



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Tuesday 2 May 2023

Session 6



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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NET ZERO, ENERGY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

15th Meeting 2023, Session 6

CONVENER

*Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Fiona Hyslop (Linlithgow) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Jackie Dunbar (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)

*Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con)

*Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab)

*Ash Regan (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)

*Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Kevin Stewart (Minister for Transport)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Peter McGrath

LOCATION

The Mary Fairfax Somerville Room (CR2)

Scottish Parliament

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Tuesday 2 May 2023

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:30]

Decisions on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Edward Mountain): Good morning, and welcome to the 15th meeting in 2023 of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. The first item is a decision on whether to take in private item 5, which is the consideration of a draft report on the committee's inquiry into a modern and sustainable ferry service for Scotland. Do members agree to take item 5 in private?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: The next decision is on whether to consider our draft report in private at future meetings. Do members agree to do so?

Members indicated agreement.

Subordinate Legislation

National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (Gender Representation on Public Boards) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 [Draft]

The Convener: The next item of business is the consideration of a draft Scottish statutory instrument. I am pleased to welcome to the meeting Kevin Stewart, the Minister for Transport, and I welcome him to his new role. From Transport Scotland, I welcome to the meeting Natalie Barton, who is a solicitor, and George Beale-Pratt, who is the smart policy manager. I thank them for joining us.

The instrument is laid under the affirmative procedure, which means that the Parliament must approve it before it comes into force. Following the evidence session, the committee will be invited at the next agenda item to consider a motion to approve the instrument. I remind members that officials can speak under this item but not in the debate that follows. I believe that the minister would like to make a short opening statement.

The Minister for Transport (Kevin Stewart): Good morning. Thank you for inviting me to discuss the addition of the new national smart ticketing advisory board—NSTAB—to the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018. The NSTAB is a product of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and will advise Scottish ministers on topics including smart ticketing arrangements, a national technological standard for smart ticketing and the strategic development of smart ticketing in Scotland. Adding the NSTAB to the 2018 act is intended to address the historical and persistent underrepresentation of women in public life and in the transport sector. The 2018 act sets a gender representation objective for listed public authorities, which is that 50 per cent of non-executive members are women. The act imposes on listed public authorities and those who are making appointments a duty that is related to the achievement of the gender representation objective.

Regarding gender balance in the transport sector, the 2011 Scottish census found that women accounted for only 24 per cent of all people who are employed in the transport and communications industry. Similarly, in 2020-21, the annual population survey found that women accounted for only 19.8 per cent of people who were employed in the transport and storage industry in Scotland. As such, Women in Transport, Sustrans and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe have all called for greater representation of women in transport planning and delivery. As a new public body

formed by the Scottish Government, the NSTAB should lead the way in improving gender representation in the transport industry, helping to make policy more inclusive and representative of Scotland's population. The NSTAB should be a role model for the industry, encouraging more women to be part of the future of transport.

Regarding the gender balance of public appointments in Scotland, data from the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland showed that, between 2005 and 2021, the percentage of women on public boards in Scotland increased from 35 per cent to around 51 per cent. Although that shows that significant improvements have been made, the momentum needs to be maintained. That can be supported by adding the NSTAB to the 2018 act.

The financial impact of adding the NSTAB to the 2018 act is expected to be minimal, primarily relating to outreach work to encourage women to apply for positions.

I thank the committee for its time and look forward to hearing members' questions.

The Convener: Thank you, minister. Do any committee members have questions that they would like to ask?

Jackie Dunbar (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP): I welcome the minister to his new role and to the committee meeting. Is remuneration or pay offered to board members?

Kevin Stewart: We will look at remuneration for those roles as we move forward and will update the committee accordingly.

The Convener: People are entitled to claim expenses for their trips. I wonder whether that is about encouraging women. Will there be additional payments to assist women with childcare if it falls to them to undertake it?

Kevin Stewart: We will look at all of that. In my previous ministerial roles, we have looked to see what we can do to help people who have caring responsibilities, whether that is women or men. It is important that we are as inclusive as possible in attracting the right folk to fill roles. The same applies to this board as to all the others that I have dealt with.

The Convener: It would be useful to have feedback when you are in a position to know that. The aim of the instrument and the committee's aim is to encourage people to attend. We do not want hurdles to be put in their way.

Kevin Stewart: Absolutely. I am more than willing to share that information with the committee as we move forward.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): If the minister does not mind, I will press him on Jackie

Dunbar's question. Part of what we are looking at is the establishment of an advisory board. The purpose of the instrument that we are looking at is to establish that board. Regulation 5 of the instrument provides that

"Scottish Ministers may pay members of the Board ... remuneration".

From your answer to Jackie Dunbar, I am hearing that the questions whether remuneration will be paid and what that amount will be were not considered prior to the instrument that sets up the board being laid. Is that right?

Kevin Stewart: That is not unusual. As Mr Kerr points out, regulation 5 sets out how the Government will look to deal with that, which includes that

"Scottish Ministers may pay members of the Board such remuneration as the Scottish Ministers may determine appropriate."

As the convener has pointed out, regulation 5(3) says that ministers

"must pay or reimburse members of the Board any expenses which have been reasonably incurred by them in connection with the Board's functions."

As I have said, we will look to ensure that that includes people who have caring responsibilities. That is not unusual for such instruments.

The Convener: Agenda item 3 is the formal consideration of motion S6M-08262.

Motion moved,

That the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee recommends that the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (Gender Representation on Public Boards) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 [draft] be approved.—[Kevin Stewart]

The Convener: No other members wish to contribute to the debate. Minister, I am advised that, technically, you may sum up in response to the debate, but I fear that you might not wish to add anything at this stage.

Kevin Stewart: I will forego that privilege, convener.

The Convener: The question is, that motion S6M-08262, which was lodged on 16 March in the name of Jenny Gilruth, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The Convener: The committee will report on the outcomes of the instrument in due course. I invite the committee to delegate authority to me as convener to finalise the report for publication. Are members happy to do that?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: I thank the minister and his officials. You are welcome to leave as we continue with our meeting.

National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (Scotland) Regulations 2023 (SSI 2023/080)

The Convener: Agenda item 4 is consideration of a negative instrument. The instrument is laid under the negative procedure, which means that its provisions will come into force unless the Parliament agrees to a motion to annul them. No motions to annul have been laid.

As no members have comments on the instrument, I invite the committee to agree that it does not wish to make any further recommendations. Are we agreed?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: That concludes the public part of the meeting.

09:40

Meeting continued in private until 12:30.

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