



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 5, No. 59, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 10 December 2025

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Deputy First Minister Responsibilities, Economy and Gaelic, and then on Finance and Local Government, were answered by the Deputy First Minister, a Cabinet Secretary, and Ministers.

2. Controlling the Rising Benefits Bill in Scotland: Alexander Stewart moved S6M-20056—That the Parliament believes that social security spending by the Scottish Government and its future social security spending commitments are unsustainable; notes the report published by Audit Scotland in September 2025, Adult Disability Payment; further notes that the Audit Scotland report highlights a "funding gap for devolved social security spending of £2.0 billion by 2029/30"; calls on the Scottish Government to explain why, according to Audit Scotland, it "has not yet set out a detailed strategy for how it will manage the forecast gap between social security funding and spending"; believes that raising taxes in order to remove the limit on the child element of Universal Credit was not the right priority for either the Scottish Government or the UK Government, and calls on the Scottish Government to use the money that it will save, as a result of the UK Government's decision, to lower costs for people across Scotland by instead cutting income tax.

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice (Shirley-Anne Somerville) moved amendment S6M-20056.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20056 in the name of Alexander Stewart (Controlling the Rising Benefits Bill in Scotland), leave out from first "believes" to end and insert "reaffirms its commitment to the social security principles

contained in the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 and unanimously adopted by the Parliament, including that social security is an investment in the people of Scotland and is itself a human right; welcomes the abolition of the two-child limit across the UK; calls on the UK Labour administration to go further and scrap other damaging welfare reforms implemented by the previous UK administration, including the benefit cap, and supports the Scottish Government's commitment to reinvest funding to end the two-child limit in further measures to tackle child poverty in Scotland."

Claire Baker moved amendment S6M-20056.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20056 in the name of Alexander Stewart (Controlling the Rising Benefits Bill in Scotland), leave out from first "believes" to end and insert "notes with concern Audit Scotland's recent assessment of a 'funding gap for devolved social security spending of £2.0 billion by 2029/30' and the absence of a 'detailed strategy for how [the Scottish Government] will manage the forecast gap between social security funding and spending'; welcomes the announcement in the 2025 UK Budget of the removal of the two-child limit for universal credit, noting that this will lift an estimated 450,000 children across the UK out of poverty and that, in the assessment of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'the projected fall in child poverty over the current parliament would be the biggest on record'; believes that this must be followed by a renewed focus in Scotland on tackling the causes of poverty and boosting the means of defeating it, such as employability, housing and education, and further believes that the long-term solution to breaking the generational cycle of poverty in Scotland must include supporting people into sustainable and well-paid work."

After debate, amendment S6M-20056.3 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 68 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 49, Abstentions 5). As a result, amendment S6M-20056.2 was pre-empted.

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 72 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 29, Abstentions 21).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament reaffirms its commitment to the social security principles contained in the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 and unanimously adopted by the Parliament, including that social security is an investment in the people of Scotland and is itself a human right; welcomes the abolition of the two-child limit across the UK; calls on the UK Labour administration to go further and scrap other damaging welfare reforms implemented by the previous UK administration, including the benefit cap, and supports the Scottish Government's commitment to reinvest funding to end the two-child limit in further measures to tackle child poverty in Scotland.

3. Connecting Scotland: Sue Webber moved S6M-20057—That the Parliament recognises the importance of Scotland's road network to delivering enhanced connectivity and economic growth across Scotland; urges the Scottish Government to accelerate the upgrading and dualling of key roads such as the A75,

A77 and A96, and to adhere to its promise to dual the A9 by 2035 or earlier and to ensure that this project is finally completed by not rejecting private funding; believes that improved connections across Scotland can be enhanced through the provision of more safe and secure rest stops, particularly for the logistics sector; rejects the UK Labour administration's planned imposition of a pay-per-mile tax for electric and hybrid vehicles, and urges the Scottish Ministers to undertake greater efforts to futureproof the EV charging network across Scotland's key roads, and urges the Scottish Government to commit to ensuring that the upgrading of Scotland's roads remains central to future economic and social development.

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport (Fiona Hyslop) moved amendment S6M-20057.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20057 in the name of Sue Webber (Connecting Scotland), leave out from "; urges" to end and insert "and the progress being made to deliver the completion of the A9 dualling in 2035 specifically; further recognises that both public and private funding has been used to support the development of the trunk road network, including the use of private finance for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty and the M8, M74 and M73 motorway improvements, and that private finance will continue to play a role in the future; notes that the Union Connectivity Review, undertaken by Lord Peter Hendy on behalf of the previous UK Conservative administration, recognised the contribution that the A75 makes in linking the rest of the UK to Northern Ireland; urges the UK Government to match the previous UK Conservative administration's funding commitment for the A75; notes the improvements undertaken by the Scottish Government to the A77, including the Maybole Bypass; welcomes the ongoing constructive work between the Scottish Government and the A77 Campaign Group and South West Transport Alliance; supports the full dualling of the A96, beginning with the Inverness to Nairn section, along with delivery of the Inshes to Smithton Link Road, as part of the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal; agrees that improved connections across Scotland can be enhanced through the provision of more safe and secure rest stops, particularly for the logistics sector; rejects the UK Government's planned imposition of a pay-per-mile tax for electric and hybrid vehicles, regretting the ill-thought-out and counter-productive proposal, which will be bad for the climate and for rural Scotland in particular; agrees that the switch to EV cars and the provision of public and at-home EV infrastructure will be vital to Scotland meeting its climate change targets, and calls on the UK Government to engage in four nations discussions on motoring taxation reform to support a properly planned transition to EV car use."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 60 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 60 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 2 – by casting vote).

Daniel Johnson moved amendment S6M-20057.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20057 in the name of Sue Webber (Connecting Scotland), leave out from "; rejects" to end and insert ", and considers that future transport infrastructure decisions should be based on

economic importance, safety and local necessity, and underpinned by a national industrial strategy and a strategic spatial plan."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 23, Against 98 (including 2 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

Mark Ruskell moved amendment S6M-20057.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20057 in the name of Sue Webber (Connecting Scotland), leave out from "recognises" to end and insert "believes that future transport investment must prioritise sustainability, equality, public transport and active travel over large-scale road building, and further believes that investment in roads should improve safety, address maintenance backlogs, deliver climate resilience on vulnerable routes, including the A83, help prioritise road space for buses and be matched with ambitious investment in rail, including upgrading the Highland Mainline and reconnecting communities, such as Newburgh, to the rail network."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 8 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 114 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

The motion was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 34, Against 87 (including 2 proxy votes), Abstentions 1).

4. Urgent Question: An urgent question, to ask the Scottish Government whether it will release all correspondence between the Scottish Government and Professor Alexis Jay, and what mechanism will be used to provide this information to MSPs and Parliament, was answered by the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise (Natalie Don-Innes).

5. Revision to Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20101—That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 11 December 2025—

after

followed by Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee Debate: British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 Inquiry

insert

followed by Financial Resolution: Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill

The motion was agreed to.

6. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20068—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 16 December 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

6.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 17 December 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; Health and Social Care

followed by Ministerial Statement: Protecting Children from Harm

followed by Criminal Justice Committee Debate: Cybercrime

followed by Motion on Legislative Consent: Pension Schemes Bill - UK Legislation

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 18 December 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.45 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Portfolio Questions: Social Justice and Housing

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Contract (Formation and Remedies) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Motion on Legislative Consent: Sentencing Bill - UK Legislation

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

3.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Tuesday 6 January 2026

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee Debate: Legal Aid

followed by Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee Debate: Petition

PE2018: Recognise the value of swimming pools and provide financial relief to help keep pools open

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 7 January 2026

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, and Parliamentary Business; Justice and Home Affairs

followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 8 January 2026

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 Stage 1 Debate: Building Safety Levy (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Building Safety Levy (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 15 December 2025, 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.

Douglas Lumsden moved amendment S6M-20068.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20068 in the name of Graeme Dey (Business Programme), leave out from third "followed by Business Motions" to "3.10 pm Decision Time" and insert—

"followed by Scottish Government Debate: Energy Strategy

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time".

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to by division: (For 34, Against 89 (including 2 proxy votes), Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to.

7. Stage 2 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20069—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 12 December 2025.

The motion was agreed to.

8. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20070—That the Parliament agrees that the Rural Support (Improvement) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) (No. 2) Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 87 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 32, Abstentions 1).

9. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20071—That the Parliament agrees that the Sheep Carcase (Classification and Price Reporting) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

10. Committee Membership: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20072—That the Parliament agrees—Paul O'Kane be appointed as a member of the Education, Children and Young People Committee; and Claire Baker be appointed to

replace Michael Marra as a member of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

11. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 3, 8, 9, and 10 as noted above.

12. Scotland National Football Team Qualifies for the 2026 FIFA World Cup: The Parliament debated S6M-19823 in the name of Keith Brown—That the Parliament congratulates the Scotland national football team on qualifying for the 2026 FIFA World Cup; recognises that this marks Scotland's first appearance at the tournament in 28 years and represents a significant moment for Scottish sport; commends the team on its thrilling 4–2 win over Denmark at Hampden Park, which secured qualification; acknowledges the quality and determination shown throughout the match, including Scott McTominay's early goal from an overhead kick, Lawrence Shankland's restoration of Scotland's lead in the second half, and the dramatic stoppage-time goals from Kieran Tierney and Kenny McLean, which sealed the result; further acknowledges the contribution of head coach, Steve Clarke, and all the staff supporting the national side; pays tribute to the Tartan Army for its passionate and positive backing of the team at home and abroad; notes the wider social, cultural and sporting benefits that participation in major international events can bring to communities across Scotland; wishes the national team every success as preparations begin for the 2026 World Cup finals; notes the pride that this achievement has brought to communities across Clackmannanshire and Stirling, and recognises the work of local clubs and volunteers in supporting grassroots football.

The meeting closed at 6.47 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
10 December 2025

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

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 10 December 2025—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 90th Report, 2025 (Session 6): Contract (Formation and Remedies) (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1 (SP Paper 928)

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 91st Report, 2025 (Session 6): Delegated Powers in the Non-surgical Procedures and Functions of Medical Reviewers (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1 (SP Paper 931)

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 92nd Report, 2025 (Session 6): Subordinate Legislation considered by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 9 December 2025 (SP Paper 932)

Subordinate Legislation

Affirmative Instruments

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 10 December 2025 and are subject to the affirmative procedure—

Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (Investment Zones Relief) (Scotland) Order 2026 [draft]

laid under section 68(2)(c) of the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (Scotland) Act 2013

Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Non-surgical Procedures) Order 2026 [draft]

laid under sections 3A(3), 44(3) and 136(4)(b) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 10 December 2025 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

HMICS Thematic inspection of police response to drug harm reduction (HMICS/2025/10) laid under section 79(3) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

Scottish Funding Council Annual Report and Accounts for 2024-25 (SG/2025/302) laid under section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Scottish Law Commission Report on Tenement law: compulsory owners' associations (SG/2025/29) laid under section 3(2) of the Law Commissions Act 1965

Published by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000 or 0800 092 7500

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot

Live chat on parliament.scot

You can write to us in any language or contact us
using the Text Relay service or in British Sign
Language through contactScotland-BSL.

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

The Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website -
www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information.