

Motions- Saturday

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09:30 First Timers Session

10:10 SC1: National Care Service

Mover: Cllr Sally Pattle

Summator: Jacquie Bell

Conference notes that:

1. The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill was introduced by the Scottish Government in June 2022 with the intention of reforming how social care, social work and community health services are delivered in Scotland.
2. It has been described by the Scottish Government as the most significant reform to public services since the creation of the NHS because it proposes moving responsibility for children's services, justice social work and mental health services, as well as adult social care, into a newly created National Care Service, all of which will be overseen by Scottish Ministers.
3. Plans to transfer up to 75, 000 local authority workers into the National Care Service have since been abandoned as too costly.
4. The Bill is referred to as framework legislation because it proposes general principles of the National Care Service, but leaves considerable detail to be laid out in future secondary legislation.

5. The Scottish Government is proposing that the National Care Service sits as a directorate within their governance structure rather than becoming a stand-alone body.

6. Following repeated delays, the National Care Service is expected to be implemented by 2028/9.

Conference further notes that:

1. Local Government (through COSLA), the NHS and the Scottish Government reached an initial agreement regarding accountability for the National Care Service in summer 2023.
2. When estimated costs of implementing the original scheme rose to £2.2bn, the Scottish Government announced its intention to scale back the plans in December 2023.
3. Costs for the scaled back version of the National Care Service are still estimated to be in the region of £1bn.
4. It is still unclear from the Bill how the National Care Service will be governed and who will be represented on local care boards and special care boards.

Conference believes that:

1. Introducing a new layer of centralised bureaucracy by wrenching away control of local services by Local Government will only impede service delivery on the frontline of care across Scotland.
2. Funnelling £1bn of public money towards a National Care Service is particularly unjustified in the face of rising inflation and wage costs and increased demand for Council services – it is noteworthy that £1bn is also the size of the budget black hole that the SNP and Green Scottish Government has passed onto Councils.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. Immediately dismantle, rather than simply delay, plans for the new National Care Service.
2. Give any money that was earmarked for the creation of a National Care Service directly to local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships, so that it can be invested into front line care, including improved pay and conditions for staff.

Cards:

Mover: Sally Pattle, West Lothian, called
Sum Up: Jacquie Bell, East Lothian, called
Euan Davidson, Edinburgh West, called
John Cole, Central Scotland, called
Malcolm Wood, Edinburgh West, called
Kevin Lang, Edinburgh North & Leith, called
Tim Brett, North East Fife, called

Votes:

Motion: Carried

[10:50 Emergency Motion Ballot – Healthcare selected](#)

Title	Result
Rural banking	Rejected
The Dangers of Hollowing out Rural and Remote Healthcare	Accepted

10:55 MM1: A better formula for babies

Submitted by: Jack Clark

Policy Suggestion:

Review the law around infant formula milk to allow it, among other measures, to be included in offers/ discounts, supermarket point schemes, and general advertising to bring down the costs for parents, particularly those who cannot breastfeed.

Policy Benefits:

Cost of living: The price of infant formula has risen by around 25% over the past 2 years, and families could save over £500 over the first year of a baby's life with better options.

Less stigmatisation: The current "breast is best" philosophy stigmatises mothers who either do not want, or are unable, to breastfeed. Making formula an easier option can help close this gap.

Giving children a better start: Better nutrition from infancy helps children develop both physically and mentally. Access to a wider range of baby formula can help stimulate this development.

Closing the rich-poor divide: There is a significant correlation between wealth and rates of breastfeeding vs formula, with formula being more concentrated in.

MM2: Electricity Standing Charges

Submitted by: Christine Jardine MP

We recommend the prohibition of setting domestic energy prices according to geographical region.

Policy benefits

No geographical disparity in price of electricity, that currently sees areas like Northern Scotland, Southern Scotland, and North Wales and Mersey pay more than most other regions in the UK.

Cost-of-Living relief for people in regions with the highest standing charges.

Implementing this prohibition would ensure that geographic region no longer plays a part in determining the amount of someone's electricity bill.

MM4: Comprehensive Reform of Public Transport Fares

Submitted by: Fraser Graham

Transportation is an important part of the daily lives of many Scots, and the escalating costs of commuting are exacerbating the cost of living crisis, impacting affordability and accessibility for all.

We want a comprehensive review and reform of public transport fares across Scotland. This aims to make commuting more affordable and to support sustainable transportation solutions that benefit all.

Introduction of 'Fair Fare Structure': we propose the development of a 'Fair Fare Structure' that includes fare caps to prevent excessive charges and introduces targeted discounts and subsidies for low-income individuals and families. This approach is designed to ease financial pressures on regular commuters, particularly those from economically vulnerable groups.

Anticipated Benefits:

The implementation of this motion is expected to not only make commuting financially manageable for everyone but also contribute significantly to alleviating the broader cost of living crisis. This reform will promote greater use of public transport, reduce individual travel expenses, and support environmental sustainability.

Cards

Fraser Graham, Edinburgh South

Stephen Harte, Edinburgh West

Mini Motions Indicative Votes – all to be developed

Mini Motion	Result
MM1: A better formula for babies	To be developed
MM2: Electricity Standing Charges	To be developed
MM4: Comprehensive Reform of Public Transport Fares	To be developed

11:45 Speech: [Kellie Armstrong MLA](#)

12:15 Lunch/Fringes

13:30 SC2: [Supporting Bereaved Children and Young People](#)

Mover: Christine Jardine MP

Summator: Amanda Clark

Conference notes that:

1. According to research from the Childhood Bereavement Network, every three hours a child in Scotland will lose a parent, with 2, 800 children bereaved each year.
2. The impact of a bereavement during childhood is not confined to losing a parent, and many more children lose grandparents, siblings or friends.
3. Specialist charities such as Richmond's Hope, Winston's Wish, the Childhood Bereavement Network and Child Bereavement UK provide tailored support services, including phonelines, online resources, live webchats and email support.
4. The lack of official data on the number of children suffering bereavement creates challenges for charities, making it more difficult to plan or scale up service provision, and a petition organised by these charities to call for improved data collection earned over 11, 000 signatures.
5. Schools and colleges will often be the main point of contact for children after a bereavement, but 90% of teachers say they have received no bereavement support training, and it is not currently part of the curriculum for teacher training in Scotland.
6. While teacher support is valuable, it is not always sufficient or appropriate for a child or family, whereas independent peer support is seen by many as the missing link, which is something national charities can offer.
7. The biggest challenge is the lack of a protocol linking the charities with children and families who may want their help.

8. Research from Winston's Wish shows that children in lower-income households are at greater risk of losing a parent.

9. The Bereavement Support (Children and Young People) Bill, presented to Parliament by Christine Jardine MP, Member of Parliament for Edinburgh West, on March 12th 2024.

Conference believes that:

1. Every child has the right to be offered specialist support upon the death of a parent, close relative, or friend, with service providers ready and resourced to deliver it.

2. A protocol is needed to ensure that every bereaved family is aware of the support available and that it is offered to them.

3. Bereaved children and young people should be able to make an informed decision on the most appropriate decision for them and should be informed of available services.

4. Cuts to local government funding and service provision has had a negative impact on the ability of schools, social services and other local bodies to provide the best possible support for bereaved children.

Conference reaffirms:

1. The Scottish Liberal Democrat commitment to improving access to mental health and wellbeing services for children and young people as outlined in the policy "New Hope - A Blueprint for CAMHS & Psychological Therapies", passed at Spring Conference 2023.

2. Support for the content of the mini motion "Childhood Bereavement", passed at Scottish Liberal Democrat Autumn Conference 2023.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to develop a protocol for the collation and dissemination of information to bereaved children about relevant support services, that:

1. covers services that are provided by:

a. local authorities,

b. publicly funded bodies, including NHS regions,

c. charities and other third sector organisations.

2. creates a new Duty to Inform to ensure that any dependent or affected children are made aware of these services, which would apply to individuals such as:

a. registrars who are involved in the process of registering a death,

b. teachers and other education professionals,

c. social workers and relevant local government staff,

d. GPs, nurses and other relevant healthcare workers,

e. any other professional where appropriate.

3. includes mandatory bereavement support training for anyone to whom a new Duty to Inform applies, ensuring that bereaved children and young people are treated with appropriate care and respect.

SC2 Cards:

Moving: Christine Jardine, Edinburgh West, called

Summate: Amanda Clark, Perth & Kinross, called

Jacquie Bell, East Lothian, called

Hayley Bennie, West Lothian, called

Clare Maclaren, Perthshire, called

James McMardie, Borders, called

Michael Anderson, , called

Votes:

Motion: Carried nem con

14:10 SC3: North Sea Power Superhighway: A Credible Plan for Offshore Wind Power Distribution

Mover: Michael Turvey

Summator: TBC

Motions - Saturday

Conference notes that:

1. The UK Government has set out an ambition to deliver 50GW of offshore wind generation capacity by 2030. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has also indicated that to become a net zero economy could require 75GW of Offshore wind by 2050.
2. The Scotwind and INTOG licensing rounds awarded licenses for approximately 32GW of offshore wind capacity. This award was three times the supply anticipated in the National Grid ESO's pathway to 2030 "Holistic Network Design". The award of these licenses has not been matched by a credible plan for the provision of grid connections. Grid connections are not available until the 2030s.
3. In the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany an order for 14 offshore substations has been placed. This "energy Island" concept will simplify offshore wind developers' ability to tie into the network providing certainty and improved economics for offshore wind projects. Germany is burying three major transmission lines avoiding unnecessary local challenges.
4. In the UK the current holistic network design relies heavily on onshore substations and overhead line transmission failing to take advantage of Scotland's vast expertise in subsea and offshore technology.
5. This onshore overhead line approach represents the path of maximum resistance for residents. Significant local resistance has arisen in Scotland on the Spittal to Beaully overhead line in the Highlands and the Kintore to Tealing overhead line in Aberdeenshire and Angus.
6. Delays to the delivery of vital transmission infrastructure will be the inevitable consequence of these poor choices that fail to show respect for the environment, cultural history, health, wellbeing, livelihoods and property rights of local people.
7. According to the Energy System Operator, their current Holistic Network design will deliver a saving of £2.18 per year on the average (currently approximately £2, 000).

Conference believes that:

1. Investing more money in less invasive transmission techniques: offshore substations, subsea cables, and onshore buried cables will have less impact on the local environment and maintain the societal consensus needed for the energy transition and net zero.
2. Delays to infrastructure delivery will have the effect of driving investment away from Scotland and the UK to more attractive locations and leave a long legacy of unwanted infrastructure in our countryside.
3. Power should be delivered via a subsea power superhighway direct to centres of demand in England. the Central Belt and continental interconnectors minimising onshore infrastructure. That onshore infrastructure should be buried where possible, minimising public opposition and maximising reliability by reducing storm damage.

Conference calls for:

1. the UK Government and National Grid Energy System Operator to review, as a matter of urgency, their plans for network delivery taking full account of new wind licenses and learning from international best practice.
2. the Scottish and UK Governments to encourage transmission owners to continue with upgrades to existing lines, but allow a pause on new lines while the review takes place.
3. the Scottish Government to embed in planning regulations the principle that impact of power distribution infrastructure on people, the environment and landscape should be kept as low as reasonably possible favouring subsea and subterranean routes where possible.
4. the Scottish Government to oppose the construction of the Spittal to Beaully overhead line in the Highlands and the Kintore to Tealing overhead line in the planning process, unless the current proposals are amended to the satisfaction of residents.

Amendment 1

Tabled by: Conrad Wood and 11 others

1. In line 22 (conference Notes item 5), after Highlands insert “, the Blackhillock to Peterhead overhead line”.
2. In line 57(conference Calls for item 4), after Highlands insert “, the Blackhillock to Peterhead overhead line”.

This is a drafting amendment so no specific debate required

Amendment 2

Tabled by: Liam McArthur MSP and 5 others

1. Delete from "will be" in line 24 to end of line 27 and insert: "risk holding back essential investment to decarbonise all sectors of the economy and the opportunity to put the North East, Highlands and Islands at the forefront of the UK's renewables revolution, but that the grid changes required must give due respect to the environment, landscape, cultural history, wellbeing and property rights of local people.
2. After line 30 (before *Conference believes that*) insert:

(8). Recognises that the cost of transmission lines will ultimately be borne by consumers through their energy bills.

(9). Notes that the National Grid's Electricity Transmission Cost Study, published in February 2012, found that the cost of undergrounding is always more expensive than installing overhead lines. The report found that the cost of undergrounding is approximately 5 times higher per kilometre over the lifetime of a typical connection (building, operational and maintenance costs), but that this can be significantly higher for more complex underground projects, for instance where there are obstructions, difficult terrain and denser populations.

(10). Notes that undergrounding cables does have an impact on the environment with 400kV cable corridors requiring trenches over 40 metres wide, between 1-7 metres deep, and a working corridor of over 70 metres wide for cable installation, presenting significant challenges for land use, maintenance and operation which are important to consider for security of supply and network reliability.

(11). Further notes that the National Grid states that "despite the costs and technical challenges, there are circumstances in which underground cables are a more preferable option than overhead cables".

3. Line 38 (believes that, item 2), delete "unwanted" and insert "outdated"

4. Line 41 (believes that, middle of item 3), after infrastructure, insert "if viable from a cost perspective"

5. Lines 49-50 (calls for item 2), delete from "but allow" to end and insert "while recognising that Scotland's renewables revolution requires a modern upgraded grid and that the viability of critical projects for our economy and energy security, including ScotWind, would be threatened without new connections and transmission infrastructure."

6. Lines 53-54 (calls for item 3), delete from "favouring" to end.

7. Delete lines 55-58 (calls for item 4), and insert:

() the Scottish Government to respond to campaigners' calls for public local inquiries on the Spittal to Beaully and Kintore to Tealing overhead lines, and urges it to learn the lessons of previous energy infrastructure inquiries so that any public local inquiries in future are completed promptly in the interests of everyone involved.

() the Scottish Government to make public consultation a statutory requirement of section 37 applications and to work together with the UK Government to establish good practice principles on how the National Energy System Operator and transmission operators consult with communities moving forward to improve relations, build community support and secure a consensus around the grid changes that need to be made.

() the UK Government to come forward as a matter of urgency with their final proposals on community benefit for transmission network infrastructure as well as the UK-wide public information campaign, as recommended by the independent Electricity Networks Commissioner, to improve public understanding of why upgrades to our electricity network are important for our economy, energy security and climate obligations.

SC3 Cards:

Move: Michael Turvey, West Aberdeenshire, called

Summate:Clare Maclaren, Perthshire, called
Move Amd 2: Liam McArthur, Orkney, called
Conrad Wood, Aberdeenshire East, called
Christine Jardine, Edinburgh West, called
David Evans, Aberdeenshire East, called
Jack Clark, Paisley & Renfrewshire, not called
Sally Pattle, West Lothian, not called
Dick Moerman, Stirling, called
Jeff Goodhall, Aberdeenshire East, called
Galen Milne, Stirling, called
Beatrice Wishart, Shetland, called
Steve Kew, West Aberdeen & Kincardine, called
Angus McDonald, Highland, called
Jack Norquoy, Orkney, called

Votes:

Amd 1:Carried

Amd 2:Carried

Motion as amended:Carried

14:55 Speech: Sir Ed Davey

15:20 Speech: A President's Update

16:10 Q&A: Liam McArthur: Assisted Dying

Question Cards:

Imogen Beattie, Rutherglen & Hamilton West

Kevin Lang, Edinburgh West

17:00 EM1 – The Dangers of Hollowing out Rural and Remote Healthcare

Mover: Cllr Angus MacDonald

Supported by 12 members

Conference notes:

1. Reports showing that the emergency care system collapsed on Skye last weekend.
2. One person died after becoming unwell at the Skye Live music festival, while another suffered a life-threatening anaphylactic shock practically on the doorstep of Portree Hospital. Its doors were locked despite the Ritchie Report stating six years ago that there should be 24/7 urgent care on this side of Skye.

Conference believes:

1. Many more areas of Scotland have suffered from the hollowing out of their rural healthcare services, from the far north to the Borders.
2. The absence of quality local healthcare puts lives at risk, contributes to depopulation and risks the sustainability of communities.

Conference calls for:

1. The Scottish Government and NHS Highland to work together to guarantee that there are no further delays to rolling out urgent care improvements on Skye and ensure Portree Community Hospital is capable of delivering 24/7 urgent care.
2. The Scottish Government to rural-proof its health policies to ensure equitable access to services such as urgent care and maternity care, and bring forward a new plan to reverse its hollowing out of rural healthcare.

EM Cards:

Move: Angus Macdonald, Highlands, called, , didn't put in a card
Jacquie Bell, East Lothian, called
Neil Alexander, Moray
Conrad Wood, Aberdeenshire, called
Alan Reid, Argyll & Bute, called
Daniel John O'Malley, Glasgow City, called
Jeff Goodhall, Aberdeenshire East, called
Claire McLaren, Perth & Kinross, called

Votes:

Motion- Carried

17:30: Evening Fringes

18:45: Drinks Reception

Motions – Sunday

09:15 AGM

Motion to Approve the accounts: Accepted

09:55 SC4: A Fair Deal for Scottish Sport

Submitted by:

Mover: Neil Alexander

Summator: Cllr Sally Pattle

Conference believes that:

1. Being active isn't just good for a person's physical health, it's also proven to have a positive mental health and wellbeing impact, as stated in SAMH's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport.
2. Scotland has a rich and unique heritage of sport, which should be celebrated and any success built on to encourage participation.
3. Anyone participating in sport, be it as a competitor or fan, should always feel like they are listened to, respected, safe and able to reach out for support wherever possible.

Conference notes with concern that:

1. Scottish Government budget cuts and restrictions on how the money it provides can be spent, combined with the cost of living crisis, mean local authorities across the country are facing difficult decisions about where to allocate funding.
2. As a consequence, some local authorities may end up closing sports facilities, meaning sports clubs and local communities are losing access to much needed facilities.
3. The freeze in the Scottish Government's mental health budget has meant real-terms cuts to the funding available for mental health which can have an impact on access to support in the community, including through local sports clubs.
4. Physical activity and sport is a massive gap in the new Scottish Government strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Conference calls for:

1. the Scottish Government to protect both the mental health and Sport Scotland budgets in real terms, such as protecting these budgets in line with inflation.
2. the Scottish Government to further support the partnership between SportScotland and SAMH as well as SAMH's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport, by making more funding available for mental health first aid training for sports clubs and governing bodies.
3. Scottish local authorities to work in partnership with local sports clubs to explore, where possible, alternative models of ownership of community assets - particularly where publicly-owned facilities may be at risk of closure
4. the Scottish Government to promote more widely their guidance on community asset transfers, and make this a more accessible process as possible so that local sports clubs know their options if the publicly-owned facility they use is at risk of closure.
5. the UK Government to conduct a review of the sporting events currently listed in the Ofcom Code on Sports and Other Listed and Designated Events, to discuss which sporting events are free-to-air nationally
6. the governing bodies of Scottish sports to introduce appropriate misconduct policies to protect vulnerable groups, tackle misogyny, ensure clear protocols around sexual misconduct, and guarantee that there are cultures where everyone feels safe and supported to participate.
7. SportScotland to create a new funding stream specifically targeted at increasing participation in sport, which clubs could apply for to increase the number of people actively taking part in sport in Scotland.
8. professional sport governing bodies to support fan-led reviews such as that proposed by the Scottish Football Alliance, and to accept recommendations where possible.

SC4 Cards:

Mover: Neil Alexander, Moray, called
Summate: Sally Pattle, West Lothian, called
Grant Toghill, Paisley & Renfrewshire, called
Eugene Clerk, North East Fife, called
Lauren Buchanan-Quigley, Dunfermline & West Fife, called
John Mackenzie, West Lothian, called

Votes:

Motion – Carried unanimously

MM4: Music used to help Mental Health

Proposed by: Lorna Cammock

Conference believes that music is important for mental health, happiness and wellbeing. It creates harmony and can heal divisions making enemies friends. The recent programme on bbc2 TV, 'A Life in 10 Pictures, Nelson Mandela, ' showed music powerfully used in the cause of justice.

We therefore promote it wherever we can.

We commend the teaching of musical instruments in schools, and ask that music therapy be available as needed and that people of all ages and incomes may benefit from the pleasure music brings.

Try this. 'You, on my left sing 'doh, ' centre sing 'me', right sing 'soh'. Now !!

Harmony! I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony.

MM5: Addressing the shortfall of ASN Teachers

Proposed by: Paul McGarry

This motion addresses the urgent shortfall in Scotland's workforce of Additional Support Needs (ASN) teachers, with a critical focus on specialists for the deaf and visually impaired. Recent data highlights a significant decline in trained professionals in these areas.

Action Proposed:

1. Development of a National Strategy: Implement a national strategy to enhance the training and recruitment of ASN teachers.
2. Training Programmes and Bursaries: Introduce targeted training programmes with associated bursary support, encouraging specialisation in supporting deaf and visually impaired school students.
3. Priority Focus: Special emphasis on reversing the steep decline in Qualified Teachers of the Deaf (QToDs) and Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (QTVI), ensuring that all school students receive appropriate educational support.

Justification:

The rising number of ASN pupils coupled with a decreasing pool of specialised teachers demands immediate action to secure educational equity and support for all children.

MM6: Preserving Scotland's Cultural Heritage: Enhancing Cultural Assets and Intangible Traditions

Proposed by: Neil Casey

Policy Proposal:

Initiate a comprehensive program to revitalize and maintain cultural venues across Scotland, alongside advocating for a gradual increase in the cultural budget allocation, aiming for 1% of the Scottish budget. This strategic investment will ensure the continued vitality of our cultural sector.

Additionally, collaborate with the UK Government to champion the endorsement of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, providing protected status to local cultural traditions recognized by communities.

Policy Benefits:

Sustaining Cultural Spaces: Ensuring the longevity and accessibility of cultural venues, fostering a vibrant cultural scene accessible to all.

Celebrating Diversity: Preserving and celebrating the unique traditions of diverse communities, enriching Scotland's cultural tapestry. **International Recognition:** Demonstrating our commitment to global cultural heritage conservation, fostering international cooperation.

Economic Impact: Stimulating local economies through increased tourism, job creation, and support for creative industries.

By calling for strategic investment in cultural infrastructure, advocating for increased cultural funding, and safeguarding cherished traditions, Scottish Liberal Democrats reaffirm our commitment to cultural preservation and community cohesion.

[MM11: Proposal for a Scottish Health and Social Care Convention](#)

Proposed by: Alexander Drummond Begg

Policy suggestion:

To establish a Health and Social Care Convention to create a blueprint for the reform of Health and Social Care in Scotland.

Policy benefits:

A convention would be cross party to ensure the widest political participation. This would allow longer term planning with the support of all parties.

A convention would include key stakeholders and organisations to ensure wide civic engagement.

A convention would ensure a collective focus on health and social care. This is a positive response to public opinion which puts health and social care issues at a top priority for politicians in Scotland to engage with.

The overall Health and Social Care budget was set at £19.1 billion for 2023/24. This represents over one third of the total Scottish budget. A cross-party, cross society convention could create a blueprint for a sustainable service for the long term.

A convention may help us move away from populist announcements which are poorly considered and waste scarce resource (e.g. the National Care Service)

A convention may help develop a more truthful analysis of the problems facing health and social care services and service users. Radical truthfulness will help meaningful understanding which will help meaningful long term change. It is the opposite of political spin and denial.

Mini Motions Indicative Votes: 2 to be developed

Mini Motion	Result
Music used to help Mental Health	To be developed
Addressing the shortfall of ASN Teachers	To be developed
Preserving Scotland's Cultural Heritage: Enhancing Cultural Assets and Intangible Traditions	Not to be developed
Proposal for a Scottish Health and Social Care Convention	Not to be developed

11:20 SC5: Report of the Policy Committee on a Reference Back of 'Creating a New Approach to solving the Housing Crisis.

Mover: Neil Casey

Summator: Neil Casey

Conference notes that:

1. There is currently a housing crisis in Scotland with Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Argyll and Bute Councils all having declared housing emergencies and a recent YouGov poll finding that 80% of adults in Scotland now think there is a housing crisis.
2. Housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable for young people in Scotland. The median home in Scotland is now 5.3 times the typical household income. Young people in Scotland live in HMOs longer, remain living with their parents, and buy their first home, later than ever.
3. There are currently 30, 000 people homeless in Scotland. Every 16 minutes, a household becomes homeless in Scotland. In addition, 15, 625 households are in temporary accommodation in Scotland, including just under 10, 000 children.
4. In February 2024, the SNP Government reduced its budget for the supply of affordable housing by £196 million.
5. Year-on-year homebuilding declined in Scotland in 2023, with 6% fewer homes completed and 24% fewer homes started in the year to end September 2023. In Glasgow, new homes started in 2023 were 46% down on 2022. Demand for housing in Scotland continues to increase.
6. Following a Reference back from the 2022 Autumn Conference on motion SC8, the Policy Committee Working Group developed a report into the state of the housing market in Scotland.

Conference believes that:

1. The Scottish housing emergency requires radical, comprehensive, and integrated solutions; there is no single panacea, nor any viable solution that does not include multiple stakeholders being engaged and encouraged to enact bold solutions.
2. The UK and Scottish governments have not only failed to adequately address the emergency, but continue to make matters worse. Both have failed to meet their limited housebuilding targets. Furthermore, the Conservative government's focus on demand-side reforms serve only to exacerbate the problem. The SNP government's cut in funding for affordable housing will further diminish the housing supply.
3. The solution to the Scottish housing emergency should look primarily at increasing the supply of homes. In addition, any meaningful policy must have community building at its heart, rather than relying solely on housebuilding targets.

4. The 'Help to Build' model identified in the Policy Committee Report represents a plausible means of addressing the funding issues that drive small and medium size housebuilders out of the Scottish market, and places the burden of building new homes on the larger builders who have bank balances large enough to shoulder the risk.

5. Scotland is in dire need of a national housing plan that engages all relevant stakeholders and explores bold solutions to the challenges outlined in the report, ensuring community-building is prioritised alongside housebuilding targets. The Help to Build model can be the foundation stone of such a plan.

Conference accepts the Policy Committee Housing Report as a response to the reference back.



Report_on_Housing_
Report: Motion_Reference_Bi

Conference calls for the Scottish Liberal Democrats to develop a radical and multi-pronged National Housing Plan to truly address the housing emergency, with Help to Build playing a significant role alongside other key initiatives.

SC5 Cards:

Move: Neil Casey, Central Scotland, called
Sum up: Paul McGarry, Central Scotland, called
Stephen Harte, Edinburgh West, called
Peter Barrett, Perth & Kinross, called
Andy Williamson, Edinburgh South, called

Votes:

Motion: Carried

12:00 Lunch/Fringe

13:15 SC6: Supporting Scotland's Flood-Risk Communities

Mover: Willie Rennie MSP

Summator: Wendy Chamberlain MP

Conference notes that:

1. The changing climate of Scotland has meant the frequency of severe storms has increased, meaning more and more areas are at high risk of flooding.
2. It is estimated that 284, 000 homes and premises are already at risk of flooding in Scotland, with an additional 110, 000 properties at risk by 2080.
3. Communities like Cupar and Brechin have already been severely impacted by flooding events caused by Storm Babet and Storm Gerritt. These communities have had to evacuate homes and close their businesses with no real timescales of when they can return.
4. The Bellwin Scheme can provide local authorities extra funding for emergency situations, such as flooding or storm damage, but despite it being activated by the Scottish Government 17 times over the last four years, it has only provided local authorities with funding twice.

Conference believes that:

1. More and more communities are at risk of being severely impacted by flood and it is vital that both local and national governments have strategies in place for when these incidents occur.
2. Local government cannot shoulder the financial burden of protecting our communities alone. The Scottish Government must do much more to ensure there is adequate funding in place should it be needed.
3. Landowners and farmers can also play a role, as they can often be best placed to understand what is needed to manage the burns and rivers on their land.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. conduct an immediate audit of the Bellwin Scheme, to ensure it is fit for purpose.
2. ensure the availability of additional grants and other forms of funding, which would be payable directly to homeowners and business owners in weather events beyond those classified as Amber by the Met Office.
3. create river catchment plans in partnership with landowners and farmers, that would combine their knowledge of burns and rivers with the tools to help them manage them.

SC 6 Cards:

Move: Willie Rennie, North East Fife, called
Sum Up: Wendy Chamberlain, North East Fife, called
Ed Thornley, Edinburgh West, called
Liz Barrett, Perth & Kinross, called
Jenny Lang, Edinburgh Northern, called
Kevin Lang, Edinburgh Northern, called
Daniel John O'Malley, Glasgow, called
David Evans, Aberdeenshire East, called
Margaret Kennedy, North East Fife, called
Jeff Goodhall, Aberdeenshire East, called
Conrad Wood, Aberdeenshire East, called
Michael Turvey, Aberdeenshire West, called

Votes:

Motion: carried nem con

14:00 Speech – Jim Wallace

14:20 SC7: Boosting Literacy to Lift Attainment

Mover: Kirsten Herbst-Taylor

Summator: Kirsten Herbst-Taylor

Conference notes with concern that:

1. The final Scottish Survey of Literacy showed declining performance in reading and writing and no improvement in listening and talking, after which the abrupt abolition of the survey by the SNP Government in 2016 created gaps, inadequacies and inconsistencies in the measurement of progress in Scottish education.

2. The Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels statistics, published by the Scottish Government in December 2023, showed that:

a. the poverty-related attainment gap for P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined has narrowed by just 1.6% in literacy since 2016/17.

b. the poverty-related attainment gap for S3 pupils achieving at least third level literacy is actually 0.1% worse than it was in 2016/17.

3. Scotland recorded its worst ever score in reading in the recent PISA international comparison of countries' education systems, published in December 2023.

4. That first and foremost, schools are measured on reading and writing to the neglect of listening and talking.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

1. High-quality education from early years to apprenticeships, colleges and universities.

2. Promoting play-based learning until age 7 to give our children a flying start, based on the Nordic model.

3. Ensuring that young children starting school are not held back by communication barriers, providing effective early intervention and support.

4. Raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

5. Making sure young people with additional support needs and those who require the help of speech and language therapists get the help they need.

6. Extending the Pupil Equity Fund which has been the subject of SNP stealth cuts worth more than £200 for every Scottish child from a poorer background.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. create a National Literacy Taskforce:

a. made up of a group of early years, primary and secondary classroom practitioners empowered to continually inform and shape national strategy and a common approach to teaching all aspects of literacy in line with age and stage.

b. that will explore a teacher-led R.O.L.E. (Reading Out Loud Everyday) initiative for early learning settings, primary and secondary schools, and for the government to act upon any such recommendation.

2. properly support the implementation of a national literacy programme of work in Scottish early years settings/a kindergarten stage, primary and secondary schools, recognising and repairing the harm that has been done to literacy by the cuts SNP ministers have overseen to in-class and specialist support.

3. liaise with universities and teacher training providers to ensure comprehensive training for all primary and secondary teachers on delivering all aspects of learning and teaching literacy based on linguistic approaches and the scientific nature of language.

4. fund an early intervention programme for pupils whose literacy knowledge and skills fall below age and stage expectations.

Amendments- carried

Proposed by: Christine Jardine MP

On Behalf of: Scottish Liberal Democrats Women, South Lanarkshire Liberal Democrats

Add at end:

Finally Conference recognises the vital importance of adequate library provision, both in schools and in the community, deplores the funding cuts suffered by councils under the SNP Government which have seen a fall in the number of libraries in Scotland by a fifth since 2009 and calls for fair funding for councils sufficient to guarantee the future of modern library services accessible to all in the future.”

SC 7 Cards:

Move: Kirsten Herbst-Taylor, Dumfries & Galloway, called

Move Amendment: Christine Jardine, Edinburgh West, called

Jacquie Bell, East Lothian, not called

Caron Lindsay, West Lothian, called

Daniel John O’Malley, Glasgow, not called

Robert Bell, Rutherglen & Hamilton West, called, Request for separate vote lines 32-39 (Conference calls for item 1) and lines 47-48 (Conference calls for item 3, last 2 lines)

Robert Brown, Rutherglen & Hamilton West, not called

Conrad Wood, Aberdeenshire East, not called

Malcolm Wood, Edinburgh West, called

Lorna Cummock, Rutherglen, not called

James McMordie, Borders, called

Mike Anderson, Edinburgh Northern, called

Votes:

Amendment: carried

Sep vote on lines 32-39: lines are retained

Sep vote on lines 47-48: lines are retained

Motion as amended: carried

14:50 Thanks and Awards

Award	For	New Recipient
The Helen Watt Quaich	Diversity	Not awarded this year
The Sheila Tennant award	SYL member	Lauren Buchanan-Quigley
The John Morrison award	Local Government	Robert Brown
The Russell Johnston Trophy	Speech to Conference	Amanda Clark
The Ray Michie Quaich	Membership	Les Tarr
The Robbie Simpson award	Service to the party over many years	Donald Cameron, Moray
The Hugh Waterfield award	Non elected, non staff	Matt Glenday

Financial Appeal

15:00 Speech – Alex Cole-Hamilton