



# The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 1, No. 26, Session 7

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 16 September 2026

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

**1. Portfolio Questions:** Questions on Justice, and then on Health and Care, were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

**2. Hyperscale Data Centres:** Patrick Harvie moved S7M-01177—That the Parliament agrees to the introduction of a moratorium on planning applications for new hyperscale data centres until a national strategy and updated planning guidance are produced, which takes into account the cumulative impacts on energy demand and the environment.

The Minister for Public Finance (Hannah Mary Goodlad) moved amendment S7M-01177.5—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01177 in the name of Patrick Harvie (Hyperscale Data Centres), leave out from "agrees" to end and insert "believes new hyper-scale data centres in Scotland will only be approved where they have met robust environmental impact assessments, which will take account of any impact on the amenity of any neighbouring communities; welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to the swift creation of national planning and spatial guidance by the end of the year for the determination of conditions, under which data centre development should be permitted; believes that, in order to gain planning approval, any proposals for data centres should demonstrate how they would minimise emissions for their energy usage and not impact on water usage and how community wealth benefit will be built in to the business case; notes that best practice for the creation of data centres

includes steps to support decarbonisation and to recycle waste heat for wider community use; recognises the increased utilisation of AI and further development of such technology, and calls for strong domestic regulation of and international collaboration on the development and use of AI systems to ensure its safe and ethical use, and to address the scale and seriousness of potential threats the use of AI may pose now and in the future."

Graham Simpson moved amendment S7M-01177.1—

As an amendment to S7M-01177 in the name of Patrick Harvie (Hyperscale Data Centres), leave out from "agrees" to end and insert "recognises the importance of data centres to Scotland's digital economy; notes however growing concerns regarding the cumulative impacts of hyperscale developments on energy demand, water resources, agricultural land and local communities; believes that greater certainty is needed for communities, planning authorities and investors alike, and calls on the Scottish Government to urgently publish national guidance defining what constitutes a green data centre, setting clear environmental standards and prioritising development on appropriate brownfield and industrial sites."

After debate, amendment S7M-01177.5 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 72, Against 32 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 16). As a result, amendment S7M-01177.1 was pre-empted.

Paul Sweeney moved amendment S7M-01177.3—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01177 in the name of Patrick Harvie (Hyperscale Data Centres), insert at end "believes that Scotland has great strengths in data science and energy, and as such, a clear industrial strategy is required to maximise the economic benefits of AI data centre developments, including jobs and wages; calls on the Scottish Government to bring forward a clear definition of what constitutes a hyperscale data centre and to issue national planning guidance, alongside robust environmental standards and assessments, to inform national and local decision-making on current and potential hyperscale data centre planning applications; notes that such guidance must provide clarity on spatial, community and social impacts of any such developments and that decisions must be based on community consent; agrees that consideration must be given to implementing community benefit schemes and adjusting the non-domestic rates regime or other tax measures to ensure that economic benefits are accrued by communities in which such data centres are sited; calls on the Scottish Government to report back to Parliament on the development of national planning guidance by the end of the current calendar year and to publish this guidance in full within 12 months, and believes that no decisions on planning or consenting in relation to such applications should be made until this has been completed."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 94 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 26, Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 80, Against 26, Abstentions 15 (including 1 proxy vote)).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament believes new hyper-scale data centres in Scotland will only be approved where they have met robust environmental impact assessments, which will take account of any impact on the amenity of any neighbouring communities; welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to the swift creation of national planning and spatial guidance by the end of the year for the determination of conditions, under which data centre development should be permitted; believes that, in order to gain planning approval, any proposals for data centres should demonstrate how they would minimise emissions for their energy usage and not impact on water usage and how community wealth benefit will be built in to the business case; notes that best practice for the creation of data centres includes steps to support decarbonisation and to recycle waste heat for wider community use; recognises the increased utilisation of AI and further development of such technology; calls for strong domestic regulation of and international collaboration on the development and use of AI systems to ensure its safe and ethical use, and to address the scale and seriousness of potential threats the use of AI may pose now and in the future; believes that Scotland has great strengths in data science and energy, and as such, a clear industrial strategy is required to maximise the economic benefits of AI data centre developments, including jobs and wages; calls on the Scottish Government to bring forward a clear definition of what constitutes a hyperscale data centre and to issue national planning guidance, alongside robust environmental standards and assessments, to inform national and local decision-making on current and potential hyperscale data centre planning applications; notes that such guidance must provide clarity on spatial, community and social impacts of any such developments and that decisions must be based on community consent; agrees that consideration must be given to implementing community benefit schemes and adjusting the non-domestic rates regime or other tax measures to ensure that economic benefits are accrued by communities in which such data centres are sited; calls on the Scottish Government to report back to Parliament on the development of national planning guidance by the end of the current calendar year and to publish this guidance in full within 12 months, and believes that no decisions on planning or consenting in relation to such applications should be made until this has been completed.

**3. Middle East: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions:** Gillian Mackay moved S7M-01178—That the Parliament believes that a company's involvement in illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian Territories constitutes grave professional misconduct and should, as a result, automatically disqualify that company, together with any parent company or subsidiary, from eligibility for public procurement and all forms of support from the Scottish Government.

The Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy (Stephen Gethins) moved amendment S7M-01178.5—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01178 Gillian Mackay (Middle East: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions), insert at end "recognises, however, that any such decisions must be taken in accordance with the current legal framework, noting

that trade sanctions, foreign policy, export controls and economic sanctions remain reserved to the UK Government; urges the Scottish Government to continue to engage with the UK Government on the recently announced package of measures, including sanctions; reiterates its call on the UK Government to place an immediate ban on licenced arms exports from the UK to Israel; reaffirms its support for humanitarian access as well as lasting peace through a two-state solution, and also reaffirms its commitment to the international rules-based system and international humanitarian law."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 64, Against 56 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Neil Bibby moved amendment S7M-01178.3—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01178 in the name of Gillian Mackay (Middle East: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions), insert at end "; notes the actions being progressed by the UK Government in relation to illegal settlements, including an import ban on settlement goods, sanctions against individuals, an advertising ban and arms export restrictions, and calls on the Scottish and UK governments to consider what further actions they can take to secure a lasting peace between the two states of Israel and Palestine and to uphold international law."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 80, Against 25, Abstentions 15 (including 1 proxy vote)).

Russell Findlay moved amendment S7M-01178.4—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01178 in the name of Gillian Mackay (Middle East: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions), leave out from "believes" to end and insert "condemns the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, in which approximately 1,200 people were murdered, and 251 people were taken hostage, including children and British nationals; notes several reports, including findings by the United Nations, that rape and sexualised torture were committed during the attacks and against women and children held hostage in captivity; recognises Israel as a democratic state and a longstanding ally of the UK, and acknowledges the importance of UK-Israel intelligence sharing in tackling shared threats and protecting citizens; recognises Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which are terrorist organisations proscribed in the UK and receive support from Iran; notes that foreign policy is reserved matter to the UK Parliament; recognises that Israeli settlements and settler violence undermine the prospects for peace; considers, however, that blanket boycotts will not advance a two-state solution and risk deepening community tensions in the UK, and supports a two-state solution that guarantees security for Israelis and Palestinians."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 25, Against 85 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 10).

David Green moved amendment S7M-01178.1—

As an amendment to motion S7M-01178 in the name of Gillian Mackay (Middle East: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions), insert at end "; further believes that public bodies should ensure that all due diligence processes are up to date so that no companies with links to human rights abuses are provided with public funding; recalls that Parliament passed motion S6M-16571 on 26 February 2025, calling on Scottish Enterprise to review its human rights due diligence checks; notes that, since confirming in a GIQ on 25 June 2025 that the review had taken place and that, steps would be taken to implement its findings during 2025-26, no further information has been published, and calls, therefore, on Scottish Enterprise, to update Parliament on progress and whether any new human rights due diligence process has been created as a result of this review."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 95 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 25, Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 25, Abstentions 31 (including 1 proxy vote)).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament believes that a company's involvement in illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian Territories constitutes grave professional misconduct and should, as a result, automatically disqualify that company, together with any parent company or subsidiary, from eligibility for public procurement and all forms of support from the Scottish Government; recognises, however, that any such decisions must be taken in accordance with the current legal framework, noting that trade sanctions, foreign policy, export controls and economic sanctions remain reserved to the UK Government; urges the Scottish Government to continue to engage with the UK Government on the recently announced package of measures, including sanctions; reiterates its call on the UK Government to place an immediate ban on licenced arms exports from the UK to Israel; reaffirms its support for humanitarian access as well as lasting peace through a two-state solution; also reaffirms its commitment to the international rules-based system and international humanitarian law; notes the actions being progressed by the UK Government in relation to illegal settlements, including an import ban on settlement goods, sanctions against individuals, an advertising ban and arms export restrictions; calls on the Scottish and UK governments to consider what further actions they can take to secure a lasting peace between the two states of Israel and Palestine and to uphold international law; further believes that public bodies should ensure that all due diligence processes are up to date so that no companies with links to human rights abuses are provided with public funding; recalls that Parliament passed motion S6M-16571 on 26 February 2025, calling on Scottish Enterprise to review its human rights due diligence checks; notes that, since confirming in a GIQ on 25 June 2025 that the review had taken place and that, steps would be taken to implement its findings during 2025-26, no further information has been published, and calls, therefore, on Scottish Enterprise, to update Parliament on progress and whether any new human rights due diligence process has been created as a result of this review.

**4. Business Programme:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S7M-01187—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 22 September 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: Scotland's Right to Decide

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 23 September 2026

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Climate Action and Rural Affairs; Education, Culture and Gaelic

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Addressing Drug Harms

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Building a Flood Resilient Scotland: Delivering Action for Communities in a Changing Climate

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 24 September 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: Growing Scotland's Creative Economy

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by Members' Business*

Tuesday 29 September 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 30 September 2026

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Social Justice and Housing; Economy, Tourism and Transport

*followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business*

*followed by Business Motions*

*followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions*

5.30 pm Decision Time

*followed by Members' Business*

Thursday 1 October 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 21 September 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.

(c) that, for the purposes of Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Questions on Thursday 24 September 2026, that Rule 13.9.3 be varied to replace the words "of up to 15 minutes" with "of up to 20 minutes".

The motion was agreed to.

**5. Designation of Lead Committee:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S7M-01188—That the Parliament agrees that the Economy, Tourism and Energy Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the supplementary legislative consent memorandum relating to the Cyber Security and Resilience (Network and Information Systems) Bill.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

**6. Designation of Lead Committee:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S7M-01189—That the Parliament agrees that the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Scottish Local Government Elections (Candidacy Rights of Commonwealth Citizens) Bill at Stage 1.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

**7. Office of the Clerk:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S7M-01190—That the Parliament agrees that between 1 February 2027 and 31 January 2028, the Office of the Clerk will be open on all days except: Saturdays and Sundays, 26 March, 29 March, 3 May, 28 May, 31 May, 10 September, 26 November, 24 December (pm), 27 and 28 December and 3 and 4 January 2028.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

**8. Decision Time:** The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 as noted above.

**9. Scotland's Rainforest:** The Parliament debated S7M-00319 in the name of Jenni Minto—That the Parliament recognises the importance of Scotland's rainforest and associated natural habitats; understands that under all climate warming scenarios over the coming century, Scotland will increase its global share of the temperate rainforest biome, making it the best place on the planet to regenerate this habitat; notes that Argyll and Bute hosts approximately 50% of what remains in Scotland, and therefore holds a central role in this regeneration; recognises the significant role of the Alliance For Scotland's Rainforest in promoting the importance of Scotland's rainforest as well as the need to protect and expand it; welcomes the recent discovery of a number of rare species, including glow-worms and slime moulds, in Scotland's rainforest; recognises the immense work of the Argyll Countryside Trust (ACT) following the launch of the West Cowal Rainforest Habitat Regeneration - Biological Recording project in June 2024, which has now identified 1,109 species across the project area, and commends the team at ACT and all of the volunteers who have contributed to this project.

The meeting closed at 6.31 pm.

**David McGill**  
Clerk of the Parliament  
16 September 2026

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

**Other Documents**

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 16 September 2026 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

**Management of the ScotWind leasing round : A report prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS/2026/7)** laid under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

**The Scottish Consolidated Fund Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2026 (SG/2026/191)** laid under Section 20 subsection 6 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

**The Scottish Government Non Domestic Rating Account for the year ended 31 March 2026 (SG/2026/182)** laid under Section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

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