



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

**Wednesday 25 May 2016**

**Session 5**



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot) or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

---

**Wednesday 25 May 2016**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>BUSINESS MOTION</b> .....	1
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick]—and agreed to.</i>	
<b>FIRST MINISTER’S STATEMENT: TAKING SCOTLAND FORWARD</b> .....	2
<i>Statement—[First Minister].</i>	
The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon).....	2
<b>TAKING SCOTLAND FORWARD</b> .....	13
Ruth Davidson (Edinburgh Central) (Con) .....	13
Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab).....	19
Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green) .....	22
Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD) .....	26
Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP) .....	29
Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con) .....	31
Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab) .....	33
Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP) .....	35
Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con).....	37
George Adam (Paisley) (SNP) .....	39
Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab).....	42
Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP).....	44
Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP) .....	46
Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con).....	48
Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP) .....	50
Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab) .....	52
Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP) .....	54
Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con) .....	57
Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP) .....	59
Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab) .....	61
The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution (Derek Mackay).....	63
<b>BUSINESS MOTION</b> .....	67
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick]—and agreed to.</i>	
<b>PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTIONS</b> .....	69
<i>Motions moved—[Joe FitzPatrick].</i>	
<b>DECISION TIME</b> .....	70

---



## Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 25 May 2016

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

### Business Motion

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is consideration of business motion S5M-00182, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to the business programme for this week.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the programme of business—

(a) Wednesday 25 May 2016

delete

2.00 pm Scottish Government Business

and insert

2.00 pm First Minister's Statement: Taking Scotland Forward

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Taking Scotland Forward

(b) Thursday 26 May 2016

delete

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

and insert

10.00 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

10.00 am Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's Future in the European Union

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Continuation of Scottish Government Debate: Taking Scotland Forward

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time—[Joe FitzPatrick]

*Motion agreed to.*

## First Minister's Statement: Taking Scotland Forward

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is a statement by the First Minister on taking Scotland forward. The First Minister's statement will be followed by a debate and therefore there should be no interruptions or interventions during the statement.

14:00

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Today, I will set out the priorities that will guide this Government over the next five years. They have one central ambition at their heart: to make real and lasting progress towards true equality of opportunity for all. By the end of this session, through the action that we take to improve our most life-changing public services—education, health, social care and social security—we intend to ensure that many more people get the opportunities and the support that they need to fulfil their potential.

Greater equality of opportunity will make a real difference to the lives of those who suffer disadvantage, but it will do so much more than that. It will boost our economy and enhance the quality of life of all of us. It will help to create not just a fairer nation but one that is wealthier, healthier and happier.

Before the election, I said that our manifesto was my job application—I am pleased that it proved to be a successful one—but it was also a comprehensive plan of action for the next five years. Now, it is our blueprint for delivery.

Today, I will set out the overarching priorities of this Government and how we will set about achieving them. I will set out our plans for the long term but also the immediate actions that we will take now to reform and transform Scotland.

Our priorities are clear. We must continue to grow an economy that is strong, sustainable, fair and inclusive. We must put local communities more in charge of the decisions that shape their lives. We must use the new powers of our Parliament as best we can to help grow our economy and tackle inequality. We must drive forward reform of our public services to make them fit for the challenges of tomorrow as well as of today. We must support and empower our teachers, colleges and universities to deliver an education system that gives all young people the chance to reach their potential and achieve their ambitions.

We know that inequality has its roots well outside school and we must do more—much more—to tackle it at source. However, we must

also aim for our schools to be places where young people can overcome inequality and succeed, regardless of their background.

Whatever our differences, I firmly believe that the aspiration of this Government for a wealthier, fairer and more equal Scotland is shared across the chamber. There is no doubt that this is a Parliament with the ability to be bold and progressive in how we achieve that vision. I will do everything that I can to harness that consensus.

We will draw on successful ideas from around the world and, as I will indicate in some of the announcements that I will make today, we will also take forward good ideas from across the chamber if we believe that they can help achieve our goals.

As I have already made clear, the defining mission of this Government will be education. That is because we want every child to have a fair chance in life and because we know that a good education is the foundation of that. However, we also know that ensuring equality of opportunity for young people starts well before the school years and extends far beyond the school gates. We will therefore introduce a range of new policies targeted at the early years.

Within a year from now, every child born in Scotland will receive a baby box—a box of essential items to help level the playing field in the very first days of their life. That simple but—I think—very powerful idea originated in Finland and has been a huge success. It provides practical help for parents. It also helps to reduce infant mortality and improve child health, partly because it encourages early contact between new mothers and health visitors. However, the baby box does more than that. It symbolises the fair and equal start that we want for all children. That is why we will be very proud to introduce it here in Scotland.

We will also use new social security powers to introduce a maternity and early years allowance to give financial support to low-income parents—initially, when a child is born, then when the child starts nursery and again when they start school. It will be targeted help to reduce inequality at key stages of a young life.

Over the next two years, we will recruit 500 more health visitors to help improve child health and wellbeing.

We will also transform childcare. By the end of the next session of Parliament, the availability of flexible, high-quality and state-funded early years education and childcare will be doubled to 30 hours a week for all three and four-year-olds and vulnerable two-year-olds.

Children eligible for extended early years provision will also benefit from free meals—like children in primaries 1 to 3 already do. By 2018,

every nursery in our most deprived areas will have an additional qualified teacher or childcare graduate. That will be a key early step in ensuring the quality, as well as the quantity, of expanded childcare.

There is no doubt that the expansion of childcare will be our most important infrastructure project of this session of Parliament. It will help parents—particularly mothers—into work and it will be a transformational investment in the life chances of our children.

The support that we give children in their earliest years will complement and contribute to our efforts to further improve school education. I believe that Scotland has a good education system. We have great schools and great teachers. We have a new curriculum, record exam passes and more young people leaving school to go on to positive destinations. We will never talk down what we have, but we are determined to do even better. It is simply not acceptable that school leavers from the most deprived 20 per cent of areas in Scotland—if we look at highers as just one measurement—do half as well as school leavers from the most affluent areas.

Our aim is to ensure that Scotland's education system delivers excellence for all. Our manifesto set out a range of reforms to help us achieve that aim.

We will shortly begin discussions to develop a new, fair and transparent funding formula for schools to ensure that resources go where they are needed most. We will expand our attainment fund and invest an additional £750 million over this session of Parliament that will be specifically targeted at closing the attainment gap. From next April, £100 million a year of that money will go directly to headteachers, so that they—not councils or central Government—can decide how best to use it to deliver improvements in their schools.

We will undertake work to empower teachers and parents, within a framework of national policy and inspection, to drive more of the decisions that shape the lives of their schools. We will implement the new national improvement framework, including new standardised assessments that will help to inform teacher judgment. By ensuring that we have reliable data, the improvement framework will enable us—for the first time—to accurately measure the attainment gap and set precise and transparent targets for closing it.

The reforms that we plan are substantial. Before the summer holidays, John Swinney will publish a draft delivery plan setting out more of the detail, timescales and next steps of our plans to close the attainment gap. It will build on the discussions that he is already having with teachers, parents, local

government and trade unions and will provide the basis for further consultation.

I stress that point about consultation. I want our work to close the attainment gap to be the mission not just of this Government nor even of this Parliament but of the country as a whole. I want it to be guided by the best possible evidence from around the world, which is why I announced yesterday that I will establish an international council of education advisers.

I also want it to be built, as far as possible, on consensus. To that end, I confirm today that, over the next few months, we will convene a major summit on school reform and raising attainment, which will bring together all the key stakeholders in education to look at what each of us can do to help to raise attainment and how collectively we can drive that work forward. We will invite party leaders and education spokespeople to attend.

We will work hard to build consensus and partnership. However, what we will not do is to allow the search for consensus to result in inertia or in the lowest common denominator for action. We intend to be bold and to move forward with purpose and with pace. We have a precious opportunity, over the next five years, to make real and lasting improvements for the benefit of this and future generations, and we are absolutely determined to seize that opportunity.

Giving young people the best school education is about equipping them for the rest of their lives, so we are also determined to extend the opportunities that are open to young people later in life. We will deliver an additional 5,000 apprenticeships in highly skilled careers, taking the total number of apprenticeships to 30,000 by 2020. We will work with schools to inspire more young people—boys and, especially, girls—into science, engineering and technology.

We will use our new powers, when we have them, to introduce a jobs grant to help young people aged 16 to 24 who have been unemployed for six months or more to move into and remain in work. We will maintain the number of full-time equivalent college places and continue to focus on the skills and training that help young people into work.

We will widen access to university. By 2030, we aim to ensure that 20 per cent of Scotland-domiciled university entrants come from our 20 per cent most deprived communities. University education will remain free of tuition fees—front-door or back-door—for as long as the Scottish National Party is in government. *[Applause.]*

I know from my own personal experience that free tuition is essential to supporting working-class young people into university. However, I also know that although it is essential, it is not sufficient. We

must also break down the other barriers—financial, cultural and institutional—that mean that young people from poorer backgrounds are less likely to go to university than their more affluent peers. Therefore, over the summer, we will appoint a commissioner for fair access to drive the change that will be needed in our universities and colleges and to ensure that the recommendations of the widening access commission are implemented in full.

The target that we are setting is clear: a child born today in one of our most deprived communities must, by the time that they leave school, have the same chance of getting to university as a child of the same ability from one of the most well-off parts of our country. That is a fundamental part of what I mean by a fair and equal society.

Our young people are fundamental to our future as a country. However, the ambition that we are showing in education will be matched in other areas of our responsibility too.

We will protect the police budget in real terms and we will strengthen the accountability and improve the community focus of policing.

We will improve how female offenders are treated, with greater use of community sentencing and support and more use of local custody units.

We will also step up our work to tackle violence against women and girls, and we will legislate to create a new offence of domestic abuse.

We will ensure that at least 50,000 affordable homes are delivered over this session of Parliament, including at least 35,000 for social rent—and if we can go further than that, we will.

Those new houses will help to ensure that individuals and families across this country have access to good, affordable homes, but the houses will also deliver economic benefits. Their construction will support around 14,000 FTE jobs a year and generate around £1.8 billion in economic activity.

We will also introduce a warm homes bill, making use of existing powers to tackle fuel poverty and new powers over energy efficiency.

We will continue to take action across a range of fronts to tackle poverty and inequality. We will shortly publish a fairer Scotland action plan, and we will also implement all of the recommendations of the independent poverty adviser and commence the socioeconomic duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. Over the next few weeks, I will also reappoint an independent poverty adviser. We will introduce early legislation for a 50:50 gender balance on our public boards.

During this session of Parliament, we will assume important new responsibilities over social security. We will introduce a social security bill in the first year of this session and we will start work to establish a new Scottish social security agency.

We will use our new powers to put dignity and respect back at the heart of our social security system. We will abolish the bedroom tax; we will make changes to how universal credit can be paid; we will extend winter fuel payments to families with severely disabled children; and we will restore entitlement to housing support for 18 to 21-year-olds in our country. We will end, once and for all, the degrading Department for Work and Pensions approach to disability assessments and we will ensure that disability payments are not reduced or means tested.

We will increase carers allowance, and I can announce today that we will consider the introduction of a young carers allowance to provide extra support for young people with significant caring responsibilities. That proposal was in the Green Party manifesto—I think that it has real merit, and we will now ask our carer advisory groups for their views on how to take it forward.

Our new responsibilities will give us the chance to develop a social security system that respects the dignity of individuals as human beings. Rather than stigmatising those with disabilities or those who cannot find work, we will value their potential and help them to contribute to society.

I turn to health and care. We will continue as a Government to take forward a major programme of investment and reform. Over this session of Parliament, revenue spending on our national health service will rise by £500 million more than inflation. That means that, by the next election, the NHS revenue budget will be almost £2 billion higher than it is now.

However, we will not just increase what we spend; we will also change how we spend it. For example, there is a growing awareness of the importance of expanding mental health services. We will put in place a 10-year strategy to improve mental health and mental health services, which will be backed by an additional £150 million of resources over five years. Our action will include the recruitment of more mental health link workers in local communities, where they will work alongside general practitioners and other health professionals. That work will be led by a new, dedicated Minister for Mental Health—a key ask in the Liberal Democrat manifesto.

We will continue to adapt services for an ageing population. We know, for example, that the incidence of cancer is likely to increase as people live longer, so we will invest £100 million in a new

cancer strategy to improve survival rates and reduce inequalities. We will invest £200 million in new elective treatment centres to meet increased demand for procedures such as hip and knee replacements and cataract removals. By increasing capacity for planned procedures, those centres will ease pressure on emergency care.

The integration of health and social care, which took effect last month, is the most radical reform in healthcare in Scotland since the foundation of the NHS. Helping people to live independently for as long as possible requires expanded community and social care services. That is why we will support integrated health and social care partnerships with an additional £1.3 billion of investment over the next five years.

We will take forward our work to transform primary care, delivering a community health service with a new GP contract; increased numbers of GPs and nurses working in the community; and new, multidisciplinary hubs. We will also explore other initiatives to relieve the pressure on our family doctors. All GP practices will have access to an enhanced pharmacist, and we will examine a proposal in the Labour manifesto to extend the minor ailments service to make it a universal service that is available in all pharmacies.

We all know that better primary care, provided by a range of expert health professionals, will become ever more important in the years and decades ahead. We are determined to make the decisions in this session of Parliament that will ensure that we have a health service that is fit for the needs of the next generation.

As the way in which we deliver healthcare changes, we will ensure that the structures of our NHS, and the relationships between local government and our NHS, reflect rather than inhibit those changes.

World-class universal public services are part of our vision for this country. However, those services need to be paid for and underpinned by a strong economy, just as a strong economy is enabled by world-class public services. Supporting the economy has always been important to this Government, but with new powers over income tax it will become even more so. For the first time, there will be a direct link in Scotland between the number of people in work and paying tax and the revenues that we have to invest in our public services.

We are fortunate that Scotland has strong economic foundations. For example, just yesterday the Ernst & Young annual report showed that 2015 was a record year for inward investment in Scotland. However, we also know that we face significant challenges. My



appointment of a dedicated economy secretary is recognition of those challenges. The difficulties in the North Sea oil and gas sector during the past 18 months have undoubtedly slowed growth and affected levels of employment. We see evidence of that again today with the announcement from Shell. That is why, in the months ahead, the Government will remain very focused on doing everything that we can to support the oil and gas sector.

Although the productivity of our economy has improved relative to that in the rest of the UK, we know that it is still a long way behind the productivity of European neighbours such as Germany and Sweden. Innovation is crucial to improving our productivity, which is why we are investing £120 million in new innovation centres to bring together businesses and academics to develop ideas and products in some of the key growth sectors of the future. We will continue and expand that approach. We will launch an annual innovation prize and we will invite the Council of Economic Advisers to propose specific actions to boost productivity through innovation. Through the can do forum, we will do more to encourage entrepreneurship. We will build on the success of initiatives such as the encouraging dynamic growth entrepreneurs—EDGE—fund and Entrepreneurial-Spark, and we will encourage even more people in Scotland to establish and grow the world-class companies of tomorrow.

Over the summer, we will carry out an end-to-end review of the roles, responsibilities and relationships of our enterprise, development and skills agencies, covering the full functions of Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, to ensure that our public agencies are delivering the joined-up support that our young people, universities, colleges and businesses need. Scotland has had great success in attracting investment and in helping companies to innovate, export and expand. We have real strength in depth in our universities and a record of achievement in our skills agencies, but now is not a time to rest on our laurels; now is the time to ensure that we drive greater innovation and improve our productivity.

We will, of course, also continue to invest in the infrastructure that businesses need. Top of the list will be superfast broadband. In 2012, just 42 per cent of premises across Scotland had access to fibre broadband; now, the figure is above 85 per cent, but that is not good enough. By 2021, we intend to reach 100 per cent of premises across the country. That investment will improve productivity across Scotland and transform the connectivity of businesses in remote and rural areas. We will set out our detailed timetable for achieving that over the next few months.

Our investment in broadband is just one of the ways in which we will boost the rural economy. We will work to resolve the difficulties in the common agricultural policy payment system. Fergus Ewing will update Parliament on that work next week. We will also continue to support our food and drink industry, which has achieved such great success in recent years. We will maintain the road equivalent tariff scheme and support lifeline ferry routes and air links, and we will continue to support smaller businesses, which are the lifeblood of our economy. In next year's budget, we will extend the small business bonus, which has already saved small businesses £1 billion, by increasing the relief threshold and lifting 100,000 properties out of business rates altogether.

Our focus on the economy will go hand in hand with our commitment to promoting equality. We will use the Parliament's new tax powers fairly and progressively. We will protect those on low and middle incomes but generate extra revenue for public services by asking higher-rate taxpayers to forego a tax cut. We will also make local tax more progressive and ask those in the most expensive houses to contribute more.

We will also continue to promote fair work. There are now 500 accredited living wage employers across the country. We will increase that to 1,000 by autumn of next year. Over the summer, we will publish a labour market strategy, which will build on the work done by the fair work convention. Through the Scottish business pledge, we will encourage more companies to adopt good employment and business practices, such as gender equality, the living wage and worker involvement. Let us be very clear that, in a highly competitive global marketplace, Scotland's economic success will be based on the excellence of our people and our products. We will succeed, not through low wages but through high skills and high quality.

Finally, in promoting sustainable growth, we will continue our transition to a low-carbon economy. Since 1990, we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 38 per cent. We are on course to meet our current target of a 42 per cent reduction by 2020. However, we must be bolder. We will legislate to establish a new and more testing target for 2020—one of reducing actual Scottish emissions by at least 50 per cent. We will look for support across the Parliament for the bold and sometimes controversial actions that we will need to take to meet that target. In doing that, we will not just live up to our moral obligations but seize a massive economic opportunity. The low carbon and renewable energy sector already employs 21,500 people; a tougher target gives us an even greater incentive to develop clean energy, promote energy efficiency and move to a more circular economy.

The final theme that I want to touch on today is empowerment and democratic accountability. In this Parliament we will work constructively to improve the way in which Government is held to account. I have already made some proposals that seek to do just that. More broadly, we will seek to empower individuals and communities across our country. For example, at a time when the United Kingdom Government is—disgracefully—still considering repeal of the Human Rights Act 1998, we will take a different approach. We will work with civic Scotland to establish an agreed set of social and economic rights for all Scotland's citizens. By valuing and strengthening human rights, we can empower citizens and encourage better government.

We will devolve more power to local communities. We will work with local authorities to review their roles and responsibilities and get more powers into the hands of communities. As a first step, over the course of this parliamentary session, we will increase participatory budgeting across local authorities to at least 1 per cent of all council spending. We will also introduce an islands bill to give new powers to our island communities, and we will continue our work to get more land into community ownership and make land ownership more transparent.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, which was passed at the end of the last parliamentary session, provides a strong basis for taking forward our land reform agenda, and I confirm today that over the summer we will progress our commitment to introduce a mandatory public register of controlling interests in landowners.

As members will expect, we will also continue to build the case for Scotland to become an independent nation—a position that is backed by a majority of members of the Scottish Parliament across this chamber. Of course, we know that Scotland will become independent only if and when a majority of the people are persuaded of our case. We also know that our job is to govern at all times for all the people of this country. That is what we will always strive to do.

As part of that, we will seek to build alliances across party boundaries. I believe that there is a clear progressive majority in this Parliament. Where there is cross-party opposition to unfair or regressive Westminster policies, such as continued austerity, the renewal of Trident or attempts to undermine human and trade union rights, we will work with other parties to maximise Parliament's influence and make Parliament's voice heard. As I look ahead to the debate that we will have tomorrow, I can say that defending Scotland's place in the European Union is a key early priority in demonstrating that progressive majority.

The priorities that we pursue over the next five years will shape Scotland for the next generation and beyond. The proposals that I have outlined today have at their heart a faith in social justice—a belief that we will prosper as a nation and succeed as a society if we encourage every person's potential and respect every person's dignity. Only by empowering individuals will we achieve our shared ambition for a fairer and more prosperous nation.

The priorities that I have outlined today are designed to do just that. Our young people must know that if they work hard they will have a fair chance to achieve their dreams. Workers must be paid a decent wage for a decent day's work. People who rely on social security must be valued for their potential contribution to society. Entrepreneurs and business owners must get the support that they need for their businesses to grow. Older people must be helped to live as independently as possible. All our citizens must know that their rights are valued and protected and that they will have a say in the decisions that affect them and their communities.

That sense of empowerment—for individuals, for families, for communities and for our country as a whole—is what we will seek to build over the next five years. By doing that, we can make lasting progress towards true equality of opportunity for all. I look forward to working across Parliament to achieve that goal.

## Taking Scotland Forward

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** I thank the First Minister for her statement on taking Scotland forward. We now move to a debate on the statement. All members who wish to speak should ensure that their cards are inserted properly and should press their request-to-speak buttons. I invite Ruth Davidson to open the debate.

14:29

**Ruth Davidson (Edinburgh Central) (Con):** I thank the First Minister for advance notice of her speech.

In today's meeting, Parliament begins the real work of holding the Government to account for the next five years. That task has never been more important. We get down to business today in the knowledge that decisions on education, the health service and all our public services have been stacking up and now require our attention.

In addition, there are the huge new responsibilities over tax and welfare that the Scottish Parliament is soon to take on. No longer are we here simply to argue over how best the Government spends a fixed sum. We must now decide how best we raise money, the people and businesses from which that money is taken, and how best we grow the economy to ensure that those funds increase. The rewards and the risks are great.

It is clear that, if the previous session of Parliament was about deciding the shape and identity of our country, the current session should be about setting the policy direction and goals of our country for the coming years. That makes the provision of facts, analysis and evidence-based policy all the more important—and that is something that my group of MSPs will be determined to bring to the chamber and the Parliament committees.

The Conservative group was elected on a promise to provide a strong opposition to the Scottish Government. That does not mean shouting louder or emoting harder, or a more frenzied gnashing of teeth; it means that we intend to provide a forensic challenge to the Government's policies. If the Government wants support, we will want to see the evidence and the facts that back up its plans.

We will set out a clear vision for how we hope the Government will proceed. We want a Government that uses the tools of the state to create a stronger society, that seeks not to crowd out individual freedom but to liberate it, and that offers support for communities and families to lead better lives—prioritising those who need it most—

while recognising that the Government cannot do it all and that government at its best is not an imposition but a partnership with society.

The First Minister has been criticised for caution and inaction during her first 18 months of tenure. It is a criticism that has stung. The First Minister and her team now have a huge opportunity to build that partnership with society and to use their next five years in office to make a real and lasting difference. However, that requires the Government to take the right course. Either it can take the easy option, which means keeping things quiet, managing its way around problems and taking regular pot shots at the United Kingdom Government in the hope that the show stays on the road until the promised day of indyref 2, or it can take the harder road, which means focusing on bringing about long-term change, right now.

Such change will not be easy, and I am certain that it will cause conflict among vested interests and create hostility, but it will show that the Government has left its mark. In a decade's time, that change will show that the SNP Government was not just about one thing and one thing only, but that it made a lasting difference from which Scotland has benefited. In the election, we asked to be a strong Opposition, because we wanted to encourage that better government, and that is the task that we set ourselves today.

On policy, the First Minister has said that the economy and education are her priorities, so let me start on one and end on the other. On the economy, we welcomed the news yesterday that inward investment is up in Scotland—a lesser woman than me might remark that it is good to see the funds that were corked up due to the independence referendum now being released. However, we should not allow one set of good figures to blind us to the facts.

Last year, Scotland's growth rate was 0.4 per cent behind that of the United Kingdom as a whole. Unemployment is rising again—the most recent figures show that it is up by 8,000. The jobless rate, at 6.2 per cent, is higher than that of the rest of the UK, at 5.1 per cent. The Federation of Small Businesses says that those figures are an amber warning for the Scottish Government. That note of caution is being repeated by large and small firms across Scotland. Liz Cameron, chief executive of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, tells us that Scotland is now on a knife-edge between further growth on the one hand and a new period of recession on the other.

We know that we have an economy that is dangerously reliant for growth on big infrastructure projects, which alone are not enough. We therefore need to plan for growth. That plan must demonstrate that Scotland is open for business.

On tax, the issue is not one of ideology; it is simply about recognising the reality that we face. The test for us when deciding whether to support or oppose the Government will be whether we are helping or hindering growth. We will call out short-sighted fixes or tax raids that are born of envy rather than common sense. We will oppose the Government's planned increases in business rates on many firms across Scotland. That plan still awaits justification in any way at all. We will propose, as well as oppose, with evidence-based policy to show how a competitive taxation system can benefit us all. We must give people and firms reasons for starting here, settling here and growing their businesses here.

I am aware that the Scottish Government will face pressure to do the opposite. I have read already that the three amigos who lead the Greens, Labour and the Liberal Democrats are ganging up to form a new high-tax alliance. I remind my Labour and Lib Dem friends that it was the positive and forward-looking vision for Scotland of hitting hard-working people in their pockets that saw those parties lose 13 seats between them earlier this month.

If those parties want to keep charging up the valley of death, please be my guest, but I say in all seriousness to the Scottish Government that there is no long-term future in a policy direction that will only suck enterprise out of Scotland. We need to support and encourage our businesses, not hobble them by imposing levies, doubling supplements and increasing rate rises.

It is not just through tax that the Scottish Government can boost the economy; there is much more besides. Two areas will be a priority for us. We will press the Scottish Government to encourage a new house building revolution for Scotland. With better regulations, a streamlined planning system and improved infrastructure, we should aim to build 100,000 new homes over the coming five years, of which half should be affordable. I welcome the First Minister's commitment to delivering 50,000 affordable homes over the parliamentary session, which we will hold her to.

The Scottish Government's capital budget will rocket over the coming years, so let us see that put to good use. We will press for a transformative investment in energy efficiency and call for £1 billion to be invested in our warm homes proposals. That would not just cut bills and reduce emissions—although each of those aims is important—but help the mental, physical and respiratory health of home dwellers and create thousands of new jobs.

The money is there. The Scottish Government has said that energy efficiency is a national infrastructure priority, and we were told today

about a warm homes bill but, up to now, the Government has shown no plans for and allocated little budget to making it so. The Government should put its money where its mouth is by making energy efficiency a proper national infrastructure priority.

Sixty-five per cent of all homes and 80 per cent of rural properties have an energy performance certificate rating of D or worse. The Scottish Government should invest in bringing those homes up to scratch. It should allocate 10 per cent of the capital budget by the end of the parliamentary session to reduce fuel poverty, start hitting some of the Parliament's environmental targets, create a warmer, healthier Scotland and see thousands more people employed, with that employment spread across the country—even to the most remote areas. [*Interruption.*] I was going to say that members of the Government party should examine whether their Government is spending its money wisely before they start protesting about a lack of funding, but I see that they have already started protesting.

Last week, we learned the full scale of the Government's failure to deliver the common agricultural policy programme. Hundreds of millions of pounds have been ripped out of our rural economy. We are lumbered with a programme that is costing nearly £200 million and which will deliver less for more, could soon run out of money and may land us with financial penalties from the European Union of up to £125 million.

That scandal has severely damaged the Scottish Government's claim to competence, and I for one do not think that families should face higher taxes to pay for it. I want the Government to clear up a mess that is entirely of its own making and of which it should be utterly ashamed.

The economy and wealth creation are only one side of the equation; public services and the provisions by the Government lie on the other. As we said in our manifesto, we will support financial protections for our national health service. We will join others in backing significant increases in mental health services, because we know that that will have huge benefits in the long term. Our new health team will seek to work constructively with the Government and find consensus when appropriate.

We know that a functioning, healthy society does not come simply from investing in a good-quality NHS to treat those who are ill; it comes only if we think more broadly about health. We will therefore support greater integration between health and social care. The person who needs help with adapted housing also needs help with illness.

We want the new welfare powers to be used to encourage people back into jobs, with a target to halve the disability employment gap. We will back and support measures in our prisons to cut reoffending with the review of all purposeful activity, so that more released criminals are freed not just from jail but from the cycle of crime.

Finally, I turn to education. I welcome the First Minister's focus on that topic in her speech. Indeed, it is a good first step forward that she wants to be judged on her performance. As I have said, this is the time for concerted action. It is time for all of us to be bold in our thinking. Too often we as a nation have hidden from the hard facts, with self-satisfied claims about how great Scotland's education system was in the past. However true that once was, we cannot afford to allow ourselves to do that now—not when standards in maths are tumbling, not when there is a lower proportion of children in primary reading well, and not when the number of secondary pupils who feel that they belong to their school has fallen since the turn of the century.

We should agree as a Parliament that the status quo is no longer an option. This is not about left versus right; it is about focusing on what works and having the courage to challenge and to change where necessary.

Let me set out what I think are the priorities. We all now agree across this chamber on the vital role played by early years education. A statistic that we have heard too often in the past few months is that, at age five, a child whose parents have no qualifications is often already 18 months behind the vocabulary of a child whose parents are degree educated.

The Scottish Government has proposed offering 30 hours of childcare a week, which is welcome. We propose that, instead of offering that mostly for three and four-year-olds, more childcare should be allocated to children aged one and two, particularly to those from deprived communities. Let us take action to stop the attainment gap at the point at which it starts.

In the state school sector, we will urge genuine reform. As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's report into Scottish education made clear earlier this year, curriculum for excellence is at a watershed. The report concluded that we must now give strong leaders in schools and in local communities the chance to deliver it successfully.

Our simple principle will be to demand that more power and control is driven down to where it belongs: among school communities. It seems that, in this area, there is some consensus, and I have to say that we were flattered during the election campaign to find that so many Scottish

Conservative ideas published in January were repackaged in the Scottish National Party's manifesto in April. We on these benches will use influence to ensure that those ideas come to fruition. We welcome today's announcement of a summit on school reform, and I take this opportunity to confirm my attendance and that of my education team.

The Government says that local school communities should have more say over education. We agree. The Government also says that it supports the creation of so-called school clusters, with their own governing bodies. We agree here, too. Those are being trialled in some parts of Scotland; they are the right approach.

Let us be clear what the aim is: to give strong school leaders the chance to co-ordinate and run their local school communities, because that is how great schools are created. However, we will oppose the Government on any attempt to centralise further the control over education. The new Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills must resist the temptation of assuming that he can improve things by ensuring that he controls all the levers in Edinburgh. Doing that, whether that be through a national education service or a series of yet more quangos overseeing schools, would be the wrong step. Instead, this SNP Government would be better served by spreading a little independence around our education sector. While he is at it, I urge the education secretary to reinstate Scotland in some of the international surveys that we no longer take part in, and to reverse his predecessors' mistakes.

When it comes to higher education funding, I got the distinct impression from the election campaign that I may not get much change from SNP members on my ideas. I say this, however: they can slap themselves on the back about the benefits of free university education if they must, but they have to remember that that comes at the cost of slapping further education colleges in the face. Their approach has also seen poorer Scots less able to walk through the front gate of a university than those who live anywhere else in the United Kingdom.

Education should be the best way to change lives for the better, but the SNP's middle-class giveaways mean those who have most to gain from life-changing chances are those who are harmed most by this Government's policies. We on these benches will continue to push for more funding for further education colleges over the course of this session of Parliament to reverse the SNP's cuts in the last one. The further education sector has for too long been treated as a second-class service in post-16 education, and we will pressure the Scottish Government to put in place a comprehensive plan to increase spending.

Lastly—as this, too, is now in the education secretary’s brief—we will continue to press him to rethink the deeply flawed named person scheme before it is too late. We all have honest disagreements about the rights and wrongs of the scheme, where the focus should lie and where resource should be targeted, but I warn the SNP that it is becoming increasingly clear that its proposed statutory scheme is unworkable.

Does the First Minister really want to press ahead with a scheme that is putting people off from applying for primary school headteacher posts, as the leader of Aberdeen City Council says that it is; that, according to many health visitors, will wreck the trust between them and the families they visit; and that has lost the support of more than half the populace of this country? There is a growing consensus in the Parliament that, if the policy is not revoked altogether, there should at least be a pause. I urge the SNP Government to consider that and to rethink its chaotic plan immediately.

We will oppose when necessary and propose when required. That is the strong opposition that Conservative members will offer over the coming five years, and we will do so with a clear goal in mind: to ensure that Scotland gets the better government that we deserve and which will make a lasting difference to our nation’s future.

I know that the constitution will always be a constant driving force behind the SNP’s agenda. I had hoped that we might be able to get through an entire Sturgeon speech without it being mentioned, but sadly the First Minister proved me wrong once again. [*Interruption.*] I say this gently to the First Minister and to her whole team: with our schools in need of reform, a healthcare system to protect, an information technology shambles to sort out, and a new tax and welfare system to run, I respectfully suggest that there is more than enough to be getting on with. The session of Parliament in which we decided whether or not to leave the UK is over; in this session, let us get on with leading within the UK instead.

14:46

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** Today, we have seen the SNP Government take its first steps towards setting out a programme for government for this session. As the Government sets out its priorities, I want to see a programme that is underlined by boldness and ambition. This is going to be a Scottish Parliament—and a Scottish Government—like none that we have seen before. It will be more powerful, and will reach into even more areas of our lives and have the potential to meet the aspirations of all the people across Scotland who want to build a fairer country for all. In that task, the people of Scotland have matched

the Government with a Parliament that contains an Opposition majority. When the First Minister sets her priorities, she can look for support either to the parties of the right or to the progressive parties of the left.

Here are Labour’s priorities: to protect our environment and our climate, and not to open up Scotland to fracking, which is another fossil-fuel development that our environment cannot cope with and which local people do not want; to prepare our national health service for the future, while ensuring that people can access services near where they live when they need them, and protecting local services from cutbacks; to restore faith in our police service by investing in hard-working officers and staff and strengthening the relationship between the police and the communities that they serve; to give everyone—regardless of their background or where in the country they live—access to Scotland’s world-beating heritage, arts and culture; and to protect the BBC and build the infrastructure to grow our creative industries, because investment in creativity is investment in the future of our economy. My priority is to concentrate on the here and now, using the powers that we have, instead of rerunning the arguments of the past.

That is why Labour members will continue to argue for investment in our public services, why we will continue to ask people to pay a little more so that we do not have to ask the poorest to cope with even greater cuts to the services that they rely on, and why we would ask the richest 1 per cent to pay their fair share so that we can educate our young people and prepare them for the future. That is not a tax grab, or what Ruth Davidson calls the politics of envy; it is question of fairness—an economic necessity.

The priorities that I have outlined are honest priorities that focus on the challenges that we face as a nation, and they are backed up by commitments that demonstrate that we know how to pay for them. We have said how we will pay for all our priorities, and that is what people would expect from us, as a responsible Opposition.

In a Parliament that is 400 miles from here, the SNP members of that Parliament have tabled an amendment to the Queen’s speech. From opposition there, they have called for an end to austerity and for investment in public services. Meanwhile, SNP members sit on the Government seats in this Parliament with the power to act—the power to stop the cuts, to invest in education—but refuse to do so. It is cynicism of the worst kind; it is a dereliction of the duty that they owe to some of the most disadvantaged people in this country, and members on the Labour seats will not shy away from reminding the SNP of that, each and every day.

The question why it has taken nine years for the SNP to make education its priority must also be asked. There is no greater priority for Scotland and for this Parliament than education. Whether it is the pursuit of a fairer and more socially just Scotland, of a Scotland that is more at peace and at ease with itself, or of a wealthier and more prosperous Scotland, education is the path, the door and the key.

I agree with the First Minister when she says that the future of this country does not lie with low skilled, poorly paid jobs. It lies in the growth of sectors including engineering and computing, with knowledge at their heart. It lies in the design, development and deployment of technologies, and in jobs and professions that we have not yet even thought of. David Bowie said that

“Tomorrow belongs to those who can hear it coming.”

Just before Christmas, I stepped into the future—also known as the informatics department at the University of Edinburgh. There I met Baxter—a robot with the capacity and mobility to undertake many human tasks. Baxter and I built a battery pack. By using a pair of glasses that sensed my eye movement, Baxter could pass me tools and follow my instructions. Baxter represents a future in which existing jobs are redundant and those that are set to replace them are still to be discovered. If we are not ready for that, we will be left behind.

I am therefore with the First Minister when she says that education is our top priority and—as I said last week—I am pleased to see John Swinney in the critical role of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. However, if the SNP accepts that investing in education, in skills and in science and technology is the route to growing Scotland’s economy, John Swinney will need to be the first education secretary to convince the finance secretary not to cut the education budget. After all, it was John Swinney’s cuts that removed more than 4,000 teachers from our schools and 152,000 students from our colleges. His were the financial constraints that see university staff on picket lines today and school teachers balloting to strike very soon.

Over recent years, education and training budgets have been cut by 10 per cent. The First Minister had a lot to say about education today, but the one thing that she did not say was that she is going to protect the education budget. That budget must be protected and enhanced or we will, indeed, be left behind by other countries. There is no greater imperative for using the power of this Parliament to stop those cuts now and for investing in taking this nation forward. JFK said:

“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. ... The human mind is our fundamental resource.”

In Scotland, we understood that aphorism long before he coined it: we led the world in education and our ambition should be no less than to do so again.

That will be achieved neither by tinkering with the governance of schools, nor by reintroducing a failed model of high-stakes testing, such as the Tories propose. We will do it by beginning to increase teacher and nursery teacher numbers again, by making student support fit for purpose in both higher and further education, and by closing the attainment gap between the richest and the rest wherever poorer children live or go to school. We will do it by recognising that we have some of the best trained, best qualified and most professional teachers anywhere in the world. We should be supporting them—not driving them to industrial action to get some sort of public hearing.

We will do it by putting our colleges back where they belong: at the centre of an education system that is designed to realise the potential of everyone—and by “everyone”, we mean senior school students, second-chance learners, women returners and pretty much everyone who will find themselves retraining once, or more than once, during their working lifetime.

We will do it by recognising that universities are about more than teaching undergraduates, but are also the drivers of innovation, successful competition in global markets, and international partnership in the science that will shape this nation and our world.

We can make a Scotland of that kind of imaginative, innovative, exciting and progressive vision driving forward, or we can continue to cut back on education budgets, close down avenues of advancement for our young people, and drive our teachers and lecturers to the despair of industrial action. We can disrupt our schools for years through regionalisation, as the Government did to colleges, and kid ourselves that it is an efficiency drive, but avoid facing up to what our schools, colleges and universities really need.

I look forward over the next five years of this session to working with the Government when we agree, and to encouraging it in the right direction when we do not. All of us in the chamber share a responsibility for building the fairer and more decent Scotland that we all want, and now every one of us holds in our own hands even more power to do that. So—let us get to work.

14:56

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** I, too, thank the First Minister for the advance copy of her statement.

I have said before that, in this session of the Scottish Parliament, with a minority Government, all political parties will need a positive agenda if we want to exercise influence in the Parliament. I do not think that simply laying down implacable demands or seeking to block action will work. The Greens will make positive proposals, and our track record in the previous session of minority government demonstrates that that approach can get results.

The Scottish National Party may come to feel naturally entitled to propose its programme, but without a majority it will need to convince, compromise and be willing to give ground, and I welcome some early signals today that that approach will be taken. In particular, the commitments to increase the carers allowance and to look at the Green policy proposal of an additional young carers allowance are very welcome.

I also welcome the First Minister's wider comment about social security. She said that there is

"the chance to develop a social security system that respects the dignity of individuals as human beings."

We must take every opportunity that we can in the Parliament to protect people from the UK Government's damaging and divisive approach to the welfare system. I very much welcome that the First Minister seems minded to take that direction.

The Green approach of being constructive and challenging will continue, and there are certainly further areas of agreement, not only on provision for carers, but on other aspects of the approach to supporting children. I love the baby box idea—I have to be honest: I wish that we had put that in our manifesto—but I would like an assurance from the First Minister that it will not involve any hint of corporate sponsorship. I am very pleased to see the First Minister nodding in immediate response.

The important need to support maternity and early years allowances is another such issue. I hope that we will see cross-party consensus on the top-up for child benefit as well as on childcare. I am glad that the need for flexibility and quality of childcare is recognised—it is not just about numbers of hours.

I am very glad that the First Minister likes the idea of participatory budgeting. Green councillors have been champions of that at the local level. However, the idea of a nationally determined approach being imposed on all local councils jars somewhat with the idea of participation. Are locally elected councillors to be the only people not to be allowed their own say about local spending levels? Participatory budgeting is a good thing, and we will continue to back it, but it should be undertaken in the context of more economically empowered local

democracy in which councils can make meaningful choices instead of just jumping through hoops that national Government has set. That is why we will continue to make the case in this session of Parliament for scrapping the council tax and replacing it with a modern alternative, and for more widely renewing local democracy in Scotland.

Other aspects of the statement should receive broad support and consensus among the parties, such as the commitments to the roll-out of broadband, increasing apprenticeships and overcoming gender inequality.

On the warm homes bill proposal, who is not proposing a warm homes bill this year? Only a mere 13 years after Robin Harper first proposed one, I am glad that it will finally happen, but it will have to come with the financial commitment to make it a reality.

All parties have recognised that more can be achieved on educational attainment. However, I do not think that the case for standardised testing has been fully made, and we will continue to question its choice as a priority.

We welcome the opportunity to engage actively with the Government's educational agenda, but we remain concerned to ensure that education remains democratically accountable through our local authorities. That needs to be defended. The Greens whole-heartedly welcome the commitment to maintaining free HE with no front-door or back-door fees. However, the notion that that policy comes at a cost to FE has persisted for too long. Both FE and HE are vital to people, to communities and to the country as a whole. I deprecate Ruth Davidson's presentation of that dichotomy. It is clear that spending commitments are needed from the Scottish Government if we are to protect FE and HE.

It is clear that a stronger and more pluralist case for independence needs to be made than was seen in 2014. The Greens looks forward to continuing to play a constructive role in that regard.

There will be areas of clear disagreement that require discussion between all political parties. For example, there is clear parliamentary opposition to the Scottish Government's proposal to halve and then scrap air passenger duty. I come back to the notion that parties will be successful if they propose constructive alternatives. I am convinced that an alternative to the SNP's policy can be developed—one that meets an environmental test by reducing aviation emissions, and a social justice test by not placing the burden only on those who fly once a year for an annual holiday. We will seek the Government's agreement on that point of



principle. For example, the idea of a frequent-flyer levy deserves examination.

In my view, the opposition of some political parties to the child protection legislation that we passed in the previous session of Parliament has been disgraceful, as has been the misrepresentation of those policies as undermining human rights or families' rights. I suspect that there is support for proper, robust, post-legislative scrutiny to ensure that implementation can take place as intended. I hope that that is something on which there will be agreement between Opposition and Government parties.

Further, there will be areas where additional pressure is needed. That is clearly the case with the climate change targets. Over the past few years, we have seen the Government use statistical anomalies to absolve itself of responsibility for failing to meet the climate change targets, and a further statistical anomaly is likely to make it easier for the Government to reach this year's climate change target, given changes to the European emissions trading system. I hope that this year the Government will not take an approach to the role that statistical anomalies play that is different from the approach that it took last year simply because it gives the Government a more convenient response. There is clearly a need for bolder action—I am glad that the First Minister acknowledged that—if we are to go further and meet the climate change targets for the longer term.

Finally, a case must be made for a shift towards a progressive, sustainable transport policy—something that has been lacking for far too long.

On the wider Green case for a transition away from an economy that is desperately vulnerable to the oil and gas sector—yet more job losses have been announced today—do we really want Scotland to remain so vulnerable to a finite industry? Do we really want Scotland to remain vulnerable and overexposed to an industry that is doing so much damage to our world and which clearly cannot last? For how long should we remain so vulnerable—five years, 10 years, 20 years? Investment in an alternative is urgently needed, and there is much that we agree with in the First Minister's statement about the need for innovation. We need innovation in the private sector, the public sector and the community sector. We need innovation not only in new industries but in new business models—for example, having a greater reliance on employee ownership, social enterprise and mutuals. That innovation and building of a new, sustainable economy has to be seen as an alternative to simply pretending that business as usual in fossil fuels can continue.

Finally, Greens will continue to challenge the disconnect that exists between mindless measurements of economic growth and the notion of wellbeing, distribution and a healthy economy. Economies can grow while social justice is eroded or built up. Economies can grow while achieving environmental sustainability or while continuing to deplete their finite natural resources. The objective that the Government should continue to commit to is not growth but the health and wellbeing of our economy and the sustainability of our environment. Greens will continue to make that case.

15:05

**Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** I thank the First Minister for the advance copy of her statement.

I notice that Patrick Harvie is urgently, desperately looking for the closure of the North Sea oil industry tomorrow. He cannot wait for five or 10 years. He wants to get on with it now. He has not learned any lessons about his economic policies.

What is clear is that we have a big choice in the next five years. We can seek to be aspirational and ambitious, looking to bold solutions for the future, or we can hunt for security in timidity. What we heard today from the First Minister was the latter. The more she speaks, the more she begins to sound like Gordon Brown, with the double and treble-counting of all her sums of money. I am sure that she will add "s" on to the end of everything, with "billions" rather than "billion", and the trebling of the money that we have, but that will not make it any more unless she pays for more. The reality is that she needs to focus on the big challenges that we face.

The First Minister is also hunting for things such as plans, advisers, councils of advisers, consultations and summits—anything but action to make a change for the future of our country. We need to choose bold, ambitious options rather than the timidity that we have seen in the SNP's statement today.

We also need to recognise that the SNP has lost its majority—you would not think it from the statement. It is clear that we need to recognise that, and that the SNP needs to reach out across the chamber—and it will take more than a couple of references to policies from other parties. I am pleased that the SNP has agreed to have a dedicated mental health minister, but it will take more than that to convince us of the SNP's programme. I am pleased that it has picked out and adopted some things from the Green manifesto and the Labour manifesto, but it will take more than that for the SNP to be ambitious

for our country. We must recognise that the SNP has lost its majority.

I congratulate the Conservatives on their growth in numbers, but I simply say to them that they were not elected for being Conservatives; they were elected for not being the SNP. Therefore, they do not have an endorsement of every Conservative policy that has been proposed. That is quite clear.

I want Scotland to be ambitious for the future, and let us begin in an area where we can perhaps agree about the future. Mental health services have diminished under the SNP over the past nine years. They have taken a step back. We used to have a world-leading mental health strategy, but we do not even have one any more. The former mental health minister is sitting in front of me, and I am sure that he is rather embarrassed by the fact that he did not get it renewed.

We also have so many people waiting for so long for urgent treatment, and that is because the SNP has reduced mental health spending as a proportion of NHS spending. The NHS has not put enough money into mental health services, and that needs to change. We need more than just a minister. We need the funds to go with it—for emergency support and primary care, but also for child and adolescent mental health services. There are no beds north of Dundee for children and adolescents. There need to be beds north of Dundee. The whole country does not live in the central belt. There are people in far-flung parts of our country who deserve the support of mental health services. That is something that the SNP will be judged on in the next five years.

The second area on which the SNP will be judged is general practitioners. There was no reference to GPs in the statement. *[Interruption.]* The First Minister did not admit that we will be 740 GPs short by the end of the decade. Again, the reason is simple: apart from the lack of planning from the SNP Government, the proportion of money that is spent on GP services has fallen under the SNP. Let the Government recognise that it will be judged on that too.

There was no mention of the intrusive super-ID database. I wonder whether that has been quietly ditched now that John Swinney has been moved to a new department. We need some clarity as to whether the Government has some plans for that in the future.

There are areas of co-operation, but I sense from the reaction from the SNP members that the SNP is not up for any co-operation.

Let us focus on education. I celebrate what we have, but let us not be deluded about it. The OECD was clear—*[Interruption.]* SNP members are getting very animated, Presiding Officer. I

wonder why that is. It is because we are getting to the heart of the problems of the SNP Government.

Scotland used to have one of the best education systems in the world. Now, it has been judged as just average. The party that claims to be Scotland's party has dragged down our education system to just average and it thinks that some regional boards for the running of education and some national testing will suddenly turn everything around. Unless it puts the resources in, it will not make the difference. That is why the SNP needs to recognise that it will need more resources if we are to get Scottish education back up to being the best in the world again.

I have one practical suggestion that the SNP might want to consider with its shiny new council of international—not just national—education advisers. Will it consider the proposals from the upstart campaign? Upstart wants to raise the school starting age to seven. That proposal has merit. If the SNP really wants to reach out and find new opportunities to make our education the best again, it will consider that proposal.

During the election, I was interested to see that, after many months of opposition to the proposal for a pupil premium, the SNP embraced the idea in its manifesto. I wonder what happened between Angela Constance uttering her opposition to the proposal and the SNP manifesto writers putting it into print. However, it is no good having a policy that is named a pupil premium unless it is properly resourced. We do not need timid SNP amounts of funding for the pupil premium; we need proper resources.

My final plea to the SNP is to ensure that we implement the early years offer properly. We need to ensure that we do not repeat the record of the past few years, in which only 7 per cent of two-year-olds got the nursery education to which they were entitled when 27 per cent should have got it.

Let us get on with the job and make sure that Scotland is bold and ambitious with that range of policies. We will not make Scotland the best again with timidity from the SNP. We need bold policies to make the difference.

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you, Mr Rennie. We now—*[Interruption.]* We now move to the open debate. I remind members that it is a debate and they are free to interject or intervene at any stage—they simply stand up and catch my eye or the speaker's eye. I say to Mr Swinney, before he becomes increasingly animated, that he should know that.

The debate is unusual in that it runs over two days. On many occasions over the next few days, several of the new members will be making their first speeches. Over the past few years, it has become custom not to interject or intervene on first

speeches. That is entirely up to members, but it has become custom.

Although the debate runs over two days, any member who has participated or spoken in the debate is expected to be in the chamber for the closing speeches, which will be tomorrow afternoon.

15:15

**Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** Presiding Officer, I begin with personal congratulations to you and your deputies on your new roles. I know that you will do yourselves and this Parliament proud. I also extend my congratulations on their election to this place to all the new MSPs I have not yet had the opportunity to greet personally.

We would not have to be elected to this Parliament to know that issues such as the health of our nation and the education of our young people are well-fought-over political battlegrounds. Some of that discourse has rightly been about holding the Government of the day to account, but much of it has seen the issues of health and education weaponised to an unhelpful degree, for narrow political gain. That said, I believe that, with a balanced Parliament, a third of MSPs new to this place and no national parliamentary elections in the offing for four years, we now have a window of opportunity to lay aside partisan political positioning and build a national consensus on matters of vital importance to the future of our nation—we must build as much consensus as can be achieved.

Of course, the fact that we have a balanced Parliament and a minority Government will not, in itself, ensure that that consensus will be reached. It will need to be worked at, and worked at hard, without—as the First Minister rightly said—allowing inertia to set in. It will require a Government that is prepared to seek common ground and build alliances inside this place and outwith it. However, it will also require Opposition parties that are prepared to be positive and responsible, in the knowledge that they can win not only arguments but votes and make real gains on behalf of the people that they represent. Minority Government should therefore become a test not of a Government's ability to win votes but of whether the Parliament can find agreement.

I believe that our respective manifesto commitments, together with the many words that were spoken during the campaign about the central importance of education and the national health service to our national life, provide fertile ground on which to plant the seeds of consensus in order to grow agreement on the way forward. I know that the First Minister and her Scottish National Party Government are ready and willing

to try to find common ground with regard to how best to transform our public services.

During the cut and thrust of any campaign, issues are highlighted and there is a sharp focus on people's priorities and the message that they give us on the doorsteps. It is our job, as members of the Scottish Parliament, to bring those issues to life on behalf of the people we represent. During my speech, I will highlight just a couple of the areas that the people I met during the campaign would expect me to raise as part of this debate.

My enduring memory of the campaign was that people recognised that all political parties were prepared to commit additional expenditure to our most cherished public service—the national health service. Although some parties were prepared to commit more financial resources than others, to dwell on that would be to miss the point of what people were telling me. There was a recognition that more money than ever before was to be spent but there was also a clear understanding that we cannot go on delivering the level of service that people expect without fundamental change in the way in which the service is delivered and in the structure for delivery. That is why I strongly support the aim in the SNP manifesto to review the number, structure and regulation of health boards and their relationship with local government. If we are going to secure the integrity of the national health service for the next decade and beyond, we must be courageous in our ambition to reduce backroom duplication and structural impediments to the provision of improved care.

I believe that all parties in this chamber and each individual MSP share the ambition for Scotland to be one of the top-performing countries in the world when it comes to education and the lifelong learning of our people. However, achieving such an ambition will require a transformation not just in how we deliver childcare and education for our young people but in how we do politics. If we are truly serious about that national ambition, we will need to fully release the ideas, the energy and the commitment of parents, professionals and others. That simply will not happen if education continues to be a political bickering ground in which we focus on narrow party advantage.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I am interested in what the member just said about engagement with parents. Could he spell out in more detail exactly what the SNP's plans are in that regard?

**Bruce Crawford:** I say to Liz Smith that what we cannot do is involve ourselves in a bickering exercise over how we take forward education, otherwise we will lose parents on the journey towards making the improvements that we need to make in our country.

It is for that reason that I was so pleased that the First Minister appointed John Swinney to be her Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, with a remit that also includes the co-ordination of public sector reform across government. I have known John Swinney well for many years and I have worked closely with him in the Government. He is the right person in the Government to do that most vital of jobs. I know that he will do what is right for the young people of Scotland, and I sincerely hope that Opposition spokespeople are capable of working constructively with him. Such chances do not come along very often, and the people of Scotland will not forget or forgive those who jeopardise our young people's future for political advantage.

I have a lot more to say but, as I have only six minutes, I will conclude by saying that I look forward to the next five years with a renewed belief and confidence that, if we work together, we can make Scotland stronger.

I commend the Government to the chamber.

15:21

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con):**

Today I will bring the circular economy to the heart of the debate on the environment and climate change. I say that because I have a career defined by economics and the environment. My undergraduate degree was in economics, and I have done a masters degree in environmental law. I have worked on that agenda internationally, in Europe and Australia, and I have previously worked for Keep Scotland Beautiful and the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets as well as for Zero Waste Scotland. I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests in respect of Zero Waste Scotland.

Before I speak more about the circular economy, I would like to say what an honour and privilege it is to represent the people of West Scotland. I pledge to represent their views in Parliament. I also pay tribute to my predecessor, Annabel Goldie—now Baroness Goldie—who has supported me over the past 15 years in my quest for elected office. The highlight must have been the involvement of Golden, Goldie and a golden eagle in the Glenrothes by-election, showing that public relations stunts have been a feature not just of the most recent Scottish parliamentary campaign—I say that to Willie Rennie. [*Laughter.*]

I commend the First Minister for her decision to separate the ministries, which gives added impetus to the environmental agenda. Moreover, I congratulate Roseanna Cunningham on her appointment as the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise to

the role. Finally, I recognise the contribution of Richard Lochhead in his stewardship of the environmental brief—not rural affairs—and the way in which Scotland has been positioned as a leader in environment and climate change.

Unfortunately, the Scottish Government's words have not been backed up by action. It has failed to meet its own climate change targets, it has failed to meet its own recycling rate targets and it has failed to pursue a co-ordinated approach with public sector bodies and agencies. This Parliament has the opportunity to be better, to be bolder and to deliver for Scotland.

For the Scottish Conservatives, the circular economy is an economic system in which products, materials and resources are used for as long as possible in order to extract the maximum value from them. In that way, and in the longer term, it is a win for the environment, a win for consumers and a win for business.

Globally, we are using one and a half times the amount of resources that we can make available, and that trend is set to increase as the middle class increases, as consumerism increases and as urbanisation increases. Scottish businesses will struggle with the long-term increase in the price of commodities, as well as with price shocks, unless we can better control supply chains and recover materials. Globally and locally, we are seeing the impact of climate change in droughts, flooding and deforestation. We have a global problem with mining. To produce a 500g mobile phone, 75kg of waste is produced.

There is so much more that we can do to realise the massive potential benefits for Scotland.

Ellen MacArthur is a pioneer of the circular economy. She developed the concept while she was sailing solo around the world in 72 days, beating Phileas Fogg and the world record at the same time. To make that journey, she had to take everything that she required on the trip with her. That got her thinking about applying the concept to nations. Subsequently, she set up the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which has said that the value to Scotland of following circular economy policies could be £3 billion. Moreover, a recent report by the Green Alliance has estimated that, by 2030, 20,000 new jobs could be created by following such policies. Those jobs are more sustainable, they help to tackle unemployment and they are resilient to any hollowing out of the Labour Party—[*Laughter.*] Sorry, Kezia, I meant the labour market. They are reliant on recycling, servitisation—the selling of services rather than products—remanufacturing, reuse and biorefining. I note that there is no mention of incineration.

I close with a personal invitation that will help with climate change. First, members may not be

aware that my old adversary in Cunninghame North, Kenneth Gibson MSP, cannot ride a bike, so he is forced to drive or take public transport. Having recently taught my daughter to ride a bike, I extend the invitation to Kenneth, but I warn him—no backchat. Secondly, I would like to offer to car share with the Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh from our homes in Eastwood, but I will ask him not to sing along to the radio.

My final thought is that, in this session of Parliament, we can be bolder and we can be better in order to deliver a circular economy for Scotland.

Thank you. [*Applause.*]

15:27

**Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab):**

This is my maiden speech, so I begin by thanking the people of Central Scotland, who have put their faith in me and who kept their faith in my party in this month's election. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work of my predecessors, Siobhan McMahon and Margaret McCulloch, who are no longer members of this Parliament but who gave five years of distinguished public service to the people of Central Scotland.

I have come here to try to make a change because I think that this Parliament is in danger of becoming complacent and indifferent. When it was revealed last week that we now have more than 10,000 people on the unemployment claimant count in Central Scotland alone, the former cabinet secretary thought that it was good enough to issue a press release opining that

“our employment rate ... is the second highest in the four ... nations”.

What good is that, what comfort is that, to the 21,500 women and men in Central Scotland—for that is the real number, according to the labour force survey—who are now out of work? That is an unacceptable level of unemployment, which is not just an injustice for those 21,500 in families facing grinding poverty and growing inequality. It leads to one in five children being born into poverty in Scotland today. It is a stain on our society that diminishes us all.

When James Keir Hardie, who was born 160 years ago in the area that I now represent in this Parliament, gave his maiden parliamentary speech, he also spoke of the unemployment question, which he described as

“the moral degradation of enforced idleness”.

That is a phrase that I hope the new Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work will remember.

In his maiden speech, Keir Hardie also spoke of “industrial distress”. The truth is that we still have industrial distress today: just ask the 450 workers at Shell's Aberdeen headquarters who were served notice of redundancy this morning. I fear that the new Scottish Government, like the old Scottish Government, has no strategy for tackling it, with no industrial policy, no manufacturing strategy and no joining together of public procurement with our industrial base—in short, no economic plan.

We have, now more than ever, an economic system that works for those who own the wealth rather than for those who, through their hard work and endeavour, create the wealth, or could create it given half the chance. Let me give you an example. Just this week, I visited the Tannoy factory in Coatbridge. It has been there for 40 years, yet a man called Uli Behringer, who bought it just one year ago, wants to close it down and move the work to Kidderminster and China. It is a modern factory with a skilled workforce making a world-class product.

That is precisely why we need a Government that is prepared to act: not merely to send in a partnership action for continuing employment team, but to intervene actively on the side of those gallant working women and men who, with their union, are in the fight of their lives to keep the work and the jobs here. This afternoon, I call on the Scottish Government to act decisively with the owner of Tannoy, and to act now.

That is why I will make it my job to remind the new Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work that democracy should be a central aim of economic policy; we should never accept the current level of unemployment, and it must be tackled with a renewed sense of urgency. Tinkering with those problems will not work; we need an industrial policy that relies on more than private enterprise and the free market. We need a vision of a renewed Scotland, with reindustrialisation and economic modernisation, investment in education and—yes—the principled readoption of full employment as a goal of public policy.

Here are two final figures that I would like the First Minister and the new cabinet secretary to consider when they review their priorities. In Central Scotland, more than 29,500 households are on council house waiting lists. Many of them are families living in cramped, unsuitable accommodation. How can we expect to

“drive forward improvements in educational outcomes”

when too many school-age children are condemned to live like that? We should put people back to work by building council houses and homes for social rent again.

We know, too, that half of our pensioners are living in fuel poverty and cannot afford to keep warm. Let us start looking, in this new session of Parliament, at the new powers that we have in order to see what we can do to improve the income of our pensioners, who have served this society well. Let us also start using the old powers to put people back to work on a warm homes programme.

There are democrats in this Parliament who answer to the call of the nationalist bugle, and there are rather more of them than there are of us. But I am a democratic socialist: my world view is different, and my priorities for Scotland are different. This Parliament will be a battle of those different ideas. It is a battle that we—the newly elected members from my party, guided by our principles that are determined by our values, and with a renewed vision of the good society that we want to build—are relishing. [*Applause.*]

15:33

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** I start by congratulating the previous two members, Richard Leonard and Maurice Golden, on their first speeches—I do not think that we are allowed to say “maiden speeches” any more—and I look forward to hearing their future contributions in the chamber.

This debate is about how we can use the powers of the Parliament to improve the lives of everyone in the country. It is no secret that I do not think that those powers go far enough, but it is clear that this Government and the First Minister are absolutely focused on delivering with them. There is a wealth of commitment and ambition here, and we have not even unveiled a programme for government yet.

The early years and attainment programmes are particularly ambitious. During this session of Parliament, there will be a £500 million investment that will double early-learning provision to 30 hours a week. It is important to say that that will, as well as benefiting parents and children, involve a huge infrastructure project that will benefit the economy and create jobs in every corner of Scotland. Along with the increased hours of childcare, 16 new childcare centres will be created and more than 20,000 more qualified staff will be employed by 2021.

In response to comments about access to further education for poor young people, I draw attention to the Government’s commitment to extending education maintenance allowance, and I remind our Conservative colleagues that education maintenance allowance has, of course, been abolished by the Conservatives in England, which has affected the poorest children in society.

The ambitious early years agenda is a great credit to the First Minister and her Government, as is the challenging target of closing the attainment gap in education, which is something that previous Governments have not achieved—the attainment gap is not a new thing. I am particularly pleased that the manifesto confirmed that the money for schools will be allocated according to the number of children who are eligible for free school meals and not according to the index of multiple deprivation, which often does not work in rural areas.

A number of members from opposition parties have been a little too gloomy about education. We should remind ourselves that, only two years ago, the Office for National Statistics published a report that showed that Scotland is the best-educated nation in the world, with 45 per cent of people aged 25 to 64 having had tertiary education and with many having degrees.

I mentioned rural areas with regard to education. I represent one of those rural areas—South Scotland—and I want that area to benefit from the Government’s economic programme and infrastructure ambitions, which I was pleased to hear the First Minister outline today. One of the great achievements of the SNP Governments between 2007 and 2016 was that we managed to invest record amounts in infrastructure despite extremely sharp cuts from London to our capital spending budget. In my region, in Dumfries and Galloway, there have been a number of important upgrades to roads and we are building a new hospital. I am pleased that there is more coming and that there is ambition to do more.

I was very pleased that in April our Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, committed to chairing a transport summit for Dumfries and Galloway in order to raise the ambition to connect the region to the rest of Scotland properly. I had included that in my manifesto for Dumfriesshire. Now that Mr Swinney has moved on to education, if he is unable to chair that summit, I hope that it can go ahead with Mr Yousaf in the chair. The town of Dumfries is the capital of the south of Scotland, but it does not have a dualled road linking it to the motorway, nor does it have a direct electrified rail connection. Similarly, large stretches of the A75, which is a European route, are not dualled, and there is a high-profile campaign by local students in the region to have it upgraded. I hope that, as part of the infrastructure investment for this session of Parliament that the First Minister has outlined, we will be able to address some of those long-standing issues that affect the south-west of Scotland. Those issues go far back beyond the SNP Government—and, indeed, the Scottish Parliament.

I am pleased that the First Minister has said that her Government will carry out a review of the roles, responsibilities and relationships of our enterprise, development and skills agencies. I believe that that offers a real opportunity to South Scotland, where the Scottish Enterprise business gateway model has not always worked as well as it has elsewhere. As a regional member in the constituency and as a former member of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee in the previous session of Parliament, it is clear to me that the way that companies are selected for account management does not always work well in the south, because we do not have companies of the size that is required to qualify them for account management, which means that we do not get the support. Although Scottish Enterprise has made internal decisions to try to address those problems, we should, in the course of the review that the First Minister talked about, look at ways of bringing elements of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, which has a community development remit, to the highly rural south of Scotland so that we can address some of the challenges that the area faces.

The First Minister's statement was extremely wide ranging and it is impossible to cover everything that she talked about. However—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** Will you wind up now, please?

**Joan McAlpine:** I was struck by the contrast between the First Minister's statement and some of the comments from Opposition members, who talk incessantly about constitutional matters. I think that the First Minister allocated less than a minute to constitutional matters. No one has the right—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You really must wind up now, Ms McAlpine.

**Joan McAlpine:** No one has the right to stop Scotland's people determining their own future, but we are focused on the powers that the Parliament has now. I welcome the priorities that the First Minister set out.

15:40

**Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con):** I remember how easy it was to contact people when I was a boy, in the dim and distant 1970s. My mother's parents, who lived in Ayrshire, did not have a telephone in those days, so when my mother wanted to speak to my gran she would phone my gran's neighbours, the Browns, and tell them when she would phone back. Mr or Mrs Brown would then cross the road and tell my gran when my mother would be phoning. If that worked, all was well. If it did not work, the procedure just

repeated itself until my mum got my gran at the neighbours' house.

In those days of no internet, no emails, no mobile phones and—dare I say it?—no Scottish Parliament, that was an accepted way of life, but it is inconceivable in modern Scotland. Today, Scotland benefits from the great technological advances of the preceding decades. We hope that this Parliament will be an example of modern Scotland working at its best with the benefit of cutting-edge technology.

It is not only new institutions such as this Parliament that have benefited. The Faculty of Advocates—an ancient institution from which I have come to this more modern institution—has adapted to make full use of modern technology. The National Library of Scotland has done likewise. In naming just those two, I hope that I will—as in a speech at a wedding—not offend others by leaving them out. I name them as representatives of what we have in this great country of ours.

We have progressed far, but much remains to be done. Broadband access is no longer a luxury but an essential if any business or organisation is to operate effectively. For today's generation of young people, internet access is considered to be as essential to life as bread and water—or so they tell me. I am very pleased that that is recognised by the party to which I belong, and I am pleased that the need for further progress on that is considered to be a priority. I will not go into detail about my party's policies in that regard, but will leave that to my shadow cabinet colleagues who have been given that brief. I look forward, along with other members, to working with the colleagues whom our leader has appointed to the shadow cabinet. Of course, we hope that all MSPs will be willing to work together for the good of Scotland.

On a personal note, it was a woman who first encouraged me to develop my interest in politics—not the First Minister, I am afraid, but my mother. I should not forget to mention my father, who interested me in literature, in spite of its consequences for him. My mother, a good Ayrshire woman, knew her Burns and turned it to advantage when there were disagreements in the family household. Her most telling line, in any disagreement with my father, was:

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us!"

With that, my father knew that the argument was lost and would shrug his shoulders and say, "There we are." Sadly, neither of them is with us this side of heaven to hear me pay this glowing tribute to their unique—in my experience—way of settling arguments.

We all know how much things have changed since the new Scottish Parliament started in 1999. At the same time, people have not changed. The country that we have and the people whom we represent are, in many ways, the same.

The constituency that I stood for in the election—Edinburgh Pentlands—is in many ways an example of the diversity not just of Edinburgh and the Lothians, but of Scotland itself. That diversity ranges from small communities like Kingsknowe, with its own railway station, to world-class universities, such as Heriot-Watt University. It ranges from local volunteers at the gala day in Balerno to the Whale Arts Agency in Wester Hailes. It encompasses the churches of Fairmilehead and Juniper Green, Dreghorn barracks, the shops of Colinton village, Pentlands community centre in Oxfords and Currie primary school, to mention but a few. All such places and many more make up who and what we in Scotland are and are about.

There is no doubt that we are glad to have the election campaign behind us—at least, most of us are. We are also ready to get to work. However, before I leave the election behind, I would like to thank all those who worked so hard and who voted to elect me and others.

All of us have memories of the election campaign and of election day. One of my memories of election day is of standing outside the polling station at St Fillan's church in Buckstone. A young family came out of the polling station and the two young boys, who were in their school uniforms, wanted to shake my hand as I was the candidate. Their parents had taken them with them to give them an opportunity to see democracy in action. I shook their hands. Not wanting to be left out, their little sister wanted to shake my hand, too—she wanted to be part of it. That is what democracy is about. That is why we are here.

We are here because we have been entrusted with taking Scotland forward for the future of the young people who were too young to vote to choose us, and for the present of those who did choose us. Let us act together not just to make Scotland better, but to make it the best it can be. *[Applause.]*

15:46

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** I congratulate you, Deputy Presiding Officer, on your elevation to the role, and I congratulate your colleagues. I congratulate many of those who are speaking for the first time today. It was only five years ago that I was able to wax lyrical about Paisley—just on that one occasion. *[Laughter.]* That is something that you can do and enjoy at that point.

It is good to be back and to get back to important business again. We have a new positivity in the new, balanced Parliament—as my colleague Bruce Crawford said. Bruce spoke wise words when he said that we have to sit back and consider the opportunity that we have to work together to create the type of future that we all want. It is good to see that that positivity has been carried through by many of the Opposition members—well, a guy can dream. Perhaps it was not quite as positive as all that. However, we have to find that way of working because that is what the people of Scotland have decided and that is the result of the election. We have to ensure that we work together for that future.

It hardly feels like five years since I was first elected as Paisley's MSP. This year's election night was not quite as nerve-wracking for me as election night was back in 2011—I now have a majority of 5,199 as opposed to 248. However, it is an honour to represent the great town of Paisley for another five years. Although that is a challenge, it is one that I look forward to because, as you may—or may not—have noticed, I am extremely proud of my home town and the people I represent. I may have mentioned that on more than one occasion in the past.

In the previous session I had the honour to serve on the Education and Culture Committee. It was during the previous session that the First Minister announced that bridging the educational attainment gap would be the work that we should be concentrating on. We must take that seriously and work with each other on that. For far too long in constituencies like mine, and in others throughout Scotland, where a person lives has been the deciding factor in where they end up in their educational career. That cannot go on any longer.

In my constituency, Ferguslie Park has areas of deprivation and Ralston in the east end is an affluent area. We can see the differences in people's lives and their educational outcomes in those two areas. We should not be living in a country where a child's future is decided by the fact that they come from a certain area. We need to find out why the young men and women from those poorer areas end up disengaging with education as they hit their teenage years.

The First Minister is correct that one of the solutions is rooted in the early years. I was pleased to hear her say that ensuring equality of opportunity for young people starts well before the school years and extends beyond the school gate. That sums up the whole debate about educational attainment. Before they reach the school gate, many children have their educational future decided by their parents' situation and what has



happened to them. We need to work with all our communities to show the way forward.

It is welcome that the Scottish Government intends to invest a further £750 million over this parliamentary session to close the educational attainment gap. Funding will be targeted where it is needed and control will be with headteachers, not administrators in buildings that are far away from education.

The targeting can come from the national improvement framework, which helps people to find out where support is needed, ensures that funding goes to the right place and ensures that help is in the right place at the right time. That creates a culture of learning that helps our children and young people.

I declare an interest as the grandparent of Daisy, and my daughter is pregnant again—she is determined that I will have lots of grandchildren at a very young age, which seems like a good idea. Whether we have children or grandchildren, we are all in a similar boat—we all want the best for our children and to ensure that they get the same opportunity, regardless of where they live.

As I mentioned, raising attainment starts in the early years. It starts with the youngest and involves the highest-quality childcare. I am glad that we have appointed a minister—Mark McDonald—whose whole purpose is to ensure that we deliver such childcare and that our youngest people get the help that they need.

The Government will commit £500 million during this session to nearly doubling early learning and childcare provision to 30 hours a week, which shows that we are committed to making the investment. That is not a massive capital project to build a bridge over a stretch of water or a massive road, but it is an infrastructure project that is making a difference in the heart of our communities. It is almost invisible, but it is making a massive difference to people's lives.

In the coming five years, I am tasking myself with addressing the challenges of educational attainment. I will work with anyone who wants to do that—with anyone who wants to take up the challenge and work towards the aim.

First, I will continue to represent my constituents to the best of my ability, to ensure that they get the equality that they need. Paisley is my home town. It is my place in the world and it is where my fellow buddies are from. I will work with everyone to give them equality in everything in life and to make them proud of the Parliament.

15:52

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I, too, congratulate the new members who are making their first speeches.

Connectivity is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Scottish Labour led the charge for better connectivity; it has continued to campaign for that over the past decade and to see the improvement through. Those campaigns have resulted in projects such as the Highlands and Islands programme being rolled out. That programme was supposed to deliver 84 per cent coverage by the end of the current phase. If we contrast that with the First Minister's assertion that more than 85 per cent of Scotland is covered, we can see the difference between rural and urban coverage.

The SNP has been in power for nine years. It promised 95 per cent coverage by 2017, but there is not a hope of achieving that promise. When the figures are broken down geographically, we see a huge disparity—many rural areas are much less likely to be connected and some have rates that are not even close to 50 per cent.

The Scotland-wide figures hide the unmet rural need for connectivity. We need a strong strategy that will target the hard-to-reach areas. We know that BT, which is the preferred contractor, operates only through fibre and copper, but we need a mix of technologies to get to remote and rural communities.

Some communities are doing things for themselves—strong rural communities are raising funds and some are even installing the technology themselves. That is positive, but what about the less active communities? Will those outside towns or those that have no natural leaders be left behind?

We need to rethink how we deliver broadband in those areas. What about a social enterprise, set up with the intention to deliver to the more remote regions? We must ensure that BT, which has received huge amounts of public money, facilitates and supports those communities rather than puts barriers in their way.

The second phase of the broadband project is now being contracted. We need much more priority to be given to rural areas—the areas of market failure. It is hard to understand why areas that would be served by the market receive Government funding while those that are not are forced to wait. How much, for example, will the Highlands and Islands get to continue the roll-out of broadband in comparison with those in urban Scotland? Rural areas have the most to gain by being connected in terms of addressing the population decline and the economic, telehealth, educational and social benefits.

We have not started to reap the benefits of telehealth. Recently, I was told by an 80-year-old constituent that she paid £100 for a taxi to access a hospital appointment. If it is too expensive to offer transport to that patient, why on earth was she not offered a telehealth appointment instead, saving her and the health board a huge amount of money?

Education also has much to gain. When I went to high school, I lived away from home. Fortunately, fewer young people are being asked to do that, but it is still the case that in some places young people choose to travel to access education because the range of education on offer locally is not what they need for their future careers. Surely good broadband can allow children to study closer to home by accessing online classes that are not available locally, giving them the same opportunity as others without forcing them away from their homes?

Without broadband the rural economy suffers. How can people complete their CAP forms online if they do not have broadband access? That brings me to the absolute debacle of the CAP payments. It is unbelievable that a Government—with plenty of notice—cannot set up a computer system that will work. While the Audit Scotland report highlighted worrying procurement procedures and conflicts, more worrying is what will happen to the farmers and the crofters who are at the mercy of the system. They have been given loan payments to tide them over—whether or not they wanted them, in some cases—but what will happen when their claims are not processed in time to pay off the loans? Will they have to pay interest? Will they lose their subsidy? If the EU penalises the Scottish Government, which budgets will be hit? What happens to those who, because of the situation that they are in, then fall foul of state aid rules? All those questions need to be answered. So, too, do the central questions: what on earth is the Government going to do to make the system work and what checks and balances are in place in the system to make it happen?

I am grateful that the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity took time this morning to speak to Opposition spokespeople. We will work with him to sort out the problems, but they are urgent and something must happen.

I am honoured to be given the Scottish Labour Party's brief on the rural economy and connectivity. The health of the rural economy is intertwined with the progress of connectivity, and everything that we do depends on that being delivered quickly.

15:58

**Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP):** It is a privilege to speak today in this Scottish Government debate and, indeed, as the first of our new SNP MSPs to make a contribution in the chamber.

As I walked into Holyrood yesterday, a colleague joked to me that only the important MSPs would get to speak today. Presiding Officer, I will take that as a vote of confidence.

As the new member for the Mid Fife and Glenrothes constituency I must begin by paying tribute to my predecessor, the Rt Hon Tricia Marwick. Tricia served my constituency with distinction from when she was first elected to Holyrood in 1999, when I was 15. It was in that same year that I sat in my modern studies class in Fife and watched the Parliament begin again.

We visited Parliament in the General Assembly building later that year. I remember asking my then MSP, Iain Smith, the member for North East Fife, how his party would get more women into politics. I cannot remember exactly what he said, but I am quite sure that even he would not speak favourably of the absence of women from the Liberal benches today.

My passion to teach modern studies is inevitably because of my teachers. I know Alex Cole-Hamilton and I share many inspirations, as we attended the same school. Mrs Broom, Mrs Brown and, as I am so much younger than Mr Cole-Hamilton, Miss Williamson, who is now the headteacher of Glenrothes high school in my constituency, taught me to think and to question and they all inspired me. Undoubtedly, without the input of those women into my schooling, I would not be here today.

When we talk about moving Scotland forward, it is clear to me that we have to begin with education. Indeed, to some extent, we are all linked by school—I know that I certainly am in this chamber. I am linked to Kezia Dugdale, who is not in her seat at the moment, whose father was the depute head at Elgin high school when I was a probationer teacher and who once interviewed me for the school newspaper, the *Pigeon Post*; to Alex Rowley, whose nephew I taught until very recently; and to the First Minister, in whose constituency my youngest sister teaches physics. None of us wants to see a Scotland that creates an unequal playing field, whether on the golf course or in the boardroom. Inequality that begins to emerge at the chalkface needs to be tackled head on.

That is why I am proud that the Scottish Government is committed to providing targeted funding that will get resources to the schools where it is needed most. Warout primary school in my constituency has already benefited from the

Government's attainment fund. Nearly £70,000 of Scottish Government funding is going directly into Warout, which is benefiting the school and the local area.

Under the SNP, the number of probationer teachers has increased every year since 2010. That is good, but we need to work with councils to make sure that those teachers get jobs. Crucially, we need to make sure that we do not lose talent from the education system. I will give an example of what I mean by that. This time last year, as a principal teacher, I was involved in interviewing new teachers for Fife Council. Someone who applies as a probationer to Fife Council must complete a generic teaching application form. They are interviewed and must then wait. They can wait weeks to find out whether they have been successful and, even after that time, they will not necessarily be told which school they are going to. They could be sent to Bell Baxter in Cupar, Auchmuty in Glenrothes or Queen Anne in Dunfermline. That is how it is. I know that, nationally, Fife Council is not alone in adopting that approach, but I must ask who that recruitment process best serves.

The Scottish Government is committed to empowering local authorities. Headteachers will now have more power to direct resources where they see fit, and £750 million is being invested to close the attainment gap. Fundamentally, the Government trusts Scotland's teachers to make the right decisions about how best to do so. As is the case when teaching a class, it is necessary to assess progress. That is why the Government has also invested in a national improvement framework to drive excellence and equality in every Scottish school.

The Government is also committed to teacher education and to ensuring that teachers across Scotland are given the right opportunities to develop professionally by funding—for example—the qualification for headship.

I have been lucky in my decade in education to have taught in three very different schools: a small community school, a large city centre school and a faith school. I was also fortunate in my time as a teacher to be seconded to Education Scotland to support the new qualifications. In every school that I have visited or worked in, there has been a sense of community that celebrates success and which works to raise ambition in our young people.

It is clear that to move Scotland forward we need political consensus on education. Curriculum for excellence was the product of the previous Labour-Liberal coalition. It arose out of the national debate on education when I was in my final year at school. Now, 14 years on, we all have a role to play in making sure that it works for this generation and the ones yet to come.

Our new Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills wants to listen to teachers. He wants to hear from parents, from unions and from local authorities but, most of all, John Swinney has made it clear that his mission is to close the attainment gap in Scottish education for every pupil, regardless of their background. I do not think that any of us could argue with that. [*Applause.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** I call Bob Doris, to be followed by Dean Lockhart. Mr Doris, you are an old hand—six minutes, please.

16:03

**Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP):** From one old hand to our not-so-old new Presiding Officer—that is probably the first and last compliment that I will give you, Presiding Officer.

I would also like to pay my compliments to all the first-time speakers who have participated in the debate so far. I single out Jenny Gilruth for what was an amazing maiden—or, as we are not allowed to use that word any more, first—speech. As a former modern studies teacher myself, I would have expected it to be of such a high standard.

We all want to ensure that our children have the best start in life. I became a first-time dad in January this year, when my wife Janet and I had a wee boy, Cameron, so ensuring that all our children have the best possible start in life has a special meaning for me and my wife—more than ever before.

I am therefore delighted that our Scottish Government plans to double existing childcare provision for vulnerable two-year-olds and all three and four-year-olds by the end of this new session of Parliament. Although it will be challenging to deliver such a step change in pre-school childcare provision, the rewards will be significant. They will be great. I believe that, in just a few years' time, it will be considered the norm for parents of pre-school children to have provision of a nursery place for their kids for the same number of hours as primary school children currently receive—and rightly so. The developmental, health and educational benefits for our children will be significant.

The Scottish Government's priority to tackle inequalities will also be well served by the policy. Nurturing the fundamental building blocks of childhood development at the earliest possible stage will surely help in the earliest years to tackle the educational attainment gap—something that we are united across the chamber to achieve.

I am particularly pleased that, by 2018, every nursery in our most deprived areas will have access to an additional teacher or early years childcare graduate to help in that task. Together with a variety of initiatives—including the baby box for every new parent, the 500 new health visitors, and a new maternity and early years allowance, with grants targeted at children in our most deprived areas—I am hugely encouraged by the Government's early years strategy.

That strategy will also of course help deliver the Government's ambitions to target gender inequalities. Getting mums—and I hope, increasingly, dads—back to the workforce after taking a career break to bring up their children, without being disadvantaged for providing that vital service for society for the first year or so of a child's life, is something that we should all put our shoulder to the wheel to make sure that we deliver.

I want to spend a little bit of time talking about how we deliver that. I am delighted that the First Minister has said that there has to be flexibility. For some mums and dads and some families, the location of childcare establishments can be as much of a barrier as an opportunity as far as accessing provision is concerned. Opening hours and current half-day provision, too, can be barriers, but I am encouraged by the fact that, as we expand the number of hours, those problems tend to melt away. Nevertheless, we still have to think very carefully about where we locate new childcare establishments.

We also have to think carefully about using partnership nurseries much more. Local authorities should be the key drivers in planning and delivering childcare provision, but sometimes the location of their bricks and mortar just does not serve working parents, and we have to look more carefully at what a reasonable offer of a childcare place from a local authority to a family might look like. In developing that, we have to start with a blank sheet of paper if we are to meet the needs of working families and get other families back into employment.

We also have to plan the childcare structure much more carefully. Much good work is taking place right now in my Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn constituency, but I want to single out work in Royston, where Rosemount Lifelong Learning is providing a vital childcare opportunity. Another group, Royston Youth Action, is looking at the possibility of creating a sports hub with a childcare facility attached. If funds are going to be made available in the next few years, we should signpost them at the earliest opportunity, as that will allow us to carry out some very careful strategic planning, work out the best use of public funds and get the biggest bang for the buck in

meeting my constituents' needs and delivering the childcare facilities that we need. There are opportunities there that we have to seize.

In my last minute or so, I want to make two brief points away from childcare. First of all, I welcome the £100 million for cancer early detection and treatment, but what comes along with that is the need to do far better on palliative care. I know that the Scottish Government has a new 10-year strategy and framework for such care, and I hope that, when in future we talk about early intervention in the treatment of cancer, we will also talk about palliative care. It is vital for a lot of families who have not been quite as fortunate in getting that early intervention.

Secondly, I note that, in Glasgow, there have been significant issues with young people who have been diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum, particularly those moving from nursery to primary school, and a feeling that there has been a forced mainstreaming of those young people into education without the required support. In the previous session, the Scottish Government signalled a review of the presumption of mainstreaming legislation, which dates back to 2005, I think. That is very important to ensure that we serve all the young people in primary schools. I do not think that a lot of schools in Glasgow have the required support for young people with additional support needs. In fact, perhaps on some occasions there is also a need to expand the specialist school estate.

There are lots of opportunities for the future and lots of challenges, but I know that the Scottish Government will work in partnership to deliver for my constituents in Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn and, indeed, right across Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you, Mr Doris. You did not take my warning and were 25 seconds over—I have made a note of that.

16:10

**Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** As one of the new members, it is a great privilege for me to give my first speech in the chamber and to provide some initial observations on my role as shadow spokesperson for the economy, jobs and fair work. In doing so, I congratulate Keith Brown on being appointed as the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work—I will pass that on when he is back in the chamber. I look forward to working with him and his team in helping to strengthen the Scottish economy.

It is a great honour for me personally to have this economic role. I have spent the past 25 years in business. I have spent time in Hong Kong and Tokyo and a lot of time in south-east Asia, China and India, and I would like to bring some of that

experience into the chamber to the extent that is possible and to bring some fresh new perspectives on economic policy that will, I hope, work for the benefit of the Scottish economy and for Scottish business.

In the fifth session of the Scottish Parliament, the general mood seems to be that there is a sense of change in the air. Not only do we have a chamber that is packed with new MSPs—I think that more than a third of us are new—we now have significant new powers under the Scotland Act 2016 that we can use to set the future direction of Scotland's business and economy, and we should all embrace that. Given that, we should all have high ambitions at the start of this session for what we should try to achieve.

From an economic perspective, I want to work with everyone in the chamber to make Scotland once again one of the most dynamic and enterprising economies in the world. We have a wealth of talent in this nation, and we should aim high and look to reawaken the spirit of enterprise that this country has been renowned for around the world. Having spent so much time overseas, I think that it is interesting that people still look on Scotland as a country of enterprise and a country where we have been a leader in business.

In recent months, I have had the pleasure of meeting a number of businesses throughout Scotland. With Ruth Davidson, I met businesses at the University of Stirling innovation park. There are a number of new businesses in new areas of the economy there—digital/information technology, engineering and software development companies. The innovation park is a great example of how we can support the creation of new and innovative businesses in Scotland.

Small and medium-sized businesses are a key part of the economy. There are more than 360,000 small and medium-sized businesses in Scotland, and they employ more than 1.2 million people. That is why a fundamental part of Scottish Conservative policy is to support the creation of more small businesses and encourage the establishment of an export market for them.

We need that from an economic perspective, because the Scottish economy is underperforming that of the rest of the UK. Unemployment is 6.2 per cent in Scotland but 5 per cent for the rest of the UK, and economic growth in Scotland is lagging behind economic growth in the UK. Against that background, the Scottish Conservative Party has a number of policies that will support business and address the slowdown in the Scottish economy, and I will highlight a couple of those policies.

We aim to reform business rates in Scotland to provide for a more dynamic economy for small and

medium-sized businesses. Obviously, we have seen real pressure in the North Sea, but the UK Treasury has provided billions of pounds of investment to support the North Sea industry. That is possible only because Scotland is part of the union and part of the fifth-largest economy in the world and the fastest growing economy in Europe, with 2.3 million new jobs created in the past six years, 300,000 of which are in Scotland.

We will reverse the increase in the large business supplement that has damaged a number of smaller-sized businesses. We also strongly oppose having higher taxation in Scotland than in the rest of the UK because higher taxation would make Scotland uncompetitive, scare off investment in Scotland and result in our losing business and a skilled workforce.

We will also address the skills shortages that are experienced by business. The constant feedback that we get from business is that it does not have skills in key areas, which is something that we will address. We will also increase the number of apprenticeships in Scotland. On that note, I am delighted to say that my nephew has just completed his apprenticeship and is now an electrician who is looking to start his own business, which is a real-life example of what our party will help to achieve through increasing apprenticeships and helping young people establish their own businesses. [*Applause.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you. We are tight for time and I do not want to see people slipping off the list, so I ask members, even first-time speakers, to try to keep to their time.

16:17

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** I am deeply honoured to be standing here as the member of our Parliament for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, an area in which I have happily lived for 20 years. I promised the voters during the election campaign that I would work as hard as I could for them if I was elected and would be a strong voice in Holyrood as their representative, and I have every intention of doing that.

I also feel deeply honoured, of course, to have been given the chance to play a part in taking Scotland forward as part of our progressive Scottish Government, and I will never take that privilege for granted. For me, taking Scotland forward means making life better for everyone, regardless of their background or status.

I am the granddaughter of an immigrant who came to Scotland from the south of Ireland when she was 18 and who could not read or write. However, she was smart enough to know that to lift her children out of the poverty trap, they had to get an education, which would be their route to a

better life. That is why I am proud that our Government has made educational attainment its defining mission, giving every child a better start in life, especially those living in the most deprived areas. An additional £750 million will go to those areas' schools to raise attainment, with the money going straight to headteachers, and there will be attainment advisers in every local authority.

I am delighted that we have excellent, high-performing schools in Strathkelvin and Bearsden, but of course we all know that there is not a level playing field and that, for a variety of reasons, some children are not able to fulfil their potential. I want every town and city in Scotland to have high-performing schools.

However, achieving equality for children starts even before they get to school, as many have said in the debate, because many of the poorest children are already behind before they start school. Over the next five years, we will see a transformational increase in the provision of free early learning and childcare to give children the best start in life, which will also help families and get more women back into work. There is no doubt that those progressive policies will take Scotland forward and reduce the attainment gap.

The First Minister has spoken of reaching out across the political divide to achieve consensus on a range of issues that will take Scotland forward and make our country even better, which is why I am dismayed and disappointed when I hear of the Opposition parties' intention to scrap two initiatives that attempt to do just that, namely the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 and the named persons scheme in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The 2014 act in particular is legislation that I passionately support. Having sat on the children's panel in the east end of Glasgow for the past six years, I am appalled by the level of misinformation and scaremongering that is being disseminated by our opponents. The act is about child protection and it should not be portrayed as being controversial or used as a political football.

Over the past six years in the children's hearings system, I have seen toddlers who have had to be taught how to play because they have been ignored since the day they were born and babies who cry when they hear someone laugh because they think that the shouting and violence around them are starting again. They are the lucky ones—they are the ones who are in the system, who are being cared for and protected. So many more children slip through the net, and the act is an extra layer of protection for them. Children's charities across the board are in favour of the act. Why do those who are so against it not listen to the people on the front line?

Something else that I strongly believe in is community empowerment. Over the past two weeks, I have been meeting community councils throughout my constituency, and I have been amazed by the amount of time and work that people put in just to make their communities better. I have met people who can only be described as local heroes, without whom our society would only half function. I am pleased that, through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, we will recognise the great work that they do and give them a voice.

I have been asked to present certificates tonight at a graduation ceremony for modern apprentices run by TIGERS—Training Initiatives Generating Effective Results Scotland—whose head office is in Bishopbriggs in my constituency, and which has just won growth business and overall business of the year at East Dunbartonshire's annual business awards. I am thrilled to have been asked to do that, because those are the young people who will take Scotland forward. They are our future, and I am proud that our Government has increased the number of modern apprenticeships and is building on progressive initiatives to get more young people into work.

As a new MSP, I am becoming aware of the great trust that people have put in all of us to help them and the expectations that are on our shoulders to do that. I will take my lead from my former boss, Gil Paterson, who could not have set a better example for me to follow. I thank the voters of Strathkelvin and Bearsden for putting their trust in me and I will do my utmost every day not to let them down. *[Applause.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Alex Rowley, to be followed by Graeme Dey.

16:22

**Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I begin by congratulating you on your new post.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You are going to the top of my list.

**Alex Rowley:** I also congratulate all those who have made their maiden speeches today.

I am quite clear that, where we can work together for the betterment of our country and its people, we should be able to do so. That is what the people of Scotland expect, and it is also the right thing to do. This morning, we talked about teachers, and quite a few people have mentioned teachers this afternoon. As I read through and listened to the First Minister's statement, I thought that, if I was a teacher and the statement was an essay setting out some of the key priorities for Scotland, I would tick most of the sentences as I

went through it. The issue is not what has been set out but how and whether it will be delivered—I suppose the issue is the report card. We need to ensure that this Parliament holds the Government to account, not in five years' time, but regularly, to see what is being delivered.

Bruce Crawford spoke about building a national consensus. I believe that we need to build a national consensus that sets out why austerity is so bad for the future of this country. I would certainly not point the finger at the Government in Scotland for creating austerity. That is the responsibility of the Tories in London, and they have driven it forward based on ideology and on reducing the role of the state with no regard for the people whom austerity will impact on. Worse than that, over the past few years, we have seen that austerity is failing and is pulling Scotland back—indeed, it is pulling the whole of the United Kingdom back. We should be building a consensus in Scotland that opposes austerity, because it is bad for Scotland.

We should also build a consensus in Scotland around the idea that we cannot have Scandinavian-type public services while paying American levels of taxation. If we want to have good public services in Scotland, we need to invest in them.

The First Minister talked about reforming our public services to make them fit for the challenges of tomorrow. I am not opposed to that. There is real opportunity to reform public services and drive the economy forward, but we will not reform public services if those reforms are driven by cuts.

Yesterday, I talked with the leader of Fife Council, who told me that, this year, the council is considering more than 400 job losses. If that is multiplied across local government, this year alone, thousands of jobs will be taken out of the sector. With the cuts and austerity that the Tories in Westminster are serving up, there will be even more job losses in years to come.

Unemployment in Scotland rose by 20,000 between December and February to stand at 171,000. Youth unemployment has risen by up to 2.5 per cent since 2008. That means that young people in their thousands are being denied any opportunity or prospects for the future. Scotland is the only country in the UK to have a falling employment rate in the past year. We need to tackle unemployment and give people opportunity but we will not do that with the levels of cuts that are taking place in the public sector in Scotland.

Let us consider the national health service. The First Minister acknowledges that we have a problem with GPs. The Royal College of General Practitioners says that we have a GP crisis in Scotland. My party wants to work with the

Government to think about how we tackle that. This week, I met some retired GPs who told me that they could start to fill some of those gaps in the short term but the bureaucracy that is involved in their coming back into the service to provide part-time services is far too great. We need to tackle that.

A few weeks ago, NHS Fife announced that it would take £30 million out of its budget, but people cannot understand how it will be able to do that without impacting on already pressured services. The First Minister talked about the new health and social care partnerships. In Fife, the health and social care partnership is starting with an £11 million deficit.

There are major challenges in all those services that will need investment. Yes, we need public sector reform, but we also need investment.

I will briefly mention the housing proposals.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am sorry, Mr Rowley. You will not mention them—not even briefly.

**Alex Rowley:** I welcome the proposals, but we need a national plan for housing. We have a housing crisis in Scotland, so let us work together to deliver the plans.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am sorry that I am having to be a bit curt, but I do not want people who are waiting to speak to find that they do not get the opportunity.

16:28

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** Five years ago, I made my first speech in the previous session of the Parliament with a mixture of nerves, excitement and pride. Today, the nerves may have gone but the pride and excitement remain—genuine excitement about what the next five years hold as the SNP Government seeks to move Scotland forward, and pride in the First Minister's announcement that the Government will explore the introduction of a young carers allowance. That represents the kind of Scotland that I want to be built.

The cabinet secretaries and the ministers are now in post. Shortly, back benchers such as me will find out their committee roles, which will allow Parliament to get down to business. Some of the business will be a legacy from the previous parliamentary session. The raft of secondary legislation for the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 will certainly occupy the time of the members of the new committee that will be charged with the effective scrutiny of that act. I would welcome being involved in that work, although the role is potentially made more challenging because of the impact of the recent election on former members

of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee. During the stage 3 debate on the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, I highlighted how their opting to stand down meant the loss of the vast experience of the land reform process of Rob Gibson, Alex Fergusson and Dave Thompson.

The outcome of the election has also seen the Parliament deprived of the knowledge and commitment of Jim Hume and Sarah Boyack. As a former committee colleague of theirs, I acknowledge their contribution to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee and to the wider work of the Parliament over an extended period. Fresh talent and fresh perspective will be introduced to the successor committee—indeed to all the new committees—which will be of benefit to this place. The speeches of Maurice Golden, Jenny Gilruth and others today certainly suggest that that will be the case.

I am particularly enthused by the prospect of a new climate change bill being introduced and developed in this parliamentary session. My enthusiasm is shared by environmental non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders. Those whom I have spoken to are delighted by the message sent by the appointment of a cabinet secretary with responsibility for climate change and environment. The message is that those are matters that the Scottish Government sees as a priority. For example, I know that WWF Scotland views the introduction of a new climate change bill as a welcome opportunity to focus the whole Parliament on tackling climate change, to reset our ambitions and to embed carbon reduction progress across all sectors of the economy.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 won many plaudits for Scotland and its Parliament. Its ambitions, and progress on delivery of those ambitions, continue to win admiration from around the globe. However—admittedly, partly through baseline adjustments—we have missed early targets and a reset is required, especially as evidence of the developing nature of climate change grows ever more obvious. It is appropriate that we look to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 50 per cent by the end of the parliamentary session—especially if we move to territorial emissions accounting. As the First Minister said, “we must be bolder.”

The development of a new energy strategy alongside that work is a further positive move, and I encourage the Government to consider the content of the RSPB’s 2050 energy report. The report, whose launch I spoke at last night, offers constructive, evidence-based proposals for decarbonising our energy supply without harming wildlife.

However, just as there is widespread support among stakeholders for both those actions, so there is a desire for information on just how the proposed climate change bill will interact with the development of the third report on proposals and policies. If memory serves, the United Kingdom Committee on Climate Change is due to provide advice on the targets for 2028 to 2032 around October this year, with the development of RPP3 to follow thereafter. People are keen to glean an understanding of whether RPP3 and the planned climate change bill will be developed in parallel or dovetail with each other, and they are looking for timescales. I fully understand that the Government has only just been re-elected, but I hope that that information will be forthcoming

“as soon as reasonably practicable”—

to use a phrase beloved of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

I turn to entirely different matters. Just as the appointment of Roseanna Cunningham to the Cabinet has met with widespread approval among stakeholders, so has the Scottish Government’s appointment of Maureen Watt as a dedicated Minister for Mental Health. Equally welcome are the additional investment in mental health, the move towards putting in place a new 10-year plan for mental health provision and the recruitment of more community-based mental health workers.

Nevertheless, the impact of that messaging and commitment at Scottish Government level must be felt on the ground. As the health ministers will be aware, there are moves by NHS Tayside to close one of its three in-patient units, which is causing considerable concern among service users and their families in Angus. Community-based day provision across the county is a long way short of what it requires to be. I look forward to seeing the Scottish Government’s leadership, backed as it is by additional funding, being followed and appropriate mental health services maintained, extended and delivered not just in Angus but more widely across Tayside.

The planned increase in the number of modern apprentices is another positive commitment by the Government that will be of benefit to the part of the country that I am privileged to represent and to other areas. I hope that the approach will recognise the specific needs of rural businesses and young people from outwith conurbations. Particularly in remote rural areas, people can find it difficult to secure year-round employment with one employer, and youngsters who are seeking to remain in the areas in which they were born and raised may well have to develop multiple skills across a range of areas.

In the previous parliamentary session, the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment



Committee highlighted the need to take a more flexible approach to MAs, allowing participants in rural areas to have more than one employer if required. I hope to see that approach followed in the new parliamentary session because it would be of real benefit in rural areas. In helping our young people to carve out careers in rural settings, the delivery of 100 per cent access to superfast broadband and the commitment to deliver affordable homes in rural areas will also be of benefit.

The manifesto on which the SNP stood was a positive, exciting manifesto for every part of Scotland, which is why we were elected for an historic third term. I now look forward to delivering on that manifesto.

16:34

**Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con):** When I introduced Ruth Davidson at our manifesto launch in April, I said that it would be my dream to be sworn in as an MSP for my home city of Glasgow. Dreams do come true—I am the proof of that. Until 5 May, the shop floor of Marks and Spencer was my workplace rather than the floor of this chamber. My busiest day was Christmas eve but I suspect that the pre-Christmas rush in M and S will be like a typical day in the Scottish Parliament.

I know that it is customary in first speeches to pay tribute to our predecessors. As a regional list MSP, it is hard to pay tribute to any one individual. Over the years since the Parliament was formed, a broad spectrum of people and parties have represented Glasgow, from big characters in Labour and the SNP to representatives from the smaller parties such as the Scottish Socialist Party and the Greens—and even a Lib Dem. Therefore I am delighted to say that, for the first time, I am the second regional list MSP elected to serve my home city as a Scottish Conservative and Unionist. That is surely an indication of how Scotland and indeed Glasgow have changed since devolution and will change further in this new powerhouse Parliament.

I must point out that I am not the first person in the chamber to cut their teeth in the Glasgow North East constituency and then go on to represent the Glasgow region in this Parliament. I have the very skilled footsteps of our leader Ruth Davidson to follow in.

Over the years that Glasgow has been sending MSPs to the Parliament, much has changed in Scotland. We have banned smoking in public places, brought about equal marriage—an issue that is very close to my heart—and hosted a successful Commonwealth games. However, many things have not changed for the better. Glaswegians have a desire to take a different

approach to tackling issues such as low life expectancy, poor housing, stalling levels of social justice and deep inequality between the best and the lowest performing state schools in Glasgow. People want an alternative conservative agenda, which was demonstrated by the surge in support that my party received three weeks ago and the fact that I am joined in the chamber by my talented and skilled colleague, Adam Tomkins. I look forward to working closely with him to address those problems and to hold the Scottish Government to account.

It is also customary to comment on our constituencies. Glasgow is my home and always has been. It is where I was born and bred, where I have raised my son and where I have spent most of my adult life. It is a great honour to represent the city that was the workhorse of the United Kingdom—a place of trade and merchants, inventors and scientists, poets and artists. It is often said that people make Glasgow, and that is true. I will work to make my home city stronger and I will support policies that make the people powerful, rather than the state.

It is also a great privilege to represent the city of Glasgow as a Scottish Conservative. I have been a Conservative all my life, even though I realised it only recently. Like many, I have challenged the stereotype that “You’re working class and Glaswegian, therefore you must vote Labour”. I looked at the other people who were coming forward to support and join our party and I saw people who were just like me and who were reflective of Scotland as a whole.

It is a sign that nothing will be the same after the historic referendum, which confirmed Scotland’s place at the heart of our United Kingdom. I fully recognise that many of the people who voted for my party and helped to elect me did so after never voting Scottish Conservative in the past, or perhaps doing so for the first time in many years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

The election result that put us on this side of the chamber for the first time was not just an event that took place on 5 May; it was the start of a significant change in Scotland that saw the coming together of people who want alternative proposals for our health services, our colleges, our schools and our transport infrastructure.

I am looking forward to getting on with the job in hand and scrutinising the SNP Government, especially on the issues that matter most to me. I will look to stand up for hard-working people, strive to strengthen local communities and address inequality wherever it may be found.

Some of the issues that are of particular importance to me include strengthening community engagement and ensuring a greater

degree of localised participation in decision making. We should aim to encourage as many people as we can from all walks of life to get involved and make their community a better place. As I am sure is the case with many members, I can think of numerous third sector organisations in Glasgow that do fantastic work in their local communities, but more can be done to encourage and provide support for those organisations.

As I alluded to earlier, much progress has been made in tackling inequalities. However, I am keenly aware that there are still hurdles to overcome. In particular, I believe that more action can be taken to address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender discrimination. For instance, I would like school inspections to ask specifically about school action on LGBT issues, as opposed to focusing simply on broad equality matters. I am aware that teachers are often unsure about how to tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying, and I would therefore like to encourage the development, in co-operation with the third sector, of a toolkit that would give teachers the confidence to take the lead in that area.

I was elected on a platform of providing a strong opposition, and that is what I will endeavour to do over the next five years. By providing a strong opposition, I can play my part in building a stronger Glasgow and a stronger Scotland. I recognise that I was elected to serve the people of Glasgow rather than one party. I therefore look forward to working constructively with members from all parties as we seek to make Glasgow the best city in the world in which to live and work.

Glaswegians were reaching out for change, and my own election was part of that. Thank you—I will not let you, your family or your community down. *[Applause.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Christina McKelvie, to be followed by Neil Findlay.

16:40

**Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I welcome you to your new chair, but I fear that you will not allow me to take your usual chair behind the First Minister for First Minister's questions—I am sure that you will still have your towel down for that. *[Laughter.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I will just say that you have mystified the new members.

**Christina McKelvie:** I welcome you, Linda Fabiani and Ken Macintosh to your new posts.

I pay tribute to the new members who have spoken today. Their contributions have been very enlightening, with a lot of detail about their aspirations for this place. With members standing

together, this place usually does make a difference, and I look forward to working with those new members over the next five years.

We come to elections, we set out our stall, we have our manifestos and we sell an ideal—a dream. More importantly, we give people some hope for a better life and a better country in which to live. My constituents in Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse have put that trust in me.

If you are a young person who is seeking either enlightenment at university or college, a career through one of our 30,000 apprenticeships or just a chance to prove yourself in a job opportunity, this Government has that vision for you.

If you are an elderly person who wants safety and security, liberation through public transport, personal independence to live at home, and—most importantly—care in your twilight years, this Government has something for you.

If you are seeking employment or training, or business start-up support or rates relief to build and establish your business, we have something for you. If you are seeking that wee break—possibly in the form of a jobs grant—that will make things a bit easier and make us all more successful, we have that for our 16 to 24-year-olds.

If you are in a job, or looking for a job, we know that our people expect nothing less than the living wage, with good employee relations through our fair work agenda, and certainly the right to be a member of a trade union unfettered by Tory regressive trade union laws.

You may be a parent who is returning to the workplace because we have provided childcare that is equivalent to a full school week, not just in term time but throughout the summer. We have provided maternity grants and early-years grants, and the much-lauded and life-saving baby box. Giving our youngsters the best start in life is a key priority for this Government.

When it comes to healthcare, our people want a national health service that responds when they need it—from the cradle to the grave, as I believe a wise man once said. Our commitment to free prescriptions will ease many minds when people are challenged by illness or disability.

When people are faced with adversity in their health, such as motor neurone disease, they look to us to provide care and support, and they will look—as I will—for the PhD research posts that were promised in our manifesto to find a cure, or at the very least to make some advancements in diagnosis, treatment and care.

While we are battered about like debris in a tsunami of horrifying welfare reforms, we have promised the sanctuary of a social security system

that cares, not castigates; that respects, not punishes; and that operates with dignity and not disdain. It is not a system that asks a woman to prove her rape before it awards benefits for her child.

For victims of domestic abuse, the Government will strengthen the law and define that crime. I very much look forward to that.

Our people will look for support for our unsung heroes—our carers—through an increase in carers allowance to the level of jobseekers allowance. Members have no idea of the impact that that will have on the people who I know in the South Lanarkshire Carers Network or of how hard they work to ensure that the people they care for are looked after.

People will also look for disability benefits to be protected from means testing; they will want the 84-day rule, which penalises parents whose child is in hospital, to be abolished; and they will want children who are eligible for disability living allowance to be awarded that benefit until they are 18, giving peace of mind. Just those few measures will take enormous pressure off families.

What about equality, which should be the watermark of our Parliament? Whether we are talking about people's gender, disability, sexuality, race or faith, we need to work together to ensure that our hard-fought-for human rights legislation is not repealed.

We will build bridges and roads, and not just over our rivers and through and connecting our towns—although I make special mention of the works going on at the Raith interchange project—but into and over our communities by empowering our people to take control of their local communities. That will enable them to build capacity and resilience in the places where they live, work and play.

People put faith and trust in us—we 129 very privileged members of our Parliament—and they expect us to live up to that faith and repay that trust. My friends in the Scottish Government have a very difficult task, and my colleagues across the chamber in other parties have a difficult task in opposition, but we have been given those tasks by the people of Scotland and I believe that we can all step up to them. Be bold, be courageous and be brave, because the people of this land—our Scotland—demand and deserve nothing less.

16:46

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** It is an honour to be returned to the Parliament to represent the Lothian region. I welcome all the new members to Parliament. The Labour Party has much thinking to do, but we also have many causes that need to

be championed in the Parliament and, more importantly, in our communities. For my part, I intend to continue the campaigning work that I started in the previous session.

Since Parliament went into dissolution, there have been major developments in many of those areas. All of us would have been humbled to see the result of the Hillsborough inquiry. That verdict was not just justice for the families and the great city of Liverpool; it will inspire class justice campaigners across the world who are seeking justice.

On the back of Hillsborough, the call for an inquiry into Orgreave and the rest of the policing of the miners strike grows louder and louder. Just today, Tory MPs wrote to the Home Secretary demanding such an inquiry. Proportionately, more miners were arrested and convicted in Scotland than anywhere else, and many were victims of a miscarriage of justice. Post Hillsborough, given all that we know now, the Scottish Government should stop obstructing the legitimate calls for a Scottish inquiry into those cases.

Also in the past few weeks, we have seen 250 blacklisted construction workers sharing £10 million in compensation, but there will be no justice until all the victims are paid out and the guilty directors of Carillion, Balfour Beatty, Costain, Kier, Laing O'Rourke, Sir Robert McAlpine, Skanska UK and Vinci Construction UK are brought to justice in the courts. Until then, the Scottish Government and public bodies should stop handing out public contract after public contract to those guilty companies.

Week in and week out, we unearth more and more evidence of the Scottish links to the undercover policing scandal. The Pitchford inquiry must be expanded to take in Scotland and, if it is not, there is a moral obligation on the Scottish Government to hold a Scottish inquiry. It is not acceptable that English and Welsh victims will have access to an inquiry yet Scots will not. How on earth is that standing up for Scotland?

I will also continue to campaign on behalf of those courageous women who have to live with chronic pain as a result of surgical mesh implants. They have been let down by the Government, by regulators, by manufacturers and by some people in the medical profession who enjoy far too cosy a relationship with the all-powerful pharmaceutical industry.

Today's debate is about priorities. During the election campaign, the priorities of voters in my region were health and public services in general. How can we provide a modern, preventative healthcare system, which tackles health inequality, when NHS Lothian has a budget black hole of £90 million? What will happen to patients in my region

if the NHS ends its legally binding waiting times guarantee, as is being reported in the media? How will the loss of between 200 and 400 beds across Lothian help to alleviate delayed discharge?

What do we say to people in Livingston and other areas of the Lothians who cannot get a GP appointment because of the crisis in surgeries? What do we do about a social care system that fails our older people and those who care for them? How do we stop people dying young in our poorest communities? If we, as a Parliament and as a society, know what is killing people early and do little or nothing about it, we are complicit in those early deaths. The Parliament must face up to that.

Public services are the services that civilise our society, and the people who work in them—the people who educate our children, clean our streets and look after the vulnerable—are the essential glue that holds our society together. At my election count and on television, I heard politicians after politicians praise the hard work of the council staff who had helped to administer the election—most members here will have done so. However, many of those politicians will have voted in this Parliament for budget cut after budget cut, year after year, and will probably vote for cuts again, leading to more below-inflation pay deals and hours being cut for some of those very same council workers—indeed, putting some of them out of work. That is hypocrisy, which people are watching.

In this Parliament, I will argue for public services, I will oppose cuts and privatisation, and I will argue for fair funding for local government. Let us not hear claims that a 1 per cent increase in the NHS budget is anywhere near enough, when health inflation runs at 7 per cent. Let us not hear claims that we are overfunding local government, when 70,000 jobs have been lost.

I will argue for progressive taxation. I will argue that we should use the powers of this Parliament to challenge the current economic orthodoxy. I will argue that we should protect our environment. I will argue for an end to the cuts that damage our young people's life chances.

I will reject the politics that refuses to address those key issues and instead waves a flag and pretends it will all be okay. My constituents cannot feed their kids with a flag. They cannot pay their gas bills with a saltire, and they cannot keep a roof over their heads with a flutter of the union jack. People need answers, not symbols and empty rhetoric.

16:53

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution (Derek Mackay):** I will try to find the

consensus that has been a feature of much of the debate, as I follow that champion of parliamentary consensus, Neil Findlay.

I welcome all the Opposition spokespeople to their posts. In particular, I congratulate Kezia Dugdale on her self-appointed promotion to Opposition finance spokesperson for the Labour Party. I look forward to her representing Labour in that role.

I congratulate all the members who have given their first speeches. I will take them in order. Maurice Golden gave a very impressive CV on environmental matters—I saw Murdo Fraser looking with great interest as he set out his environmental concerns.

Richard Leonard asked about the Government's economic strategy. I am very familiar with the strategy and will be happy to share it with the member. He asked a fair question about Government interventions, to which I simply respond that he should ask the steelworkers or the workers at Ferguson what this Government does when organisations outside the public sector require our support—and that is not to mention the preferred bidder status for CalMac, the decision on which was my last act as transport minister.

Richard Leonard also touched on the important issue of housing. The Government has an excellent record on house building and supporting that sector in very difficult times. We have also set out our aspirations in housing. Those are the right kind of issues for the Government to reflect on.

Gordon Lindhurst spoke about the importance of broadband, as did many other members. They are correct to say that it is the infrastructure of the future and that it will unlock different kinds of economic development. Rhoda Grant asked how it would be possible for us to meet our manifesto commitment for 100 per cent roll-out of broadband. I do not think that that commitment was matched by the Labour Party or any other party. We have met our targets and we have met them ahead of schedule, so I am confident that we will continue to deliver on our broadband commitments.

Jenny Gilruth gave a very powerful speech on gender and education and the connectedness of the right interventions in respect of the life chances of our children. We can all reflect on that incredibly powerful speech.

Dean Lockhart spoke about the sense of change in the chamber, with the Parliament's many new members. Some things have not changed. Tory members will have to learn how to play Parliament bingo—how many times George Adam can mention Paisley. However, it sounds as though Annie Wells might provide competition with the number of times that she can mention

Glasgow and her Glasgow roots. I know that the Tories are happy with the results in Glasgow, but I offer a note of caution: the SNP won every constituency in the city.

Rona Mackay gave an impressive speech on education, childcare, child protection and the connections between them. Many other members focused on the priorities for Government outlined by the First Minister.

The leaders of the opposition parties made important points about the consensus that we can build on, forging a progressive alliance and the policies that are right for Scotland. Patrick Harvie has said that he will not simply make demands because that will not work. As the cabinet secretary with responsibility for the budget, that is music to my ears.

**Patrick Harvie:** Will the cabinet secretary give way?

**Derek Mackay:** I am afraid that I do not have time on this occasion.

**Patrick Harvie:** There will be other occasions.

**Derek Mackay:** There will be many other occasions. I appreciate the pledge to take a positive, constructive approach.

That was also the theme—if not the content—of the speeches by Willie Rennie, Kezia Dugdale and Ruth Davidson. There are many subjects on which we can agree and find common ground and consensus.

Willie Rennie repeated the complaint that we produce too many plans and then asked where our plans are—he asked what we are doing about certain issues. He also said that it cannot just be about appointing a minister and that we have to put our money where our mouth is. That is why, following on from the priorities for Government, there will be spending commitments, some of which were outlined in the First Minister's speech, including new, real-terms resources for the NHS, for mental health and for the attainment fund for education.

In many other areas, there is not just a political focus but new resource to match the reality of the political commitment that has been made by our First Minister.

**Willie Rennie:** Will the member give way?

**Derek Mackay:** Not on this occasion.

Those commitments were set from the manifesto on which the SNP won the Scottish Parliament elections. Of course we will have to reach out to all parties in the chamber to deliver our joint aspirations in the many areas where we agree, not least in addressing inequality. The First Minister has made it perfectly clear that, in all the

themes that run through our priorities for Government, equality of opportunity is the key driver. Equality of opportunity is the key principle and we will deliver on that to build a fairer and wealthier country, which is what we all want to see.

This is the beginning of the blueprint for transforming Scotland—for public service reform and for delivering the economic growth that will fund the interventions that can support our public services to allow us to deliver the kind of Scotland that we all want to create.

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Thank you, cabinet secretary. I remind all members who have spoken in the debate that they should be in the chamber for the concluding remarks tomorrow afternoon, when the debate continues.

## Business Motion

16:59

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-00183, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, which sets out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 31 May 2016

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Common Agricultural Payments

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Taking Scotland Forward – Scotland's Economy, Short Term Resilience and Long Term Opportunities

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Wednesday 1 June 2016

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate: Taking Scotland Forward – Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Thursday 2 June 2016

12.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate: Taking Scotland Forward – Creating a Fairer Scotland

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 7 June 2016

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 8 June 2016

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Health and Sport

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 9 June 2016

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.45 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of four Parliamentary Bureau motions.

I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S5M-00184, on First Minister's questions, portfolio questions and general questions; motion S5M-00185, on a variation of standing orders; motion S5M-00186, on the office of the clerk; and motion S5M-00187, on parliamentary recess dates.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the period for Members to—

lodge a First Minister's Question for answer on Thursday 2 June should end at 9.30am on Tuesday 31 May;

submit their names for Portfolio and General Questions on Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 June should end at 4.30pm on Thursday 26 May.

That the Parliament agrees that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on 2 and 9 June—

(i) in the first sentence of Rule 13.7.A1 "30 minutes" be replaced with "45 minutes";

and

(ii) in Rule 13.6.2 "6" be replaced with "8".

That the Parliament agrees that, between 31 May 2016 and 3 January 2017, the Office of the Clerk will be open on all days except: Saturdays and Sundays, 2 December 2016, 23 December (pm), 26 and 27 December 2016, 2 and 3 January 2017.

That the Parliament agrees the following parliamentary recess dates under Rule 2.3.1: 2 July to 4 September 2016 (inclusive), 8 to 23 October 2016 (inclusive) and 24 December 2016 to 8 January 2017 (inclusive).—[Joe FitzPatrick]

**The Presiding Officer:** The question on the motions will be put at decision time.

## Decision Time

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** I propose to ask a single question on motions S5M-00184 to S5M-00187, on procedural issues that relate to question times, the office of the clerk and parliamentary recess dates. If any member objects, they should say so now.

No member has objected. The question is, that motions S5M-00184 to S5M-00187, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the period for Members to—

lodge a First Minister's Question for answer on Thursday 2 June should end at 9.30am on Tuesday 31 May;

submit their names for Portfolio and General Questions on Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 June should end at 4.30pm on Thursday 26 May.

That the Parliament agrees that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on 2 and 9 June—

(i) in the first sentence of Rule 13.7.A1 "30 minutes" be replaced with "45 minutes";

and

(ii) in Rule 13.6.2 "6" be replaced with "8".

That the Parliament agrees that, between 31 May 2016 and 3 January 2017, the Office of the Clerk will be open on all days except: Saturdays and Sundays, 2 December 2016, 23 December (pm), 26 and 27 December 2016, 2 and 3 January 2017.

That the Parliament agrees the following parliamentary recess dates under Rule 2.3.1: 2 July to 4 September 2016 (inclusive), 8 to 23 October 2016 (inclusive) and 24 December 2016 to 8 January 2017 (inclusive).

**The Presiding Officer:** That concludes decision time.

*Meeting closed at 17:01.*





This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

---

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

---

All documents are available on  
the Scottish Parliament website at:

[www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot)

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers  
is available here:

[www.parliament.scot/documents](http://www.parliament.scot/documents)

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact  
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: [sp.info@parliament.scot](mailto:sp.info@parliament.scot)

---



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba