



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 89, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 13 March 2024

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, and then on NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care, were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.

2. Bringing Down NHS Waiting Lists: Jackie Baillie moved S6M-12455—That the Parliament is concerned that almost 825,000 patients are stuck on NHS waiting lists for tests and treatment, whilst long waits have continued to rise, despite the current First Minister promising to eradicate them; is disappointed that the statutory 12-week Treatment Time Guarantee has been broken 680,000 times since it was introduced, and 320,000 times before the COVID-19 pandemic; notes that the Scottish Government’s NHS Recovery Plan commitment to deliver 55,500 additional inpatient and day-case procedures by 2025-26 will not be met, in light of its decision to pause the National Treatment Centres programme, and calls on the Scottish Ministers to urgently tackle delayed discharge to increase capacity and publish a revised plan for bringing down waiting lists, including clarifying whether it still intends to reduce waiting lists by 100,000 patients by 2026, and to set out the source of the £300 million funding package that it announced in October 2023.

The Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care (Neil Gray) moved amendment S6M-12455.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-12455 in the name of Jackie Baillie (Bringing Down NHS Waiting Lists), leave out from “is concerned” to end and insert “recognises the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on health service

waiting times across the UK, and around the world; commends the dedicated NHS staff who work to provide the best care possible; believes that all long waits are regrettable and welcomes the progress in delivering a significant reduction for the longest waits; welcomes the opening of two National Treatment Centres within the last 12 months, with a further two centres opening in the coming months, which will provide capacity for an additional 20,000 procedures each year; notes that the Scottish Budget provides over £19.5 billion for health and social care, ensuring a real-terms uplift for the NHS in the face of UK Government austerity; acknowledges that, without the distinct and progressive approach to income tax in the Budget, the NHS and other public services would have £1.5 billion less funding; understands that the UK Government's decision to cut the Scottish Government's capital budget by £1.3 billion in real terms by 2027-28 has a direct impact on health infrastructure projects; believes that the £20 billion that the UK Government will lose as a result of its decision to cut national insurance should instead have been invested in NHS services and in infrastructure investment, and understands that the share of Barnett consequential funding that Scotland has lost as a result is around £1.6 billion, and believes that, in order to recover from the combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit and UK Government economic mismanagement, reform and innovation across the health service is required."

Sandesh Gulhane moved amendment S6M-12455.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-12455 in the name of Jackie Baillie (Bringing Down NHS Waiting Lists), after "programme" insert "; recognises with deep concern that the Scottish Government has provided no guarantee of when new healthcare investment will resume; notes with alarm that one in 10 patients in Scotland are forced to wait more than a year for a new outpatient appointment and more than a year and a half for an inpatient appointment; expresses further concern that, because of the increasing shortage of GPs, the true scale of the treatment backlog may be even higher, as patients find it increasingly difficult to access their GPs and obtain referral for diagnosis and treatment; condemns the consistent failure of the Scottish Government to pass on the full Barnett consequential funding for healthcare, cumulatively short-changing the NHS in Scotland by £17.6 billion; emphasises that long waits for treatment and diagnosis cause suffering and death".

After debate, amendment S6M-12455.2 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 51, Abstentions 0). As a result, amendment S6M-12455.1 was pre-empted.

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

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament recognises the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on health service waiting times across the UK, and around the world; commends the dedicated NHS staff who work to provide the best care possible; believes that all long waits are regrettable and welcomes the progress in delivering a significant

reduction for the longest waits; welcomes the opening of two National Treatment Centres within the last 12 months, with a further two centres opening in the coming months, which will provide capacity for an additional 20,000 procedures each year; notes that the Scottish Budget provides over £19.5 billion for health and social care, ensuring a real-terms uplift for the NHS in the face of UK Government austerity; acknowledges that, without the distinct and progressive approach to income tax in the Budget, the NHS and other public services would have £1.5 billion less funding; understands that the UK Government's decision to cut the Scottish Government's capital budget by £1.3 billion in real terms by 2027-28 has a direct impact on health infrastructure projects; believes that the £20 billion that the UK Government will lose as a result of its decision to cut national insurance should instead have been invested in NHS services and in infrastructure investment, and understands that the share of Barnett consequential funding that Scotland has lost as a result is around £1.6 billion, and believes that, in order to recover from the combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit and UK Government economic mismanagement, reform and innovation across the health service is required.

3. Growing Scotland's Economy: Daniel Johnson moved S6M-12457—That the Parliament recognises the crucial role that economic growth plays in delivering strong public services and social change; believes that, despite this, the Scottish Government has failed to use the powers that it has to grow Scotland's economy and has instead presided over low growth and low productivity; notes the publication of the CBI-Fraser of Allander Institute Scottish Productivity Index 2024, which shows that Scotland is lagging behind the rest of the UK on 10 out of 13 productivity indicators; believes that this underperformance has serious implications for living standards and incomes and will place further pressure on Scotland's struggling public services; calls on the Scottish Government to take a new approach to the economy, working in partnership with business to unleash the true economic potential of Scotland and its people, and notes the publication of the Scottish Labour Party's Building a Business Case for Scotland and its proposals to use the soft power of Brand Scotland to increase exports and international investment, to simplify Scotland's enterprise agency landscape so that it is better aligned to deliver innovation, promote growth and attract investment, to embed technology across the economy and in Scottish public services to support excellence and ensure future generations are tech and business ready, and to develop a clear skills plan with transition pathways into the green economy.

The Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy (Màiri McAllan) moved amendment S6M-12457.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-12457 in the name of Daniel Johnson (Growing Scotland's Economy), leave out from "recognises" to end and insert "notes that, since 2007, Scotland's GDP per capita has grown 10.8% in comparison to the UK's growth of 5.6%; acknowledges that, over the same time period, productivity has increased at an annual average rate of 1% a year in Scotland compared with the UK's 0.5% a year; welcomes the approach taken to the economy by the Scottish Government to build a collaborative relationship with business, industry, workers and trades unions and to create jobs through the development of a green industrial strategy; considers that, in Scotland, a near record high number of people are in

payrolled employment and a higher proportion of workers earn the real Living Wage than in the other UK nations, while the gender pay gap and child poverty rates are lower also than the UK's; recognises that the UK economic model has failed to deliver the prosperity to Scotland that is enjoyed by neighbouring countries; further recognises that the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that the UK economy will be 4% smaller as a result of Brexit, a Brexit which is supported by three of the four largest parties in the UK Parliament, and agrees that the best way for Scotland to develop a wellbeing economy, and so match the economic success of Scotland's northern European neighbours, is to become an independent EU member state."

Murdo Fraser moved amendment S6M-12457.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-12457 in the name of Daniel Johnson (Growing Scotland's Economy), leave out from ", and notes" to end and insert "; recognises that ill health and long-term economic inactivity within Scotland are barriers to delivering growth, and calls on the Scottish Government to address these issues and deliver greater investment in education to provide long-term economic growth; notes that the income tax differential between Scotland and the rest of the UK is damaging business and is an obstacle to economic growth; further notes that this tax differential will become more pronounced with the introduction of the new "Advanced" tax band in the new financial year; calls on the Scottish Government to take steps to make income tax competitive with the rest of the UK to unleash Scotland's economic potential, and further calls on the Scottish Government to look to the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party's policy paper, Grasping the Thistle - Our plan for economic growth, for inspiration on how to grow Scotland's economy through its proposals for making the delivery of strong, long-term growth the main economic priority of government, creating a joint Scottish economic board to bring together ministers from the Scottish and UK governments, delivering a national workforce plan, building regional clusters of excellence to deliver Scottish exporting success, and supporting key investments to create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship."

After debate, amendment S6M-12457.2 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 50, Abstentions 0). As a result, amendment S6M-12457.1 was pre-empted.

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

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament notes that, since 2007, Scotland's GDP per capita has grown 10.8% in comparison to the UK's growth of 5.6%; acknowledges that, over the same time period, productivity has increased at an annual average rate of 1% a year in Scotland compared with the UK's 0.5% a year; welcomes the approach taken to the economy by the Scottish Government to build a collaborative relationship with business, industry, workers and trades unions and to create jobs through the development of a green industrial strategy; considers that, in Scotland, a near record

high number of people are in payrolled employment and a higher proportion of workers earn the real Living Wage than in the other UK nations, while the gender pay gap and child poverty rates are lower also than the UK's; recognises that the UK economic model has failed to deliver the prosperity to Scotland that is enjoyed by neighbouring countries; further recognises that the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that the UK economy will be 4% smaller as a result of Brexit, a Brexit which is supported by three of the four largest parties in the UK Parliament, and agrees that the best way for Scotland to develop a wellbeing economy, and so match the economic success of Scotland's northern European neighbours, is to become an independent EU member state.

4. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12470—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 19 March 2024

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 20 March 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 Debate: Scottish Crime Campus and Tackling Serious Organised Crime

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill - UK Legislation

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 March 2024

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.15 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.15 pm Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Questions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Education and Skills

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 26 March 2024

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Gender Representation on Public Boards (Amendment)
(Scotland) Bill

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 27 March 2024

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy; Finance
and Parliamentary Business

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Agriculture and Rural Communities (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 28 March 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: Transport

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 March 2024, 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.

5. Stage 1 Extension: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12471—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be extended to 26 April 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-12472—That the Parliament agrees that the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 (Expiry of Section 10: Extension) Regulations 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 80, Against 0, Abstentions 32).

7. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12473—That the Parliament agrees that the Rent Adjudication (Temporary Modifications) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 80, Against 0, Abstentions 32).

8. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12474—That the Parliament

agrees that the Scottish Landfill Tax (Standard Rate and Lower Rate) Order 2024 (SSI 2024/60) be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

9. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12475—That the Parliament agrees that the Renewables Obligation (Scotland) Amendment Order 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

10. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12476—That the Parliament agrees that the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

11. Committee Remits: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12477—That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the remits of committees—

Name of Committee: Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Remit: To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition, with the exception of matters relating to just transition; on matters relating to land reform, natural resources and peatland, Scottish Land Commission, Crown Estate Scotland, and Royal Botanic Garden within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; and on matters relating to energy within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy.

New remit: To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy, with the exception of matters relating to wellbeing economy, and just transition; and on matters relating to land reform, natural resources and peatland, Scottish Land Commission, Crown Estate Scotland, and Royal Botanic Garden within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands.

Name of Committee: Economy and Fair Work Committee

Remit: To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy with the exception of matters relating to energy; and on matters relating to just transition within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition.

New remit: To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy, with the exception of matters relating to net zero and energy.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

12. Substitution on Committees: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12478—That the Parliament agrees that Fulton MacGregor be appointed as the Scottish National Party substitute on the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

13. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 as noted above.

14. International Long Covid Awareness Day 2024: The Parliament debated S6M-12371 in the name of Sandesh Gulhane—That the Parliament recognises that 15 March 2024 is International Long Covid Awareness Day; understands that it is estimated that around 187,000 people have long COVID in Scotland, an estimated 10,000 of which are children; notes that long COVID can cause a myriad of debilitating and often life-altering symptoms; considers that a lack of awareness of long COVID exists among the public, employers, medical professionals and policy makers, and that there is often a stigma that negatively affects the mental health and wellbeing of people with long COVID; notes the view that current Scottish Government funding for initiatives does not go far enough in addressing any need for more effective treatment services and support for people with long COVID; further notes, with regret, the view that there has been a lack of progress in addressing consistency of access to diagnosis and treatment services, that there is a continuing postcode lottery for long COVID support, and that there remains little data for monitoring the current prevalence of long COVID in Scotland to inform the scale of required care; notes the belief that there is a need for clear referral pathways across all NHS boards, including access to multidisciplinary teams of specialists; highlights, with particular concern, reports that there are no specific services aimed at children or young people with long COVID in Scotland, and notes the calls for the Scottish Government to fully implement, without delay, the recommendations in the COVID-19 Recovery Committee report, Long COVID.

The meeting closed at 6.18 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
13 March 2024

Appendix

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

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 13 March 2024—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 19th Report, 2024 (Session 6): Legislative Consent Memorandum and Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum: delegated powers relevant to Scotland in the Automated Vehicles Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (SP Paper 550)

Subordinate Legislation

Laid Only Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 13 March 2024 and is not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Act of Sederunt (Rules of the Court of Session 1994 Amendment) (Payment and Electronic Money Institution Special Administration) 2024 (SSI 2024/75)
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

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