



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 65, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 10 January 2024

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 Home Affairs, were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. The Impact of UK Government Asylum Policy and Legislation in Scotland: The Minister for Equalities, Migration and Refugees (Emma Roddick) moved S6M-11803—That the Parliament recognises the impact of UK Government asylum policy and legislation in Scotland, including the effect of the complex asylum system on people who have applied for protection, restrictions on the right to work and limited support available to people awaiting a decision, the increased reliance on contingency asylum accommodation caused by a backlog in Home Office decision-making, risks of maximisation policy and inadequate engagement with Scottish local authorities or public services prior to procurement of contingency accommodation, the streamlined asylum process and limited move-on period allowed once a decision has been made, and consequent impact on both newly-recognised refugees and local authorities, and the restricting of the right to seek asylum in the UK under the Illegal Migration Act 2023; is opposed to the UK Government's pursuit of plans to relocate people to third countries to have asylum claims considered there; recognises the ruling of the Supreme Court in relation to the safety of Rwanda, and acknowledges the comments of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that the Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP) between the UK and Rwanda undermines the established international refugee protection system and that the UNHCR does not consider the MEDP to comply with the UK's obligations under international law; notes the engagement of Scottish local

authorities in asylum dispersal, and agrees that the UK Government needs to engage positively with devolved governments, local authorities and public services across asylum matters to reduce negative impacts on people, communities and services.

Miles Briggs moved amendment S6M-11803.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11803 in the name of Emma Roddick (The Impact of UK Government Asylum Policy and Legislation in Scotland), leave out from “the impact” to end and insert “that the topics of immigration and asylum are reserved to the UK Parliament and that it is therefore not within the competence of the Scottish Parliament to legislate on these issues; further recognises that the UK Government spent £3.7 billion in the fiscal year 2022-23 to support refugees, that it continues to provide asylum seekers with financial support to cover essential living needs and that it is committed to delivering an asylum system that protects individuals from persecution based on their protected characteristics; agrees that the Scottish Government must engage positively with the UK Government, local authorities and public services across asylum matters to reduce negative impacts on people, communities and services; expresses concern over both the pause of the Scottish Government's Super Sponsor Scheme for displaced Ukrainians and the Scottish Government's inability to renew the £10 million in funding initially granted to local authorities to support resettlement for displaced Ukrainians, and calls on the Scottish Government to declare a housing emergency, given the increase in homelessness applications by 9% and the record number of children placed in temporary accommodation for the fiscal year 2022-23, which is likely to be exacerbated given the recent cuts to the housing budget.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 30, Against 88, Abstentions 0).

Paul O'Kane moved amendment S6M-11803.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11803 in the name of Emma Roddick (The Impact of UK Government Asylum Policy and Legislation in Scotland), insert at end “; acknowledges the pressure placed upon local government budgets after a decade of Scottish Government cuts; calls for fair funding settlements from the Scottish Government for local authorities; notes that Scottish Government commitments to provide safe and secure accommodation for refugees must come with support for local authorities to provide suitable long-term housing, and acknowledges that Scottish Government cuts to affordable housing budgets will negatively affect local authorities' ability to provide adequate accommodation for refugees.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 20, Against 97, Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 89, Against 30, Abstentions 0).

3. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11821—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 16 January 2024

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Visitor Levy (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 17 January 2024

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

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 18 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: Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Scottish Rural and Islands Youth Parliament

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 23 January 2024

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 24 January 2024

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 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 25 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: Social Justice

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 15 January 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.

4. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11822—That the Parliament agrees that the Wine (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

5. Designation of Lead Committee: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11823—That the Parliament agrees that the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the legislative consent memorandum on the Automated Vehicles Bill.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

6. Committee Meeting Times: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11824—That the Parliament agrees that, under Rule 12.3.3B of Standing Orders, the Finance and Public Administration Committee can meet, if necessary, at the same time as a meeting of the Parliament between 11.40 am and 12 noon on Thursday 18 January 2024.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

7. Motion Without Notice: The Minister for Cabinet and Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved without notice that, under Rule 11.2.4, Decision Time be brought forward to 4.56pm.

The motion was agreed to.

8. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 4, 5 and 6 as noted above.

9. Protecting FCDO Jobs in East Kilbride: The Parliament debated S6M-11664 in the name of Collette Stevenson— That the Parliament notes the decision by the UK Government to relocate the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) out of East Kilbride; understands from reports that FCDO officials had been in discussions with the local authority about opening a new site in the town, and that this decision was unexpected; believes that Abercrombie House, in East Kilbride, has been home to a dedicated workforce in the field of international development and foreign affairs for over 40 years and that around 1,000 staff are currently based there; understands that the UK Government estimates that the office’s presence generates approximately £30 million for the local economy; notes the view that the decision to relocate jobs out of East Kilbride will have a negative impact on East Kilbride’s economic recovery; further notes the reported campaign by

local staff and trade unions against previous UK Government plans to remove HMRC from East Kilbride, as well as other towns in Scotland; recognises that the UK Government's Declaration on Government Reform commits to "... relocating jobs and areas of activity across government to places including ... East Kilbride"; believes, therefore, that the FCDO announcement goes against the UK Government's own policies; notes the view that this move is a betrayal of the people of East Kilbride, including FCDO staff living and working in the town, and further notes the calls for the UK Government to scrap its plans immediately and maintain the FCDO's substantial presence in East Kilbride.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
10 January 2024

Appendix

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

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 10 January 2024—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 2nd Report, 2024 (Session 6): Delegated powers in the Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1 (SP Paper 505)

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