



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 68, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 17 January 2024

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. Stand Up for Quality Education: Pam Duncan-Glancy moved S6M-11875— That the Parliament acknowledges the recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, and the conclusions that educational standards in Scotland are declining; considers that there are a number of contributing factors that have led to the current difficulties in Scotland's classrooms; notes the Educational Institute of Scotland's (EIS) Stand Up for Quality Education campaign, which sets out recommendations on teacher workloads, resourcing for pupils with additional support needs (ASN) and addressing violent and disruptive behaviour in classrooms as key steps to improving the experience of pupils and teachers; agrees with the Scottish Government's International Council of Education Advisers that “the time for commissioning reviews is now over”, and calls on the Scottish Government to set out a timetable for when it will deliver on its promises in education, including addressing the continued use of temporary teacher contracts, improving workloads by increasing non-contact time for teachers, addressing the gaps in teacher provision in geographical and subject areas, delivering structural reforms, including to the SQA and Education Scotland, and meeting its commitment to offer free breakfasts in primary and special schools.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Jenny Gilruth) moved amendment S6M-11875.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11875 in the name of Pam Duncan-Glancy (Stand Up for Quality Education), leave out from “and the conclusions” to end and insert “which highlight areas for improvement in Scottish education, particularly in mathematics; understands that the Scottish Government is taking forward a planned and systematic curriculum improvement cycle to enhance standards, which will focus initially on maths; welcomes the recent publication of the 2022-23 Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL), which it recognises is the most comprehensive and up-to-date national data set on attainment and which shows record levels of attainment across primary school level and improvements in secondary school level; agrees that these results by Scotland's pupils, teachers and school staff deserve commendation; notes that Scotland has the highest investment per pupil and lowest pupil/teacher ratio in the UK, and that, in addition to a record £830 million spend on additional support for learning (ASL), work is underway to update the Additional Support for Learning Action Plan and deliver a range of measures to improve the experiences and outcomes of pupils with additional needs; welcomes that Scotland has the most comprehensive free school meal offering of any nation in the UK, which will be further extended by investment in the 2024-25 Budget, and further welcomes the sector-wide agreement on the need for a holistic package of education reforms, which it agrees should be taken forward in partnership with Scotland's teachers and young people.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 67, Against 55, Abstentions 1).

Liam Kerr moved amendment S6M-11875.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11875 in the name of Pam Duncan-Glancy (Stand Up for Quality Education), insert at end “; supports the principles of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party's New Deal for Teachers, and calls on the Scottish Government to reduce contact time and class sizes and end the culture of temporary contracts.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 31, Against 91, Abstentions 1).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 67, Against 54, Abstentions 1).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament acknowledges the recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, which highlight areas for improvement in Scottish education, particularly in mathematics; understands that the Scottish Government is taking forward a planned and systematic curriculum improvement cycle to enhance standards, which will focus initially on maths; welcomes the recent publication of the 2022-23 Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL), which it recognises is the most comprehensive and up-to-date national data set on attainment and which shows record levels of attainment across primary school level and improvements in secondary school level; agrees that these results by Scotland's

pupils, teachers and school staff deserve commendation; notes that Scotland has the highest investment per pupil and lowest pupil/teacher ratio in the UK, and that, in addition to a record £830 million spend on additional support for learning (ASL), work is underway to update the Additional Support for Learning Action Plan and deliver a range of measures to improve the experiences and outcomes of pupils with additional needs; welcomes that Scotland has the most comprehensive free school meal offering of any nation in the UK, which will be further extended by investment in the 2024-25 Budget, and further welcomes the sector-wide agreement on the need for a holistic package of education reforms, which it agrees should be taken forward in partnership with Scotland's teachers and young people.

3. Ending NHS Long Waits: Jackie Baillie moved S6M-11874—That the Parliament is alarmed that almost one in six people in Scotland are languishing on NHS waiting lists for tests or treatment; notes that the Scottish Government has failed to meet its own target, set out in July 2022 by the current First Minister, to eliminate the longest waits in planned care, with a staggering 80,000 people currently waiting over a year to be seen; recognises that the Scottish National Party administration's flagship network of National Treatment Centres has been beset by delays; is concerned that the NHS is facing a workforce crisis, with 6,800 NHS vacancies that are unfilled, while agency costs have rocketed in recent years, and calls on the Scottish Ministers to set out a clear plan and timetable for when all long waits for planned care will be eradicated, and provide an update on the timescales and final costs for all the promised National Treatment Centres.

The Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care (Michael Matheson) moved amendment S6M-11874.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11874 in the name of Jackie Baillie (Ending NHS Long Waits), leave out from “is alarmed” to end and insert “recognises that health services across the UK are dealing with the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on waiting times; further recognises that too many people are waiting too long for treatment, and welcomes the reductions in the longest waits, including a 69% reduction in patients waiting over two years for a new outpatient appointment from the end of June 2022 and a 26% reduction in patients waiting longer than two years for inpatient or day case treatment over the same period; highlights the launch of the Waiting Well Hub, to give people the information and tools that they need to look at their own health and wellbeing during the waiting period, think about what matters to them and what health improvements they could make in the meantime; welcomes that constructive engagement with trade unions has meant that Scotland is the only part of the UK not experiencing strike action and the associated unprecedented level of disruption for patients and families; further welcomes the Scottish Government's draft Budget, which gives the NHS a real-terms uplift, in stark contrast to the UK Government Autumn Statement figures, which show a real-terms cut to NHS England; notes that, due to the deteriorating medium-term fiscal outlook, a revised Infrastructure Investment Plan Pipeline is expected to be published alongside the Medium-term Financial Strategy in May 2024; appreciates that the workforce is at the heart of all that the NHS does, and thanks all of Scotland's highly skilled and committed NHS staff for their hard work and dedication, and believes that the

NHS must be kept true to its founding principles of being publicly owned, publicly operated, and free at the point of need, and further believes that the only way to protect the NHS from the creeping privatisation imposed by UK administrations is through independence.”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 67, Against 55, Abstentions 1).

Sandesh Gulhane moved amendment S6M-11874.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-11874 in the name of Jackie Baillie (Ending NHS Long Waits), insert at end “; regrets that over one million people have had to wait more than four hours at A&E in this parliamentary session alone; stresses the need to bring down long waits for mental health services, and condemns the decision of the Scottish Ministers to introduce a real-terms cut to the budget for alcohol and drug services while drug deaths in Scotland remain disturbingly high.”

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 56, Against 66, Abstentions 1).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 67, Against 55, Abstentions 1).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament recognises that health services across the UK are dealing with the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on waiting times; further recognises that too many people are waiting too long for treatment, and welcomes the reductions in the longest waits, including a 69% reduction in patients waiting over two years for a new outpatient appointment from the end of June 2022 and a 26% reduction in patients waiting longer than two years for inpatient or day case treatment over the same period; highlights the launch of the Waiting Well Hub, to give people the information and tools that they need to look at their own health and wellbeing during the waiting period, think about what matters to them and what health improvements they could make in the meantime; welcomes that constructive engagement with trade unions has meant that Scotland is the only part of the UK not experiencing strike action and the associated unprecedented level of disruption for patients and families; further welcomes the Scottish Government's draft Budget, which gives the NHS a real-terms uplift, in stark contrast to the UK Government Autumn Statement figures, which show a real-terms cut to NHS England; notes that, due to the deteriorating medium-term fiscal outlook, a revised Infrastructure Investment Plan Pipeline is expected to be published alongside the Medium-term Financial Strategy in May 2024; appreciates that the workforce is at the heart of all that the NHS does, and thanks all of Scotland's highly skilled and committed NHS staff for their hard work and dedication, and believes that the NHS must be kept true to its founding principles of being publicly owned, publicly operated, and free at the point of need, and further believes that the only way to protect the NHS from the creeping privatisation imposed by UK administrations is through independence.

4. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11887—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

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 Debate: Celebrating and Supporting Breastfeeding in Scotland

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 Debate: Investing in Scotland's Green Economy

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 Debate: Scotland as a Technology Nation

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 30 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 31 January 2024

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

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 1 February 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 Finance and Public Administration Committee Debate: Scottish Budget 2024-25

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.15 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 22 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.

5. Stage 1 *Extension*: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11888— That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be *extended to* 1 March 2024.

The motion was agreed to.

6. Stage 1 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11889—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 29 March 2024.

The motion was agreed to.

7. Stage 2 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-11890—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 9 February 2024.

The motion was agreed to.

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

9. Recognising the Success of HMP Kilmarnock: The Parliament debated S6M-11199 in the name of Brian Whittle—That the Parliament recognises the efforts of staff and volunteers working at HMP Kilmarnock to promote a strong culture of collaboration and rehabilitation throughout the prison, including through working with numerous local community groups over recent years with the aim of reducing reoffending; understands that this has included award-winning collaborations with local charity CentreStage to deliver employability and life skills training, as well as help with housing, health and welfare issues, and, more recently, with Recovery Enterprises Scotland, another local charity, on the creation of its Foundations Hub at the visitor centre within the prison; notes what it sees as the substantial contribution that these efforts make not only to reducing reoffending, but to improving the life chances of prisoners on their release by helping them to avoid returning to a pattern of harmful behaviour and offering them a different path; considers that the work done by HMP Kilmarnock's staff and all those who assist them is of great importance, and notes the hope that their approach not only continues in the years ahead, but that it can also be replicated more widely across the prison estate.

The meeting closed at 6.06 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
17 January 2024

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

Subordinate Legislation

Affirmative Instruments

The following affirmative instrument was withdrawn and re-laid before the Parliament on 17 January 2024—

Consumer Scotland Act 2020 (Relevant Public Authorities) Regulations 2024 [draft]
laid under section 26(2)(b) of the Consumer Scotland Act 2020

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 17 January 2024 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Government Chemist Review 2022 (SG/2024/13) laid under Section 88(3) of the Scotland Act 1998

HM Revenue & Customs: Administration of Scottish income tax 2022-23 (SG/2024/14) laid under Section 80HA of the Scotland Act 1998 as amended by the Finance Act 2014

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