



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 2, No. 98, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 26 April 2023

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 then on Justice and Veterans were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. Homelessness Prevention and Housing Supply: Mark Griffin moved S6M-08685—That the Parliament acknowledges the recommendations of the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group and urges the Scottish Government to act upon them as soon as possible to tackle the rising tide of homelessness; welcomes the long overdue appointment of a dedicated Minister for Housing to the Scottish Government to focus minds; regrets the cuts to the affordable housing supply programme in the Scottish Government's Budget, in light of the risk that its house building target will not be met; agrees that the Scottish Government should, at a minimum, adequately fund the delivery of new social homes through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme to meet an interim target of delivering 38,500 social homes by 2026; considers that the Scottish Government should commit to a target of building 25,000 all-tenure new homes annually, and presses the Scottish Government to publish a review of funding of homelessness services, including any identified funding gaps and the provision of continued funding for Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and the prevention of homelessness.

The Minister for Housing (Paul McLennan) moved amendment S6M-08685.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-08685 in the name of Mark Griffin (Homelessness Prevention and Housing Supply), leave out from “urges” to end

and insert “agrees that the Scottish Government should respond positively to tackle the unacceptable numbers in temporary accommodation; recognises the expertise and partnership working between local and national government, third sector organisations and those with lived experience to tackle, prevent and end homelessness, building on existing strong homelessness and housing rights; welcomes the continued investment through local government core funding and the Scottish Government's £100 million Ending Homelessness Together transformation fund to continue with a rapid rehousing and housing first approach; acknowledges that Scotland leads the way in delivering affordable housing, with 118,124 affordable homes delivered since 2007, 83,291 of which were for social rent, including 21,313 council homes, and welcomes the Scottish Government's continued investment of £3.5 billion over the current parliamentary session for the delivery of more affordable homes towards its 2032 target.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 62, Against 52, Abstentions 0).

Miles Briggs moved amendment S6M-08685.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-08685 in the name of Mark Griffin (Homelessness Prevention and Housing Supply), insert at end “; notes that there has been a 12% decrease in new home starts in the year to end September 2022, compared with the previous 12 months, which adds to the housing shortfall of more than 110,000 homes since 2007; calls on the Scottish Government to look to develop new extra-care housing models to provide for people with additional support needs, and further calls on ministers to spearhead an urgent Scottish Housing Emergency Action Plan.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 53, Against 61, Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 51, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament acknowledges the recommendations of the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group and agrees that the Scottish Government should respond positively to tackle the unacceptable numbers in temporary accommodation; recognises the expertise and partnership working between local and national government, third sector organisations and those with lived experience to tackle, prevent and end homelessness, building on existing strong homelessness and housing rights; welcomes the continued investment through local government core funding and the Scottish Government's £100 million Ending Homelessness Together transformation fund to continue with a rapid rehousing and housing first approach; acknowledges that Scotland leads the way in delivering affordable housing, with 118,124 affordable homes delivered since 2007, 83,291 of which were for social rent, including 21,313 council homes, and welcomes the Scottish Government's continued investment of £3.5 billion over the current parliamentary session for the delivery of more affordable homes towards its 2032 target.

3. Scotland's Finances and the Cost of Living: Michael Marra moved S6M-08686—That the Parliament considers sound financial management and the responsible use of taxpayers' money to be key priorities for any government, and that this is especially important at a time when households and businesses face increased bills and expenses due to the ongoing cost of living crisis; understands that the record of the Scottish Government over the last 16 years has been characterised by failed financial interventions, incompetence, waste and inefficiency, which have to date cost in excess of £3.5 billion of public money; recognises that Audit Scotland has repeatedly highlighted the need for greater transparency, including during the audit of the Scottish Government's consolidated accounts for 2021-22; considers that a culture of opaqueness and secrecy has prevailed in the Scottish Government in recent years, and that this has had a detrimental impact on the ability of the Parliament and the public to hold the government to account and ensure that value for money is being delivered; believes that, in these uncertain economic times, taxpayers across Scotland must have confidence that their money is being spent wisely, and calls on the Scottish Government to commit to prioritising openness, transparency and competence in the management of Scotland's finances.

The Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance (Tom Arthur) moved amendment S6M-08686.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-08686 in the name of Michael Marra (Scotland's Finances and the Cost of Living), leave out from “failed” to end and insert “balanced budgets, unqualified accounts and, since 2018, the most progressive income tax system in the UK; considers that this is in stark contrast to the decade of austerity that Scotland has faced from successive UK governments; recognises that the Scottish Government has worked constructively with Audit Scotland, the Scottish Fiscal Commission and the Scottish Parliament's Finance and Constitution Committee to improve the budgetary process and parliamentary scrutiny of Scotland's finances, and calls on the Scottish Government to continue to prioritise openness, transparency and competence in the management of Scotland's finances.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 62, Against 50, Abstentions 1).

Liz Smith moved amendment S6M-08686.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-08686 in the name of Michael Marra (Scotland's Finances and the Cost of Living), insert at end “, and further calls on the Scottish Government to address the concerns about the inconsistency in financial data sets that were set out by the Scottish Parliament Finance and Public Administration Committee in paragraph 43 of its report, Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2023-24: Scotland's Public Finances in 2023-24 and the Impact of the Cost of Living and Public Service Reform.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to (DT).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 62, Against 51, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament considers sound financial management and the responsible use of taxpayers' money to be key priorities for any government, and that this is especially important at a time when households and businesses face increased bills and expenses due to the ongoing cost of living crisis; understands that the record of the Scottish Government over the last 16 years has been characterised by balanced budgets, unqualified accounts and, since 2018, the most progressive income tax system in the UK; considers that this is in stark contrast to the decade of austerity that Scotland has faced from successive UK governments; recognises that the Scottish Government has worked constructively with Audit Scotland, the Scottish Fiscal Commission and the Scottish Parliament's Finance and Constitution Committee to improve the budgetary process and parliamentary scrutiny of Scotland's finances; calls on the Scottish Government to continue to prioritise openness, transparency and competence in the management of Scotland's finances, and further calls on the Scottish Government to address the concerns about the inconsistency in financial data sets that were set out by the Scottish Parliament Finance and Public Administration Committee in paragraph 43 of its report, Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2023-24: Scotland's Public Finances in 2023-24 and the Impact of the Cost of Living and Public Service Reform.

4. Appointment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland: Sue Webber, on behalf of the Selection Panel, moved S6M-08663—That the Parliament nominates Nicola Killean to His Majesty The King for appointment as the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland under section 2 of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

5. Business Programme: The Minister for Cabinet and Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-08701—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 2 May 2023

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 3 May 2023

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy; Finance and Parliamentary Business

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 4 May 2023

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Net Zero and Just Transition

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Moveable Transactions (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 9 May 2023

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by The Coronation of The King and The Queen Consort
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 10 May 2023

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Patient Safety Commissioner for Scotland Bill

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 11 May 2023

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 Stage 1 Debate: Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

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 1 May 2023, 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. Stage 1 Extension: The Minister for Cabinet and Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-08702—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be extended to 12 May 2023.

The motion was agreed to.

7. Stage 2 Timetable: The Minister for Cabinet and Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-08703—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 19 May 2023.

The motion was agreed to.

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

9. Celebrating Autism Acceptance: The Parliament debated S6M-08250 in the name of Stephanie Callaghan—That the Parliament acknowledges both World Autism Acceptance Week, which runs from 27 March to 2 April 2023, and World Autism Month, which is celebrated throughout April, and their aim to raise awareness of autism, educate the public and make the world a friendly place for autistic people; notes that the National Autistic Society (NAS) theme for World Autism Acceptance Week 2023 is “colour”, and welcomes the fundraising events, including an in-person colour walk and colour virtual challenge, to support services; understands that more than one in 100 people in Scotland are autistic, and believes that accepting, promoting and celebrating the skills, thoughts, ideas and talents of autistic people supports those individuals to reach their full potential, while bringing positive benefits for wider society; further understands that the report, Closing the Accountability Gap, published by NAS and Scottish Autism, found that there is still a significant gap in the provision and access of appropriate support for autistic people across services such as schools, employment and healthcare; commends NAS and Scottish Autism for

what it considers their continuous campaigning to promote autistic people's rights and create a fairer and more accepting society, and in championing quality autism-specific services across Scotland, as well as their work to establish a Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodiversity Commissioner, and acknowledges the valuable work of local autism groups, such as HOPE for Autism and the Autism Resource Coordination Hub (ARCH) based in Lanarkshire, that work in partnership with autistic people.

The meeting closed at 6.11 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
26 April 2023

Appendix

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

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 26 April 2023—

COVID-19 Recovery Committee, 2nd Report, 2023 (Session 6): COVID-19 Recovery Committee: Long COVID (SP Paper 354)

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 26 April 2023 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Final Outturn Report for the Scottish Budget 2021-2022 (SG/2023/12) laid at the request of a member of the Scottish Government and not under any laying power

Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-26 (SG/2023/82) laid under Paragraph 16(1B) of Schedule 7 to the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002

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