Wednesday 22 February 2017

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Communities

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-03160 by Shona Robison on 7 October 2016, whether it has reached a decision on how it will take forward its response to the consultation on the proposed amendments to the National Health Service Central Register (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

(S5W-7384)

Derek Mackay: Ministers have listened carefully to the arguments made during the consultation on proposed amendments to the LEARS Act Regulations, and have concluded that it would not be appropriate to broaden the range of bodies prescribed in legislation who can share data with the National Health Service Central Register, even subject to strong controls. Ministers therefore do not intend to take forward the amendments to this effect originally proposed.

Ministers do believe that it is desirable that a member of the public, who wants to access public services online, can be given the chance to demonstrate their identity easily – and be confident that no-one else is able to pretend to be them, and that their privacy is guaranteed. This becomes ever more important as the Scottish Government takes on new powers, prepares to deliver new services, and aims to make these services as convenient, accessible and user-centred as possible.

Ministers therefore intend to work with stakeholders, privacy interests and members of the public to develop a robust, secure and trustworthy mechanism by which an individual member of the public can demonstrate their identity. Any such mechanism will have to be entirely consistent with the Scottish Government’s Privacy Principles, so that members of the public can be confident that their privacy is being protected.

Economy

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what advice and support it offers to farmers to encourage regenerative farming.

(S5O-675)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Government provides advice and support to farmers to encourage regenerative farming across a range of programmes and activities. I want to highlight 3 of these and I’d be happy to write to the member with a full list of direct and indirect activity.

Farming For a Better Climate is based on nine Climate Change Focus Farms around Scotland which undertake a three-year programme to implement best practice and showcase it for other farmers, with around a thousand farmers attending such events each year.

We are currently expanding the Soil Nutrient Network from 3 to 12 farms, to demonstrate the economic, biodiversity, conservation and climate change benefits of using soil analysis and nutrient management to improve soil health and condition.

Organic farming can be a means of regenerating soil, and has been supported in Scotland by £4 million on maintenance and conversion payments since 2015 through the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme under the Scottish Rural Development Plan.

Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding the devolution of EU powers over farming and fisheries to Scotland following Brexit.

(S5O-676)

Fergus Ewing: I hope to have discussions with the UK Government and devolved administration Ministers on these very matters when we meet tomorrow.

Should Scotland be dragged into a hard Brexit by the Tories, this Government expects the devolved powers over agriculture that currently sit with Brussels to come directly to Scotland. We may choose to share some aspects on a UK wide policy basis but that would be our decision to make.
Similarly, while funding is reserved, we would expect Scotland to receive its fair share of equivalent EU funding and for us to determine how to use that to support you, other farm and croft businesses and our rural and coastal communities.

That as you know, is not the view of UK Ministers nor of the Scottish Tory leader. As the First Minister has previously pointed out, we have a bit of a battle on our hands to win this one but it is important for farming and food production in this country, that we do win it.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has received a response to its request to the UK Government for access to Scottish waters to fishermen from the EU not to be used as a bargaining tool in the Brexit negotiations.

(S5O-677)

**Fergus Ewing:** I have raised this issue with UK Ministers on a number of occasions, and on a number of occasions they have declined to give a direct answer.

Most recently I wrote to Andrea Leadsom, Secretary of State for Defra on 22nd November. She replied to my letter on 7th December stating that: “As you will be aware, exit negotiations have yet to begin, and it is too early to say precisely what our negotiating strategy will be at this point”.

Mr Stevenson can be assured I will once again raise the issue when I meet with the Secretary of State tomorrow.

But I also want to give him and other MSPs with fishing interests in their constituencies and areas this categoric assurance. I have said that I will champion the interests of Scotland’s fishing industry – both on shore and off shore – and I am doing so. And I will continue to impress upon UK Ministers at all possible opportunities that those interests are not and should not be seen as expendable in any negotiations they conduct to leave the EU.

**Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to calls for a bottle deposit return scheme to be introduced.

(S5O-685)

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The Scottish Government is considering the benefits and drawbacks of a deposit return scheme. Such a scheme has the potential to reduce litter and improve recycling, but other factors must be taken into consideration. These include the impact on small stores with limited space, costs to retailers, and the impact on local authority kerbside collections.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to make EU environmental regulations enforceable after the UK leaves the EU.

(S5O-686)

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The Scottish Government’s paper ‘Scotland’s Place in Europe’ sets out our view that full membership of the European single market is the best outcome not just for Scotland but for the whole of the UK. We have set out proposals for staying in the single market even if the rest of the UK chooses to leave. The importance of the single market is recognised by the Scottish Parliament which voted by a clear majority on 17 January 2017 for Scotland’s place in the single market to be protected.

We believe this can be best achieved through membership to the European Economic Area (EEA). This would require on-going compliance with many existing EU environmental protections, which would be enforced through the European Free Trade Agreement structures under the EEA Agreement.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether the licensing of seal killing is compliant with the fishery product import regime of the United States.
Roseanna Cunningham: We are currently involved in detailed discussions with the UK Government, and the EU, about an appropriate response to the US Government’s initial request for information, including the need for clarification on a number of issues around domestic legislation on seal management.

The ruling has a 5 year exemption period that means it will not come into force until 1 January 2022.

Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it is making in encouraging the recycling of paper products.

Roseanna Cunningham: The Scottish Government has put in place a framework to support a more circular economy through our recycling systems:

Paper and card are priority materials targeted by the separate collection requirements of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

The Scottish Household Recycling Charter specifies separate collection of paper and card from other recycling streams. This will maximise both the quantity and quality of material collected for recycling.

24 local authorities have already signed up to the Charter – including South Lanarkshire - and we’re providing financial support for councils to implement the Charter.

The statutory Code of Practice for Material Recovery Facilities has introduced a sampling regime to determine quality and improve the standard of recyclate available to material reprocessors.

The Scottish Materials Brokerage Service will increase the value and stability of local authority waste material contracts, helping to ensure consistency and quality of recyclate supply to material reprocessors.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what representations it has made to the Secretary of State for Transport regarding licence applications and the impact on wildlife sites of ship-to-ship transfers of (a) oil and (b) other chemicals in (i) harbour authority areas, (ii) other inshore waters and (iii) offshore waters; what assessment it has made of (A) the impact of any proposed licences and (B) whether any proposed licences meet the requirements of the habitats directive, and what the reasons are for its position on this matter.

Paul Wheelhouse: The Scottish Government is not a formal consultation body for Ship to Ship Oil Transfer Licence applications under the Merchant Shipping (Ship-to-Ship Transfers) Regulations 2010, as amended. Scottish Ministers have written on a number of occasions to the Secretary of State for Transport requesting devolution of this reserved function, including two letters in 2016. In 2007, Scottish Ministers wrote four times to the UK Government’s Secretary of State for Transport with regards to concerns over ship to ship oil transfer proposals in the Firth of Forth.

Assessment of potential impact of proposed ship-to-ship oil transfer licence applications, including compliance with the EU Habitats Directive is a matter for the competent authority. For ship-to-ship oil transfer licences that is currently the Secretary of State for Transport, although Scottish Minister’s argue such powers should be devolved to the Scottish Government. Ship to ship transfers in offshore waters are not currently regulated. Again, this is an area that is reserved to Westminster. The Scottish Government is not aware of historical ship to ship transfer applications for other chemicals in Scottish territorial waters.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many tonnes of non-hazardous contaminated soils are being recycled.
Roseanna Cunningham: In 2014, the most recent year for which figures are available, 2,135,242 tonnes of non-hazardous soils were recycled. Data collected in this regard does not differentiate between contamination levels in soils.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many tonnes of recyclable non-hazardous contaminated soils have been landfilled since the Scottish Landfill Tax came into force.

(S5W-6876)

Roseanna Cunningham: Scottish Landfill Tax replaced UK Landfill Tax in Scotland from 1 April 2015. The 2015 figures will be published in May 2017.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-05743 by Roseanna Cunningham on 17 January 2017, for what reason the subsidy provided to Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) increased by a greater margin between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

(S5W-6920)

Humza Yousaf: HIAL receives both revenue and capital subsidy from the Scottish Government. In 2013-14 HIAL’s revenue subsidy was lower than trend as a proportion of the operating cost deficit was met from the use of cash reserves that HIAL had built up over a number of years. In 2014-15 the revenue subsidy reverted to trend. There was a significant increase in HIAL’s capital subsidy between 2013-14 and 2014-15. This primarily related to repairing the runway at Sumburgh Airport.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with (a) Scottish Natural Heritage, (b) the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, (c) Cromarty Firth Port Authority and (d) the UK Government regarding the application of Regulation 48A of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), which was introduced by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (No. 2) (Scotland) Regulations 2007, regarding ship-to-ship transfers in the Cromarty Firth.

(S5W-6998)

Paul Wheelhouse: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-06053 on 26 January 2017. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament’s website, the search facility for which can be found at http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government which (a) river catchment areas and (b) lochs are covered by protection orders, and when each order (i) was lodged and (ii) will expire.

(S5W-7053)

Roseanna Cunningham: 14 Protection Orders have been made under Schedule 3 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. They have no end date until they are revoked.
A full list of the prescribed areas which includes the date on which they were put in place is available from the Marine Scotland website: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00514197.pdf.

Edward Mountain (Highland and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the cost of wild fisheries review process has been, also broken down by (a) staffing, (b) meeting, (c) publication and publicity, (d) travel and (e) other costs each year.

(S5W-7167)

Roseanna Cunningham: The Wild Fisheries Review commenced in March 2014 and concluded in October 2014 when the Review Panel submitted its findings to Scottish Ministers. From October 2014
the Wild Fisheries Reform Programme has been supported by the Wild Fisheries Reform Team. In total, from March 2014 until the end of February 2017, the cost of the wild fisheries review process has been circa £446,000. This figure includes an estimate of some costs that the Scottish Government does not yet have or hold, as detailed in the notes associated with the following table.

The breakdown of this overall cost is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>(a) Staffing costs*</th>
<th>(b) Meeting costs**</th>
<th>(c) Publication and Publicity costs</th>
<th>(d) Travel costs***</th>
<th>(e) Other costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-03-2014 – 31-12-2014</td>
<td>£142,583</td>
<td>£1,987</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>£4,891</td>
<td>£17,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>£129,449</td>
<td>£614</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>£126,532</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>£900</td>
<td>£1,746</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-01-2017 to 28-02-2017</td>
<td>£13,608</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>£313</td>
<td>£1,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

* Average salary costs for the financial years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 have been used to calculate staffing costs. Average salary costs for the financial year 2016-17 have not been produced yet. The 2016 and 2017 year to date staffing costs therefore use 2015/16 average salary costs.

** Meeting costs are for external venues. The Scottish Government does not hold a formal record of the cost of all meetings held.

*** Travel costs are for the Review Panel, staff travel to the associated external venue meetings and some stakeholder travel costs to attend subsequent Wild Fisheries Reform Programme meetings. The Scottish Government does not hold a record of other staff travel expenses associated with the wild fisheries review process.

** Learning and Justice **

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what the quarterly figures were for (a) graduate and (b) foundation apprenticeship (i) starts, (ii) numbers in training, (iii) achievements and (iv) redundancies in each of the last five years.

*S5W-6824*

Jamie Hepburn: These figures are not available by quarter.

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) graduate and (b) foundation apprenticeships have been started in each of the last five years by people who were (i) 12 to 15, (ii) 16 to 19, (iii) 20 to 24 and (iv) over 25 years old.

*S5W-6825*

Jamie Hepburn: Foundation Apprenticeships have been in operation for three years

**Age Breakdown of Foundation Apprenticeship starts at time of Registration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Year started 2014</th>
<th>Year started 2015</th>
<th>Year started 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 to 15</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduate level Apprenticeships have been in operation since February 2016 GLA starts by age group at time of start**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Age 16-19</th>
<th>Age 20-24</th>
<th>Age 25 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb-16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) graduate and (b) foundation apprenticeships have been started in each of the last five years by people who self-declared as disabled.

(S5W-6829)

Jamie Hepburn: Foundation Apprenticeships have been in operation for three years

FA Starts Self-Declaring as Disabled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Year Started 2014</th>
<th>Year Started 2015</th>
<th>Year Started 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not To Say</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Provided</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FA Starts Self-Declaring as Disabled, by percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Year Started 2014</th>
<th>Year Started 2015</th>
<th>Year Started 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not To Say</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Provided</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate level Apprenticeships have been in operation since February 2016.

Currently no Graduate Level Apprentices have disclosed a disability.

Rachael Hamilton (South Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how the £10 million in the Workforce Development Fund will be spent, broken down by (a) sector and (b) local authority to achieve its aim to help employers work in partnership with colleges to upskill and reskill their existing workforce and address skills gaps.

(S5W-6913)

Jamie Hepburn: The detail of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund is currently being shaped through a process of engagement with key stakeholders and employers. Further details will be released in due course.

Transport Scotland

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on extending the concessionary travel scheme to people aged 18 or under.

(S5O-678)

Humza Yousaf: The National Concessionary Travel Scheme for Young People already provides discounts on bus and rail travel within Scotland for all young people living in Scotland aged 16 to 18. Using the Young Scot smart card, the Scheme offers a one-third discount off the adult single fare on any registered bus service in Scotland, one third off most rail journeys in Scotland and a 50% discount on rail season tickets. Eligible Island residents also receive vouchers for 4 free ferry journeys a year.

In addition, the Scottish Government will introduce free bus travel for Modern Apprentices aged under 21 in 2018. We will also be providing three months free bus travel for recipients of the Job Grant aged between 16 and 24 once this benefit comes into force.

The Scottish Government has no plans to extend eligibility to the National Concessionary Travel Scheme for Older and Disabled People to people aged 18 and under.

(S5W-6736)

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the impact of changing the eligibility criteria for free bus travel on women born in the 1950s who are also affected by the increase in the state pension age.
Humza Yousaf: Over the coming months, we will be engaging with stakeholders across Scotland to listen carefully to their views so that we may understand the social, equality and other impacts of possible changes that might be made to the scheme.

This early period of engagement will lead to a more formal written consultation later in the year on ways in which we might help ensure the longer-term sustainability of concessionary travel.

I do not wish to pre-empt the conclusions of those discussions. However, if the formal consultation includes options to change the eligibility criteria for the National Concessionary Travel Scheme, we will consider the potential impacts on groups that might be affected as part of the consultation process.

I would add that I will be meeting representatives of Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) in the near future to discuss the proposed consultation.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether people who turn 60 in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019 will be eligible for free bus travel.

Humza Yousaf: In terms of the The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Older and Disabled Persons (Eligible Persons and Eligible Services) (Scotland) Order 2006, all persons aged 60 or over are eligible for free bus travel.

In the coming months the Scottish Government will be consulting on ways in which to ensure the longer term sustainability of the Concessionary Travel Scheme, through initial engagement with stakeholders leading to a formal open and transparent public consultation later in the year. I do not wish to pre-empt the conclusions of those discussions.

John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to upgrade the A1 by dualling the single carriageway sections.

Humza Yousaf: The Programme for Government sets out our commitment to examine the case for an extension of the Borders Railway along with improvements to the A1, A7 and A68. The Borders Transport Corridors Pre-Appraisal Study, led by Transport Scotland, will take forward that commitment by considering how we improve accessibility in the Borders and link communities to key markets through strategic transport routes, and identify where improvements to transport links are required.

This study will result in a range of options for improving transport that can be considered as part of the national review of the Strategic Transport Projects Review which will be undertaken in parallel with the National Transport Strategy.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide (a) the number, (b) the names and (c) details of individual road safety campaigns that were planned for 2016-17.

Humza Yousaf: The Scottish Government is committed to achieving safer road travel in Scotland, which is why Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020, written in 2009, contains challenging casualty reduction targets and an ultimate vision where there are no fatalities on Scotland roads. Recently, the Framework underwent a mid-term review which identified speed, age and vulnerable road users as key priority focus areas.

For 2016-17, Road Safety Scotland - the Scottish Government's principle road safety delivery partner - developed three planned road safety campaigns around the focus areas in an effort to meet the Framework's outcomes:

Vulnerable road users - £365,000
Motorbikes - £50,000
Country roads - £250,000

In addition, the Scottish Government also spent £30,000 on a Drink Drive Festive campaign, which supported Police Scotland's enforcement campaign.

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how much was budgeted for each road safety campaign in 2016-17.

(S5W-6780)

**Humza Yousaf:** I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-06779 on 22 February 2017. All answers to written Parliamentary Questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at: [http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx](http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx)

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what the budget was for the Safer Roads campaign, which was designed to target men aged 22 to 40 and raise awareness of the risks of driving on country roads.

(S5W-6781)

**Humza Yousaf:** I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-06779 on 22 February 2017. All answers to written Parliamentary Questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at: [http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx](http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx)

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government, when the contract was formally agreed between it and the contractor for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR); for how many years it was agreed that it would make unitary charge payments to the contractor, and what the value was of these payments in each year.

(S5W-6858)

**Keith Brown:** The Non-Profit Distributing contract for the AWPR was awarded to Aberdeen Roads Limited in December 2014. Like many projects of this nature, the contract has a 30 year concession period.

The value of the payments are not fixed values but are calculated monthly on the basis of road availability and service performance. A proportion of the unitary charge payments are also subject to indexation.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether there have been any changes made to the (a) value of unitary charge payments and (b) number of years that they will be paid since these were formally agreed in its contract with the contractor for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and, if so, what the (i) payment timetable now is and (ii) value is of the unitary charge payments that it will now make each year.

(S5W-6859)

**Keith Brown:** There has been no change to value, or duration of, unitary charge payments since Contract Award in December 2014.

**Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how many days in each of the last three years have temporary traffic lights been in operation on the A76.

(S5W-6865)

**Humza Yousaf:** The detailed information requested is currently being collated and I will write to the member as soon as the information is available.
Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will be taking part in the H2 Transport Summit that is scheduled to be held in Aberdeen from 15 to 17 March 2017.

(S5W-6909)

Humza Yousaf: The Hydrogen Transport Summit is being organised independently by Aberdeen City Council. Officials from the Scottish Government and its agencies have been invited to attend and will ensure that Scottish Ministers’ interests are represented.

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the benefits of hydrogen-powered buses in reducing carbon emissions.

(S5W-6910)

Humza Yousaf: The Scottish Government is supporting the ongoing evaluation of hydrogen-powered buses.

In terms of policy development, Transport Scotland commissioned and recently published independent research by Element Energy on a range of low carbon technologies ("Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Potential in the Scottish Transport Sector from Recent Advances in Transport Fuels and Fuel Technologies" - published in January 2017). The report informed the transport contents of the draft Climate Change Plan currently under consideration in the Parliament; and includes emissions reductions scenarios for the bus sector based on the uptake of a range of different fuels and technologies, including hydrogen-powered buses.

In terms of practical evidence-gathering, the Scottish Government is one of the project partners supporting the operation of a 10-vehicle fleet of hydrogen-powered buses as part of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Bus Project.

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on Glasgow Queen Street station redevelopment plans and the impact of this on retail redevelopment plans at the Buchanan Galleries.

(S5W-6943)

Humza Yousaf: The redevelopment of Queen Street station continues to make progress, some advanced works are already underway and Transport Scotland authorised a further package of enabling works in December 2016 which should commence March 2017.

The remaining works package is reliant on the outcome of the Transport and Works Scotland Order application which remains under active consideration.

The introduction of 7-car services from December 2017 and 8-car services with improved journey times from December 2018 remain on schedule.

I had a very positive meeting with representatives of Land Securities, the owner of Buchanan Galleries, and Glasgow Chamber of Commerce on 26 January 2017 when all parties re-affirmed their commitment to working closely to deliver both the Queen Street station redevelopment and the extension of the Buchanan Galleries.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to its statement on Scotland’s ferry services on 2 February 2017, what impacts the review of ferry service procurement will have on Audit Scotland’s review of Scotland’s ferry services, which is due to report in autumn 2017.

(S5W-6945)

Humza Yousaf: We cannot pre-judge the outcome of the ferry services procurement policy review. The Scottish Government has engaged with Audit Scotland to discuss the purpose and timing of the ferry services procurement policy review and their review of Scotland’s ferry services.
Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to its statement on Scotland’s ferry services on 2 February 2017, what steps it will take to reassure Argyll Ferries staff and their trade union representatives regarding the continuity of contractual terms and conditions of employment during the nine-month extension of the existing contract for foot passenger ferry services between Gourock and Dunoon; by what date the extended contract must be produced by Transport Scotland, and whether it will consult the recognised trade unions before signing the contract extension with the employer.

(S5W-6949)

Humza Yousaf: I am committed to keeping Argyll Ferries fully informed of the purpose and progress of the review, and on-going engagement with the trade unions involved. Contractual terms and conditions of employment are a matter for Argyll Ferries as the employer. I do not foresee the need for any changes to the current terms and conditions of employment during the review or as a consequence of any extension period being agreed.

Discussions on the contract extension have commenced with Argyll Ferries to ensure the extension is in place prior to the current contract expiring at the end of June 2017. Extension of the contract is a matter for negotiation between the Scottish Government and the operator of the public service contract.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the UK Government's proposals to make it an offence to shine lasers at transport operators, whether it will introduce similar legislation for Scotland.

(S5W-6950)

Humza Yousaf: Prosecutions in relation to laser pen attacks can be raised under the common law offence of culpable and reckless conduct. In respect of laser pens being shone at aircraft, prosecutions can be raised as a contravention of the statutory Air Navigation Order 2016. We have no plans to create new offences in respect of lasers being shone at aircraft or other forms of transport. As aviation safety is reserved to the UK Government, any legislative changes would apply to the whole of the UK.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to tackle the incidence of people shining laser pens at transport operators.

(S5W-6951)

Humza Yousaf: Police Scotland is responsible for investigating incidences of laser pens being shone at transport operators. We have not received representations from transport operators or Police Scotland about laser pens and would encourage any transport operator to report incidences to Police Scotland for investigation.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, further to its statement on 2 February 2017 on Scotland’s ferry services, whether it will provide further details of its plans relating to “an in-house provider without the need for competitive tendering”.

(S5W-6959)

Humza Yousaf: The ferry services procurement policy review will consider in detail the legal, policy and financial implications relevant to the procurement of ferry services in the future. This will include consideration of whether it is possible to make a direct award to an in-house provider. However, as I made clear during the statement on 2 February, we cannot pre-judge the outcome of the review.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the cost of taking ferry services into public ownership.
Humza Yousaf: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-06959 on 22 February 2017. All answers to written Parliamentary Questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it is aware of local concerns about the operation of the level crossing at Kirknewtown and, if so, whether it has made representations to Network Rail.

Humza Yousaf: The Scottish Government is aware of local concerns about the length of time the crossing barriers are down during normal operation and that the barrier down time has increased recently due to a period of unreliability with the barrier mechanisms. Network Rail is working on some modifications to the barrier equipment to improve the reliability.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, further to its statement on Scotland's ferry services on 2 February 2017, what the substantive difference is between the application of the “Teckal Exemption” and Regulations 13(1), 13(2) and 13(3) of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

Humza Yousaf: The provisions in regulation 13 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 codify and slightly extend the “Teckal Exemption” developed by the European courts. The scope of the exemption is extended by the addition of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) of Regulation 13(1). The regulations also provide greater clarity in relation to the functions test through the application of a threshold in regulation 13(2)(b).