster energy security and, in turn, reduce consumer bills, and calls on the UK Government to make urgent progress on delivering its commitment to reduce bills by £300, against which no progress has yet been made.

Liz Smith moved amendment S6M-16750.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16750 in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Supporting Households with Cost of Living Pressures and Rising Energy Bills), leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert "notes the ongoing

concerns amongst the Scottish business community about the effects of the widening tax differential between Scotland and the rest of the UK; further notes the failure of both the UK Government and the Scottish Government to prioritise policies that will deliver sustained economic growth, investment in infrastructure and more efficient public services, and calls on the Scottish Government to take a balanced approach to net zero, which includes supporting Scotland's oil and gas industry and ending policies that worsen cost of living pressures."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 23, Against 83 (including 3 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

Paul O'Kane moved amendment S6M-16750.4—

As an amendment to motion S6M-16750 in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Supporting Households with Cost of Living Pressures and Rising Energy Bills), leave out from "notes" to end and insert "recognises that there are significant cost of living pressures in the UK and globally; further recognises the impact that rising energy bills have for families and communities across Scotland; welcomes the recent announcement by the UK Labour administration that it is expanding the £150 Warm Home Discount scheme so that 220,000 more Scottish households receive help to reduce energy costs; further welcomes the other support delivered by the UK Labour administration, including an extra £41 million in funding this past winter for the Scottish Government and delivering a record budget settlement for Scotland; demands that the Scottish Government works to urgently introduce greater support in the short term and accelerate insulating and decarbonising homes to bring down energy bills in the long term, and calls on the Scottish Government to deliver the policies that the Scottish Labour Party is calling for, such as scrapping peak rail fares, delivering affordable housing and keeping council tax low while boosting Scotland's energy security through its sprint to clean power to keep bills low."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 19, Against 88 (including 3 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 59 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 48, Abstentions 0).

4. Appointment of Chair to Environmental Standards Scotland : The Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy (Gillian Martin) moved S6M-16749—That the Parliament notes the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee's consideration of Dr Richard Dixon as the nominated candidate for the role of Board Chair of Environmental Standards Scotland at its meeting on 18 February 2025; welcomes the committee's recommendation that the Parliament approves the appointment of Dr Richard Dixon for four years in accordance with schedule 1, paragraph 2(4) of the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021, and approves the appointment as required by schedule 1, paragraph 2(2) of the Act.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 83 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 1, Abstentions 22).

5. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 3 and 4 as noted above.

6. Additional Support Needs in Scotland: The Parliament debated S6M-15955 in the name of Alexander Stewart—That the Parliament acknowledges that, in Scotland, additional support needs (ASN) is a term used to describe the requirements for an estimated 190,000 children and young people, or 26.6% of all school pupils, who require extra help to reach their full learning potential; believes that ASN can include having motor or sensory impairments, learning difficulties such as dyslexia, English as an additional language or a myriad of emotional and social difficulties; notes that all schools have a duty to provide appropriate support and that this requirement was laid out in the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004; further notes that the Additional Support for Learning: Statutory Guidance 2017 sets out that schools have a number of responsibilities to support pupils who have ASN, such as making adequate and efficient provision for the support required, publishing, reviewing and updating specified information about their ASN policy, providing the parents of the pupils with all of the information that they are required to publish, providing, where needed, co-ordinated support plans for the pupils, and keeping this under regular review, and providing independent and free mediation services for parents and pupils, including publishing information about these services; believes that, with the right resources and focus, schools and further education settings, including those in Stirling and Clackmannanshire, can create a whole-school environment with an emphasis on inclusion and cooperation and delivering high aspirations; further believes that social and emotional skills programmes, which aim to build resilience through learning or coordinated support plans, can build skills step by step to bring success and give pupils with ASN a chance to test their skills out and receive encouragement and feedback, developing inclusiveness that can be encouraged through good quality health and wellbeing lessons, promoting relationships and diversity, supporting pupils to feel accepted and to belong; believes that, in addition to myriad other ambitions, they can help to deal with, and reduce, bullying and discrimination, and notes the calls that, in order for all pupils with ASN to benefit in full from their education, the support that they receive should be tailored to meet their individual needs and build on their strengths to help them overcome any difficulties that they experience.

The meeting closed at 6.02 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
11 March 2025

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

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 11 March 2025—

Criminal Justice Committee, 3rd Report, 2025 (Session 6): Stage 1 report - Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Bill (SP Paper 749)

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 18th Report, 2025 (Session 6): Subordinate Legislation Considered by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 11 March 2025 (SP Paper 750)

Subordinate Legislation

Affirmative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 10 March 2025 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Social Security Information-sharing (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025 [draft] laid under section 96(2) of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018

Laid Only Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 10 March 2025 and is not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Act of Sederunt (Rules of the Court of Session 1994 Amendment) (Nautical Assessors) 2025 (SSI 2025/61)
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Other Documents

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

OECD Review of Scottish Fiscal Commission 2025 (SFC/2025/2) laid under section 13(4)(b) of the Scottish Fiscal Commission Act 2016

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 11 March 2025 and is not subject to parliamentary procedure—

HMICS Scrutiny plan 2025-28 (HMICS/2025/02) laid under section 79(3) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

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