The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minutes of Proceedings

Parliamentary year 1, number 42, Session 7

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 5 November 2026

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

The meeting opened at 1:30pm.

1. General Questions: Questions were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.

2. First Minister's Questions (Party Leaders): Questions were answered by the First Minister (John Swinney).

3. Ministerial Statement: The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic (Màiri McAllan) made a statement and answered questions on Safeguarding and Protecting Children.

4. Strengthening Scotland's Bus Network: Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport (Stephen Flynn) moved S7M-01881—That the Parliament welcomes the opportunity to strengthen the availability, affordability and accessibility of Scotland's bus network by bringing the bus network back into public control through franchising and regulation across Scotland; welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to bring legislation before Parliament to deliver this at the earliest possible opportunity; recognises the successful delivery of the £2 bus fare cap scheme in the Highlands and Islands and Strathclyde areas; welcomes that this means that bus fares are now capped at £2 across 60% of the land area of Scotland and in areas where half of the population of Scotland live; supports expansion of the fare cap to Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire from April 2027 in advance of further roll-out to the rest of Scotland; notes that this measure makes a real difference to people during a cost of living crisis, helping with the cost of everyday travel and supporting access to work, education, healthcare and leisure, and recognises that this builds on the success of the free bus schemes available to 2.4 million people, including everyone aged under 22, eligible disabled people, and over 60s.

> Paul Sweeney moved S7M-01881.4—As an amendment to motion S7M-01881 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Strengthening Scotland's Bus Network), insert at end "; regrets the reduction in bus services across Scotland, including in rural areas, over the past decade; believes that true public control through regional bus franchising must ensure that money raised through passenger fares is retained by the public sector and reinvested directly into the network rather than

extracted as profit by private operators; further believes that public control will also enable integrated smart ticketing across Scottish public transport; calls on the Scottish Government to reform taxpayer-funded bus grant processes to give significantly greater weighting to meaningful social value criteria, including measurable commitments relating to domestic jobs, apprenticeships, skills and supply chain growth, and urges the Scottish Government to adopt institutional patient capital leasing models for zero-emission bus fleets, learning from the financing approach being deployed by Transport for London, to reduce upfront financial barriers for franchised or publicly-owned bus operators and secure a long-term order pipeline for Scotland's domestic bus manufacturing base."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 31, Against 86, Abstentions 0).

Graham Simpson moved S7M-01881.1—As an amendment to motion S7M-01881 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Strengthening Scotland's Bus Network), leave out from first "welcomes" to end and insert "calls on the Scottish Government to introduce legislation that will speed up the process of franchising where it is wanted as well as assisting regional transport partnerships that want to introduce franchising; further calls on the Scottish Government to introduce a trial multi-modal smart ticketing scheme in order that it can be rolled out nationally by 2031, and urges the Scottish Government to set out how it sees bus service improvement partnerships progressing."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 29, Against 89, Abstentions 0).

Patrick Harvie moved S7M-01881.2—As an amendment to motion S7M-01881 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Strengthening Scotland's Bus Network), insert at end "; believes that, if the Scottish Government is going to deliver on its commitments, it must urgently update Parliament with a timeline of when the £2 bus cap will be rolled out nationwide, and calls on the Scottish Government to introduce an ambitious bill by Spring 2027 to reform the legislative framework for bus services and accelerate the franchising process."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 84, Against 34, Abstentions 0).

Tim Eagle moved S7M-01881.5—As an amendment to motion S7M-01881 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Strengthening Scotland's Bus Network), leave out from first "welcomes" to end and insert "recognises the vital role that reliable, affordable and accessible bus services play in connecting communities, supporting businesses and providing access to employment, education and healthcare; recognises the particular importance of bus services to rural and island communities, where they are often an essential lifeline; supports a bus network that encourages competition and innovation, delivers value for money and puts passengers' needs at its heart; recognises the need to ensure that public transport subsidies deliver value for money, and supports the introduction of a dedicated Rural and Small Towns Bus Fund to protect vital services that might otherwise be commercially unviable."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 24, Against 92, Abstentions 0).

William Rennie moved S7M-01881.3—As an amendment to motion S7M-01881 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Strengthening Scotland's Bus Network), leave out from first "welcomes" to end and insert "believes in the importance of improving the availability, affordability and accessibility of bus services in Scotland; welcomes the opportunity to consider how this can be achieved through franchising and regulation; notes the Scottish Government's commitment to introducing a £2 bus fare cap to all areas of Scotland; believes that any such measures should be carefully considered in order to recognise the existing provision and differing needs across Scotland, and that they must be part of a wider strategy for bus services that includes the delivery of integrated ticketing and continued network development; notes with concern that over 150 million fewer passenger journeys were made on local bus services in 2024-25 compared to the peak in 2007-08, the year in which the SNP entered government, and that annual local bus service vehicle kilometres have also fallen by over 100 million in the same period; recognises concerns regarding the sustainability of bus services in rural and remote areas and a lack of coherent integration of bus and rail services; believes that the reduction in the real-terms value of the Network Support Grant base rate has undermined the viability of bus services, particularly in rural and remote areas, and recognises the importance of community transport services in the delivery of public transport across Scotland and the challenges which the sector faces, including increased fuel and maintenance costs."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 47, Against 69, Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 84, Against 33, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament welcomes the opportunity to strengthen the availability, affordability and accessibility of Scotland's bus network by bringing the bus network back into public control through franchising and regulation across Scotland; welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to bring legislation before Parliament to deliver this at the earliest possible opportunity; recognises the successful delivery of the £2 bus fare cap scheme in the Highlands and Islands and Strathclyde areas; welcomes that this means that bus fares are now capped at £2 across 60% of the land area of Scotland and in areas where half of the population of Scotland live; supports expansion of the fare cap to Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire from April 2027 in advance of further roll-out to the rest of Scotland; notes that this measure makes a real difference to people during a cost of living crisis, helping with the cost of everyday travel and supporting access to work, education, healthcare and leisure; recognises that this builds on the success of the free bus schemes available to 2.4 million people, including everyone aged under 22, eligible disabled people, and over 60s; believes that, if the Scottish Government is going to deliver on its commitments, it must urgently update Parliament with a timeline of when the £2 bus cap will be rolled out nationwide, and calls on the Scottish Government to introduce an ambitious bill by Spring 2027 to reform the legislative framework for bus services and accelerate the franchising process.

5. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on item 4 as noted above.

6. World Diabetes Day 2026: The Parliament debated S7M-01544 in the name of Colm Merrick—That the Parliament marks World Diabetes Day 2026, which takes place on 14 November; considers that this year's theme, Early Action on Diabetes, alongside its goals of early detection, symptom awareness and complication prevention, is timely given that almost half of all people living with diabetes remain undiagnosed, and believes that technology and innovation are central to transforming diabetes management and prevention, while noting the need to couple technological innovation with action to tackle the equity gap, ensuring that advances in diabetes prevention, diagnosis and treatment are accessible to all, and do not widen existing health inequalities.

The meeting closed at 6:00pm.

David McGill

Clerk of the Parliament

6 November 2026

Appendix

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

Subordinate Legislation

Subject to affirmative procedure

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 5 November 2026 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (Ancillary Provision) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/Draft)
laid under section 61(2) of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

Not subject to any parliamentary procedure

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 5 November 2026 and are not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Act of Adjournal (Criminal Procedure Rules 1996 Amendment) (Miscellaneous) (No. 2) 2026 (SSI 2026/328)
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

Trusts and Succession (Scotland) Act 2024 (Commencement No. 2 and Saving and Transitory Provision) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/323 (C. 36))
laid under Section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

The Building Safety Levy (Scotland) Act 2026 (Commencement No. 1) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/324 (C. 37))
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (Commencement No. 9) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/326 (C. 38))
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

Documents subject to parliamentary control

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 4 November 2026 and is subject to parliamentary control—

Environmental Standards Scotland engine idling laws air quality investigation: Scottish Government improvement plan (SG/2026/281)
laid under section 30(3)(a) of the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 5 November 2026 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Healthcare Improvement Scotland Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 (SG/2026/274) laid
under section 22 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

NHS 24 Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31 March 2026 (SG/2026/270) laid
under section 22 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

NHS Education for Scotland Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 March 2026 (SG/2026/271) laid
under section 22 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

NHS National Services Scotland Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31 March 2026 (SG/2026/272) laid
under section 22 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Public Health Scotland Annual Report & Accounts for the Year to 31 March 2026 (SG/2026/273) laid
under section 22 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 5 November 2026—

Education and Gaelic Committee, 2nd Report, 2026 (Session 7): Pre-budget scrutiny 2027-28 (SP Paper 40)

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