



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 23, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 6 September 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 Ministers.

2. Equality within the 2023-24 Programme for Government: The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice (Shirley-Anne Somerville) moved S6M-10343—That the Parliament notes the actions set out in the Programme for Government 2023-24 to build stronger communities, improve social justice, reduce inequalities, including in health and social care, and tackle child poverty; welcomes the investment of £5.3 billion in Scottish Government benefits in 2023-24, supporting over 1.2 million people, including £405 million for the Scottish Child Payment, which is currently helping to improve the lives of over 316,000 children; further welcomes the continued use of the Scottish Government's fixed budget and limited powers to tackle inequality and poverty and protect people, as far as possible, from the harm inflicted by UK Government cuts and austerity, as well as the ongoing cost of living crisis; notes the continued action to tackle child poverty in key areas including parental employability, early learning and childcare, mental health, transport, and affordable housing; welcomes that 90,000 fewer children will live in relative and absolute poverty in 2023 as a result of Scottish Government policies; notes that reprehensible UK Government welfare policies, including the two-child limit and benefit cap, inflict hardship on families on the lowest incomes, with the two-child limit affecting 80,000 children in Scotland and removing £341.3 million from families in Scotland since 2017, and commends successful pay deals with NHS staff and unions that have ensured there have been no strikes in Scotland, thereby protecting patients and

helping the workforce to deal with the ongoing cost of living crisis, and ensuring that people can access the social care support that they need, while recognising the valuable contribution of Scotland's social care workforce.

Meghan Gallacher moved amendment S6M-10343.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10343 in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Equality within the 2023-24 Programme for Government), leave out from “to build” to end and insert “; welcomes the announcement to improve miscarriage care, so that women do not wait until a third miscarriage to receive support; further welcomes the Scottish Government's intention to bring childcare policy in line with UK Government proposals of providing funded childcare from the age of nine months but calls, however, on the Scottish Government to do more to resolve outstanding concerns, including recruitment, retention and support for private, voluntary and third sector organisations; notes that the Scottish Government has failed to close the attainment gap and roll out free school meals by 2022 as originally promised in 2021, tackle violence in classrooms, or bring forward a new meaningful deal for teachers; further notes that the percentage of children in poverty is equal to that in 2007, and expresses concern over the record-breaking number of children in temporary accommodation; calls on the Scottish Government to declare a homelessness emergency and to find a new approach to children being placed in temporary accommodation; is dismayed that the Scottish Government has missed its deadline for transferring all benefits to Social Security Scotland and that certain benefits could be transferred as late as 2026; welcomes the UK Government's £94 billion to help households navigate the global cost of living crisis, throughout 2022-23 and 2023-24, and the UK Government's uprate to benefits by 10.1%; notes that, during the Scottish National Party's time in government, health inequalities have worsened, with record numbers on NHS waiting lists, high A&E waiting times, unacceptable drug and alcohol death rates and a mental health crisis, and agrees that a health and wellbeing strategy must be at the forefront of the Scottish Government's plan to tackle inequality.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 31, Against 91, Abstentions 0).

Paul O'Kane moved amendment S6M-10343.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10343 in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Equality within the 2023-24 Programme for Government), leave out from “to build” to end and insert “, and that no real action has been set out which will reduce child poverty or mitigate the cost of living crisis for thousands of families that are struggling to make ends meet; further notes that the last UK Labour administration lifted 2 million children and pensioners out of poverty, of which 200,000 were children in Scotland, while the last decade of the Scottish National Party (SNP) administration has seen 40,000 more children, and 30,000 more pensioners slide into poverty; notes with concern that almost 9,000 children are languishing in temporary accommodation without a home to call their own because of this SNP administration's inability to get a handle on the scale of the housing crisis facing Scotland; welcomes the UK Labour

Party's commitment to a new deal for working people within the first 100 days of a UK Labour administration, which will lift children in Scotland out of poverty by delivering a real living wage and improved working conditions, and a fundamental reform of unfair and punitive Universal Credit provisions; condemns the SNP administration's continued failure to resolve pay disputes with education staff across local authorities in Scotland; regrets that health inequalities are exacerbated by the inertia of this SNP administration; condemns the abandonment of over 820,000 patients stuck on NHS waiting lists for tests and treatment; accepts that this SNP administration has failed to meet its targets for tackling long waits with over 77,000 patients languishing for over a year; is deeply concerned that cancer treatment targets are repeatedly missed; regrets that the mental health crisis continues unabated with almost 2,000 patients waiting for over a year for treatment, and delayed discharge remains shockingly high, costing over £193 million alone in 2022-23; acknowledges that this is largely because of the SNP administration's failure to fix the growing crisis in social care; calls upon the SNP administration to address this crisis by immediately removing non-residential care charges and set out a workable plan for achieving a £15 an hour minimum wage for hard-working social care workers; recognises that Scotland's NHS is facing a workforce crisis, with over 7,000 vacancies unfilled, and welcomes the fact that a Scottish Labour administration would transform the NHS to meet the needs of future generations."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 19, Against 102, Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 68, Against 54, Abstentions 0).

3. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10340—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 12 September 2023

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Ministerial Statement: Drug Deaths

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Fiscal Framework Review

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 13 September 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 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 14 September 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: Social Justice

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Reconsideration of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Bill

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Celebrating the Resilience of Scotland's Food and Drink Sector

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 19 September 2023

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

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 20 September 2023

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

followed by Scottish Labour 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 21 September 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: Education and Skills

followed by Criminal Justice Committee Debate: Tackling Online Child Abuse, Grooming and Exploitation

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 11 September 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.

4. Stage 2 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10300—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 15 December 2023.

The motion was agreed to.

5. Office of the Clerk: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10301—That the Parliament agrees that between 1 February 2024 and 31 January 2025, the Office of the Clerk will be open on all days except: Saturdays and Sundays, 29 March and 1 April, 6 May, 24 May, 27 May, 13 September, 29 November, 24 December (pm), 25 and 26 December 2024, and 1 and 2 January 2025.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

6. Designation of Lead Committee: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10341—That the Parliament agrees that the Economy and Fair Work Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the legislative consent memorandum on the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

7. Suspension of Standing Orders: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10342—That the Parliament agrees, for the purposes of consideration of the second supplementary legislative consent memorandum on the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill (UK Legislation), that Rule 9B.3.5 of Standing Orders is suspended.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

8. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 5, 6 and 7 as noted above.

9. Save Our Pools Campaign: The Parliament debated S6M-10199 in the name of Liz Smith—That the Parliament recognises what it sees as the importance of swimming as an essential basic skill, particularly among children, the obvious health and fitness benefits for the population at large, and its importance in reducing the life expectancy gaps between different communities; notes what it sees as the need to prevent accidents in Scotland's vast array of popular rivers and lochs and to enhance the wider social benefits that swimming pools provide as community hubs enjoyed by people of all ages; acknowledges what it considers the huge part that swimming pools play in attracting and developing talent at the highest levels of Scottish and British sport, most notably swimmers such as Duncan Scott, who was trained and brought up in the Mid Scotland and Fife region and who became the most successful British Olympian at a single Olympic Games, in Tokyo, and one of the most decorated Team GB medallists of all time; expresses, therefore, its profound concerns at the reported number of swimming pool closures that are planned across Scotland, and notes the calls on the Scottish Government to urgently act to reverse what it sees as this unwelcome trend, as called for by Scottish Swimming in its campaign, #SaveOurPools.

10. Motion Without Notice: Liz Smith moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

The motion was agreed to.

The meeting closed at 6.12 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
6 September 2023

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

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 6 September 2023—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 50th Report, 2023 (Session 6): Subordinate Legislation considered by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 5 September 2023 (SP Paper 430)

Subordinate Legislation

Affirmative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 6 September 2023 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Legal Aid and Advice and Assistance (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) (No. 4) Regulations 2023 [draft]
laid under section 37(2) of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986

Negative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 6 September 2023 and is subject to the negative procedure—

National Health Service (General Dental Services) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 (SSI 2023/247)
laid under section 105(2) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978

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