



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 59, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 13 December 2023

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy, and then on Finance and Parliamentary Business, were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Minister.

2. Improving the Performance of the Scottish Education System: Liam Kerr moved S6M-11635—That the Parliament recognises the significance of the challenges facing the Scottish education system, as highlighted by the recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report; notes that, despite the efforts of teachers and school staff, Scotland's positions in mathematics and science have dropped below the OECD average to an all-time low, while standards in reading are at a their joint lowest level since PISA reporting began; acknowledges that the OECD report also found that bullying in Scottish schools is more frequent than the OECD average, and that one in three of Scotland's pupils don't feel like they belong at their school, with pupils in Scotland twice as likely to observe violence in school as the OECD average; notes that Scotland was removed from a number of international statistical studies; recognises that education was devolved in the Scotland Act 1998; demands that the Scottish Government use its powers to address the many wide-ranging problems facing Scotland's pupils, teachers, school staff and parents, beginning in and including early years; recognises that the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence has failed; calls for a fundamental rethink about schooling to raise standards, and considers that solutions should be explored, such as re-entering all statistical comparisons and benchmarks, addressing issues surrounding class sizes, teacher and support staff numbers, as

well as the use of probationers and temporary contracts and urgently tackling the violence and discipline problems in Scotland's schools.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Jenny Gilruth) moved amendment S6M-11635.3—

As an amendment to S6M-11635 in the name of Liam Kerr (Improving the Performance of the Scottish Education System), leave out from first “notes” to end and insert “welcomes the publication of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2022-23 (ACEL), which shows that the proportion of primary school pupils achieving expected levels of literacy and numeracy has reached record highs, that the poverty-related attainment gap in literacy in primary school has reached the lowest level on record, and that attainment at secondary level has increased and the poverty-related attainment gap decreased; understands that ACEL represents the most up-to-date and comprehensive statistics on attainment in Scotland, and that the findings are testament to the hard work of teachers, support staff and pupils; notes that PISA found that pupils in Scotland were less likely to witness issues with a number of aspects of behaviour in school than in other parts of the UK; welcomes the Scottish Government's decision to rejoin Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS); notes that Curriculum for Excellence was endorsed by the OECD in its 2021 report as the right approach for Scottish education, and agrees that the process of education reform, working in partnership with local authorities, and including the reorganisation of national bodies and reform of qualifications and assessments, offers the opportunity to raise standards, ensure that all children and young people can meet their full potential, and deliver excellence and equity across Scotland's schools.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 64, Against 54, Abstentions 0).

Pam Duncan-Glancy moved amendment S6M-11635.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11635 in the name of Liam Kerr (Improving the Performance of the Scottish Education System), insert at end “; considers that there is an urgent need for action to reverse the widening inequalities as highlighted by Scotland's performance in the 2022 PISA results, and recognises the excellence of Scotland's teachers against a backdrop of Scottish Government failures.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 54, Against 64, Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 64, Against 54, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament recognises the significance of the challenges facing the Scottish education system, as highlighted by the recent Programme for International Student

Assessment (PISA) report; welcomes the publication of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2022-23 (ACEL), which shows that the proportion of primary school pupils achieving expected levels of literacy and numeracy has reached record highs, that the poverty-related attainment gap in literacy in primary school has reached the lowest level on record, and that attainment at secondary level has increased and the poverty-related attainment gap decreased; understands that ACEL represents the most up-to-date and comprehensive statistics on attainment in Scotland, and that the findings are testament to the hard work of teachers, support staff and pupils; notes that PISA found that pupils in Scotland were less likely to witness issues with a number of aspects of behaviour in school than in other parts of the UK; welcomes the Scottish Government's decision to rejoin Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS); notes that Curriculum for Excellence was endorsed by the OECD in its 2021 report as the right approach for Scottish education, and agrees that the process of education reform, working in partnership with local authorities, and including the reorganisation of national bodies and reform of qualifications and assessments, offers the opportunity to raise standards, ensure that all children and young people can meet their full potential, and deliver excellence and equity across Scotland's schools.

3. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11651—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 19 December 2023

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Ministerial Statement: Scottish Budget 2024-25

followed by Ministerial Statement: Implementing the Medication Assisted Treatment Standards

followed by Scottish Government Debate: From a Warm Scots Welcome to a Warm Scots Future for Ukrainians in Scotland

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.50 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 20 December 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 3 Proceedings: Trusts and Succession (Scotland) Bill

followed by Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee Debate:
Standing Order Rule Changes - Proxy Voting

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 21 December 2023

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.45 pm Portfolio Questions: Social Justice

1.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Tuesday 9 January 2024

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee Debate:
How Devolution is Changing Post-EU

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 10 January 2024

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Constitution, External Affairs and Culture; Justice and
Home Affairs

followed by Scottish Government Business

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 January 2024

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: Education and Skills

followed by Scottish Government Business

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 18 December 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.

Douglas Ross moved amendment S6M-11651.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11651 in the name of George Adam (Business Programme), after “2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care” insert “*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Update on the Dualling of the A9”.

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to (by division: For 56, Against 62, Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to.

4. Stage 1 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11640—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Aggregates Tax and Devolved Taxes Administration (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 17 May 2024.

The motion was agreed to.

5. Stage 1 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11641—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 31 May 2024.

The motion was agreed to.

6. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11642—That the Parliament

agrees that the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 87, Against 1, Abstentions 28).

7. Designation of Lead Committee: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11643—That the Parliament agrees that the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Judicial Factors (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

8. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 6 and 7 as noted above.

9. Fighting With Pride and Advocacy for LGBT+ Veterans: The Parliament debated S6M-11225 in the name of Keith Brown—That the Parliament supports the work of Fighting With Pride (FWP), the LGBT+ military charity; commends what it sees as the opportunities provided by FWP’s Pride in Veterans Standard (PiVS) programme, which provides training for veterans organisations, including those operating in the Clackmannanshire and Dunblane constituency, on how best to support LGBT+ veterans; understands that the charity was set up to mark the 20th anniversary of the end of the ban on LGBT+ personnel in the Armed Forces; notes with concern the comprehensive findings of the final report of the UK LGBT Veterans Independent Review, published in May 2023, which it considers highlights in meticulous detail the experience of LGBT+ veterans; welcomes the UK Government’s apology to all LGBT+ veterans affected by the so-called “gay ban”, and notes the calls for the UK Government to do more to respond to the concerns raised by the LGBT Veterans Independent Review, including specifically by not introducing a £50 million cap on funds allocated to compensate for lost earnings and pension entitlements, as well as for the profound distress caused by the so-called “gay ban” and the actions of the Armed Forces in implementing it.

The meeting closed at 6.08 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
13 December 2023

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

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 13 December 2023—

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, 20th Report, 2023 (Session 6):
Report on the Flytipping (Fixed Penalties) (Scotland) Order 2023 (SSI
2023/335) (SP Paper 490)

Social Justice and Social Security Committee, 12th Report, 2023 (Session 6):
Subordinate Legislation considered by the Social Justice and Social Security
Committee on 7 December 2023 (SP Paper 494)

Subordinate Legislation

Affirmative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 13 December 2023 and
is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Order 2024 [draft]
laid under section 62(10) of the Health Act 1999

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 13 December 2023 and
are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Health and Care Professions Council Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23
(SG/2023/198) laid under Articles 44(2) and 46(7) of the Health Professions Order
2001

HM Fire Service Inspectorate - Mental Health and Wellbeing Support in the
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SG/2023/282) laid under section 43C(5) of the
Fire (Scotland) Act 2005

Scottish Futures Trust Investments (SFTi) Limited Annual Report and Financial
Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (SG/2023/307) laid under Section
22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) Limited Annual Report and Accounts for the Year
Ended 31 March 2023 (SG/2023/306) laid under Section 22(5) of the Public Finance
and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

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