The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minutes of Proceedings

Parliamentary year 1, number 44, Session 7

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 11 November 2026

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

The meeting opened at 2:00pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Social Justice and Housing, and then on Economy, Tourism and Transport, were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. Improving Attainment, Tackling Inequality and Strengthening National Standards: Katherine Sangster moved S7M-01963—That the Parliament recognises that the international performance of Scottish education has declined; further recognises the need to improve the experience and attainment for all young people in Scotland; believes that achievement in education is a key factor in breaking the cycle of poverty; agrees that Parliament must do more to break the link between family income and educational achievement; believes that, in order to address issues within the education system, they must be better understood, and calls for the reintroduction of the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) and standardised reporting across all local authorities to ensure consistent reporting on absences, behaviour and additional support needs and enable the education system to get it right for every child.

> **Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic (Màiri McAllan) moved S7M-01963.3—As an amendment to motion S7M-01963 in the name of Katherine Sangster (Improving Attainment, Tackling Inequality and Strengthening National Standards), leave out from first "recognises" to end and insert**: "celebrates the achievements of Scotland's young people, as reflected in the 2026 National Qualifications results with academic passes up at every level and a 121% increase in vocational awards since 2019; notes that there is a joint record number of young people in positive follow-up destinations such as college, work and apprenticeships, and more young Scots gaining a place at university,- including a record number from deprived backgrounds; recognises the contribution of Scotland's dedicated and hardworking teaching and school staff; notes the need to improve the experience and attainment for all young people in Scotland and believes that achievement in education is a key factor in breaking the cycle of poverty, and affirms that, in the pursuit of excellence and equity, the Scottish Government should drive meaningful reform

across the education system, including by working with parties across the Chamber to identify priorities for school assessments such as the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy and Scottish National Standardised Assessments, and embrace the opportunity of public sector reform to enhance performance, reduce unwarranted variation and empower school leaders across Scotland."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 67, Against 49, Abstentions 0). As a result, amendments S7M-01963.2 and S7M-01963.4 were pre-empted.

Laura Moodie moved S7M-01963.1—As an amendment to motion S7M-01963 in the name of Katherine Sangster (Improving Attainment, Tackling Inequality and Strengthening National Standards), insert at end "; recognises that, where data collection on pupil performance across local authorities is standardised, it should be done in a way that supports both the progress and attainment of pupils and tackles the bureaucracy placed on teachers; welcomes guidance on school uniforms that includes key recommendations to limit costs, and calls for this guidance to be placed on a statutory footing as soon as possible."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 95, Against 22, Abstentions 0).

Meghan Gallacher moved S7M-01963.2—As an amendment to motion S7M-01963 in the name of Katherine Sangster (Improving Attainment, Tackling Inequality and Strengthening National Standards), insert at end "; expresses serious concern that the Scottish Government has failed to reverse declining school standards, close the attainment gap or adequately support the rising number of pupils with additional support needs (ASN); notes that around one in four primary pupils is not achieving expected literacy levels and one in five is not achieving expected numeracy levels, and that Scotland recorded its poorest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results to date with pupils falling behind their counterparts in England in reading, mathematics and science; condemns the Scottish Government's focus on headline-grabbing policies, including the proposed £2.7 million Welcome to School Bag, and its failure to deliver promised funded bikes and laptops; believes that the Scottish Government has failed to collect and publish reliable, comparable information on school performance and that positive destination statistics are wholly inadequate as a measure of educational success; calls for consistent annual reporting, publicly available and comparable over time and across all local authorities, on attainment, the attainment gap, attendance, persistent absence, exclusions, classroom violence, disruptive behaviour and ASN; questions the effectiveness of Education Scotland in driving improvement, and calls on the Scottish Government to deliver a credible and comprehensive plan to raise attainment and restore confidence in Scotland's schools, to prioritise a knowledge-based, evidence-led curriculum with literacy, numeracy and subject knowledge at its core, and to establish clear national standards, measurable targets and robust accountability for educational outcomes."

Duncan Dunlop moved S7M-01963.4—As an amendment to motion S7M-01963 in the name of Katherine Sangster (Improving Attainment, Tackling Inequality and Strengthening National Standards), remove from "and enable" to end and

insert "; believes that pupil support assistants provide essential support to children with additional support needs and teachers; calls for education funding currently directed towards initiatives such as the Welcome to School Bag and digital screens in primary school classrooms to instead be invested in the recruitment of, and better pay for, pupil support assistants; agrees that continuity in relationships specifically between pupil support assistants and pupils must be prioritised, and calls for headteachers and the community to have more devolved powers to choose the interventions that best meet their school's needs and enable the education system to get it right for every child."

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 69, Against 48, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament celebrates the achievements of Scotland's young people, as reflected in the 2026 National Qualifications results with academic passes up at every level and a 121% increase in vocational awards since 2019; notes that there is a joint record number of young people in positive follow-up destinations such as college, work and apprenticeships, and more young Scots gaining a place at university, including a record number from deprived backgrounds; recognises the contribution of Scotland's dedicated and hardworking teaching and school staff; notes the need to improve the experience and attainment for all young people in Scotland and believes that achievement in education is a key factor in breaking the cycle of poverty, and affirms that, in the pursuit of excellence and equity, the Scottish Government should drive meaningful reform across the education system, including by working with parties across the Chamber to identify priorities for school assessments such as the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy and Scottish National Standardised Assessments; embraces the opportunity of public sector reform to enhance performance, reduce unwarranted variation and empower school leaders across Scotland; recognises that, where data collection on pupil performance across local authorities is standardised, it should be done in a way that supports both the progress and attainment of pupils and tackles the bureaucracy placed on teachers; welcomes guidance on school uniforms that includes key recommendations to limit costs, and calls for this guidance to be placed on a statutory footing as soon as possible.

3. Business Programme: Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S7M-01982—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 17 November 2026

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by General Questions

followed by First Minister's Questions (Backbench Members)

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Energy Prices and the Cost of Living

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 18 November 2026

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Deputy First Minister Responsibilities, Finance and Local Government, Parliamentary Business and Veterans; Public Service Reform, Europe, External Affairs and Energy

followed by Scottish Green Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 19 November 2026

1.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

1.30 pm General Questions

2.00 pm First Minister's Questions (Party Leaders)

followed by Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Questions

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Prevention and Preventative Budgeting

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Tuesday 24 November 2026

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by General Questions

followed by First Minister's Questions (Backbench Members)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 25 November 2026

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Justice; Health and Care

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 26 November 2026

1.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

1.30 pm General Questions

2.00 pm First Minister's Questions (Party Leaders)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 16 November 2026, 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: Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S7M-01983—That the

Parliament agrees that the Budget (Scotland) Act 2026 Amendment Regulations 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

5. Motion without notice: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved a motion without notice that, under Rule 11.2.4, Decision Time be brought forward to 5.29 pm

The motion was agreed to.

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

7. Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Lothian Buses, Formerly Lothian Region Transport: The Parliament debated S7M-01325 in the name of Daniel Johnson—That the Parliament celebrates the 40th anniversary of Lothian Buses, which was formerly Lothian Region Transport and is the UK's largest municipal bus company; commends the foresight of then Lothian Region, which established Lothian Regional Transport plc following the Transport Act 1985, which mandated that bus operators be run as commercial entities; notes the efforts of the Lothian Region administration and trades unions for resisting a management buyout in 1992, ensuring that Lothian Buses was the only major publicly owned bus company in Scotland; believes that the deregulation and privatisation of bus services has failed on its own terms; notes the continued municipal ownership model in the Lothians; believes that this ensures profits are reinvested into new routes, low ticket prices and fleet improvements; notes the crucial role that it believes public transport has in addressing carbon emissions and growing local economies, and further notes calls on the Scottish Government to urgently simplify bus franchising legislation as a stepping-stone to municipal ownership, to ensure that other regions can build better bus services.

The meeting closed at 6:26pm.

David McGill

Clerk of the Parliament

12 November 2026

Appendix

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

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 11 November 2026 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Bòrd na Gàidhlig Annual Report and Accounts 2025- 2026 (SG/2026/291) laid under paragraph 9 of schedule 1 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Revised Framework document for the National Crime Agency (SG/2026/246) laid under Section 6(3) of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013

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