



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 1, No. 21, Session 7

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 3 September 2026

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

The meeting opened at 1.30 pm.

1. General Questions: Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries 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 Justice (Neil Gray) made a statement and answered questions on Cairngorms Wildfire.

4. Eradicating Child Poverty, the Scottish Government's Defining Mission: The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Housing (Shirley-Anne Somerville) moved S7M-01022—That the Parliament notes the publication of the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, Ambitious for Scotland, and its actions aimed at eradicating child poverty and supporting families with the cost of living; recognises the ambition to go further by transforming the childcare offer for families, delivering a £2 bus fare cap across all of Scotland, and investing record public sector funding in affordable housing; welcomes the focus on ensuring support for families is integrated, person-centred and accessible, including through delivery of the £20 million Whole Family Support Third Sector Fund; supports the commitment to build on action set out in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2026-31, which is estimated to keep 100,000 children out of relative poverty this year, and to going further and faster so that every child has the chance to succeed regardless of their circumstances, and commits to working together to drive continued progress toward the eradication of child poverty in Scotland.

Julie MacDougall moved amendment S7M-01022.5—

As an amendment to S7M-01022, in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Eradicating Child Poverty, the Scottish Government's Defining Mission), leave out from "recognises" to end, and insert "notes that, by the Scottish Government's own admission, child poverty is above its 2023-24 interim target of 18%, meaning that approximately 210,000 children are still living in poverty; expresses its disappointment that, despite the buzzwords and branding of its title, Bringing Hope, Building Futures, the Scottish Government's tackling child poverty delivery plan for 2026-2031 will not reach the 18% target until 2031; acknowledges that child poverty cannot be tackled in isolation, but rather by the totality of Scottish Government's policies; believes, that, in particular, the combination of Scottish Government policies on taxation and business regulation as well as lagging educational attainment have a detrimental impact on the economy and, as a result, the incomes and job opportunities for families, which undermine the positive impacts of policies designed to reduce child poverty, and calls on the Scottish Government to commission an independent review into whether its taxation, business regulation and education policies have led to the higher than expected levels of child poverty."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 21, Against 90 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Mark Griffin moved amendment S7M-01022.1—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01022 in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Eradicating Child Poverty, the Scottish Government's Defining Mission), leave out from "supports" to end and insert "regrets that, while eradicating child poverty has been a defining mission for the Scottish Government for nearly a decade, too many children remain trapped in poverty, record numbers are living in temporary accommodation and key anti-poverty measures have not been delivered; reaffirms the commitment to meet the targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017; believes that a new approach is clearly needed with a focus on both delivery and tackling the root causes of poverty; further believes that tackling child poverty requires action across housing, homelessness, childcare, employment and family support as well as finally closing the attainment gap, and believes that if ministers are serious about delivery, they should engage in cross-party working to achieve the statutory targets and improve outcomes for children and families across Scotland."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 35, Against 68 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 9).

Holly Bruce moved amendment S7M-01022.2—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01022 in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Eradicating Child Poverty, the Scottish Government's Defining Mission), insert at end "; calls for decisive and committed action to disrupt financial inequality between women and men, and recognises the need for

targeted action to confront women's poverty as a vital part of realising its mission to eradicate child poverty; supports the progressive increase to the Scottish Child Payment to £40 per week for all children, not just those under one year old, with the goal of increasing this to £55 per week by the end of the current Parliamentary session, and believes that an increase to the Scottish Child Payment for young parents must be made to compensate for the UK Government's Young Parent Penalty."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 15 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 83, Abstentions 13).

Morven-May MacCallum moved amendment S7M-01022.4—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01022 in the name of Shirley-Anne Somerville (Eradicating Child Poverty, the Scottish Government's Defining Mission), insert at end"; calls for action to ensure that families, particularly in rural communities, do not face challenges in accessing childcare services with parents and guardians having real choice and flexibility over how to organise their lives and fewer barriers to work; acknowledges that, by providing a choice, parents are enabled to return to work if they want, boosting family incomes, tackling child poverty and growing the economy; believes that access to early learning and childcare (ELC) would be enhanced by introducing fairer rates for private, voluntary and independent providers of ELC to cover the actual costs of delivering high-quality ELC; further believes that the Scottish Government commitment in its Programme for Government to invest in independent providers does not go far enough, and calls on it to fully close the funding gap between independent and local government providers of ELC and to ensure that parents have sufficient access to childcare provision wherever they are in Scotland."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 59 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 54, Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 36, Against 63, Abstentions 15 (including 1 proxy vote)).

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

6. AI Data Centres: The Parliament debated S7M-00428 in the name of Graham Simpson—That the Parliament notes with concern proposals for hyperscale AI data centres across the Central Scotland and Lothian West region, including at Ravenscraig, Larbert, Newhouse and West Calder, and near communities affected by the proposed AI Growth Zone at Chapelhall; understands that such developments may rely on diesel generators to support 24/7 operation; further understands that there are concerns over potential nitrogen oxide emissions; recognises that there are community concerns about the cumulative impact on air quality, emissions, green space and energy costs; regrets that National Planning Framework 4 does not define "green data centres", and notes calls for the Scottish Government to issue urgent guidance on the term, including in relation to the use of gas and diesel power and the air quality standards that should apply.

7. Motion without Notice: Graham Simpson moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes. The motion was agreed to.

The meeting closed at 6.41 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
3 September 2026

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

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 3 September 2026—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 2nd Report, 2026 (Session 7): Subordinate Legislation considered by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 1 September 2026 (SP Paper 3)

Subordinate Legislation

Negative Instruments

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 3 September 2026 and are subject to the negative procedure—

Sports Grounds and Sporting Events (Designation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2026 (SSI 2026/247)

laid under section 18(3) of the Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995

Charges for Residues Surveillance Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/249)

laid under section 48(3) of the Food Safety Act 1990

Laid Only Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 3 September 2026 and is not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Act 2017 (Commencement No. 1) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/248 (C.23))

laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Legislative Consent Memorandum

The following memorandum was lodged on 3 September 2026—

Stephen Flynn, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport:
Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (LCM-S7-11)

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