



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

**Wednesday 7 June 2017**

**Session 5**



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 7 June 2017

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 13:30]

## First Minister's Question Time

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Good afternoon. We start this afternoon with First Minister's question time.

### Engagements

**1. Ruth Davidson (Edinburgh Central) (Con):** To ask the First Minister what engagements she has planned for the rest of the day. (S5F-01353)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** This is my first opportunity in the chamber since the cowardly attack in London last Saturday night to record my horror at what happened, and to offer my deepest sympathies to all those affected. My thoughts and, I am sure, the thoughts of the whole Parliament are with those who lost their loved ones on Saturday night, and all those who sustained injuries.

Later today I will have engagements to take forward the Government's programme for Scotland.

**Ruth Davidson:** I associate myself and my party with the words of the First Minister. Our thoughts and prayers go to the victims in London and their families.

Why does the First Minister believe that private conversations should not stay private.

**The First Minister:** Actually, I do believe that. Of course, the conversation that Ruth Davidson is alluding to was taken from the private sphere into the public sphere not by me, but by Kezia Dugdale. The fact of the conversation and a very selective account of its content were first put in the public domain on 23 February in *The Times*, which said

"Ms Dugdale reveals she held secret talks with"

the First Minister. That is what gave me the ability to talk about it. Of course, the part of the conversation that Kezia Dugdale did not refer to was the part that I spoke about last night, which I stand by 100 per cent.

Let me get to the nub of the matter. The nub of the matter is that all the Opposition parties in this Parliament have tried in this election campaign to use the issue of an independence referendum as a smokescreen. In the Tories' case, it is because they do not want to talk about their toxic policies—

toxic policies such as the rape clause, which made Ruth Davidson squirm so much last night, and toxic policies such as austerity cuts, extreme Brexit and, of course, removal of the rights of pensioners.

The key question tomorrow is how we stop the Tories getting a stronger hand to do more damage to Scotland. Let us make sure that we do not boost Theresa May's majority; let us make sure that we send strong SNP MPs to stand up for Scotland.

**Ruth Davidson:** She is rolling back today, but everybody now knows not to have a private chat with the First Minister, because if it suits her purposes, everybody will get to hear about it.

We are still left with the big question. The First Minister says that Kezia Dugdale told her that she would drop Labour's opposition to an independence referendum, and Kezia Dugdale says that it is all a pack of lies. They cannot both be right, so which one is it?

**The Presiding Officer:** Just be careful about use of unparliamentary language in this discussion.

**The First Minister:** People should think twice, of course, about having any conversation with Ruth Davidson, because if her Twitter account is anything to go by, she records it for later use—although I note that that tweet was hastily deleted overnight.

I stand by what I said last night 100 per cent. In fact, if anybody reads what Labour and Kezia Dugdale were saying in public around that time, they will hear the ring of truth about what I said: Labour itself was saying that all options, including an independence referendum, were under consideration. That is the reality; it is on the record. There is an article on Labour's website even today confirming that.

This comes back to the heart of the matter. All the other parties in the Parliament want to avoid the real issue in the election tomorrow. The real issue is this: the only way in Scotland to stop the Tories tightening their grip and getting a bigger majority to do what they want in Scotland, is to vote SNP. Labour is not strong enough to take on the Tories, any more. It is not so long ago that Kezia Dugdale seemed to be advising people in parts of Scotland to vote Tory in the election. Anyone who wants to take on the Tories and ensure that Scotland has, in the House of Commons, strong voices standing against austerity and standing up for Scotland, should vote SNP tomorrow.

**Ruth Davidson:** The truth is that we do not need the First Minister to tell us what we already know, which is that the Labour Party cannot be

trusted to stand up to the SNP. It is not just Kezia Dugdale—Jeremy Corbyn is even worse. She says, “You can have your indyref,” and he says, “Absolutely fine.” The First Minister has dragged Kezia Dugdale on to her ground. Given what she has seen of Mr Corbyn, how would she rate her chances of success with him?

**The First Minister:** My focus today and tomorrow is to persuade as many people across Scotland as I can of this: the only way to stop Theresa May—who is on the ropes in this election—getting a bigger majority is to make sure that we do not send Tory MPs to boost that majority and strengthen her hand. Let us make sure tomorrow that we send SNP MPs to the House of Commons to stand up for Scotland and make our voice heard.

**Ruth Davidson:** The past 24 hours have set out the choice that people face at the polls. With the SNP, it is straight back to another divisive referendum on independence; with Labour, it is, “I’m not sure; I’ll phone a friend and see what she says”; and with us, it is clear: no to a second referendum, no to more uncertainty and no to the division that it would cause our country.

I have listened to the people of Scotland, and they do not want the First Minister’s referendum. For pity’s sake, let it go.

**The First Minister:** Actually, there is something that I can at last agree with Ruth Davidson on. The past 24 hours—indeed, the duration of this election campaign—have set out clearly the choice for the people of Scotland. If people in Scotland vote for Tory MPs tomorrow, they are voting for MPs who will go to the House of Commons and vote for policies including the rape clause, who will vote for more benefit cuts, for more austerity cuts and for the dementia tax. They will vote to take away the winter fuel allowance and to take away the pension triple lock. That is what people will get if they send Tory MPs to Westminster.

On the other hand, if we send strong SNP voices to Westminster, we will get MPs who will stand against austerity, who will stand up for pensioners and who will stand against more cuts that punish the poorest people in our society. The only way to stop the Tories in Scotland is to vote SNP tomorrow.

### Engagements

**2. Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** I offer the thoughts of those on the Labour benches to the families who have been affected by the atrocious attacks in London.

To ask the First Minister what engagements she has planned for the rest of the week. (S5F-01351)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Engagements to take forward the Government’s programme for Scotland.

**Kezia Dugdale:** If the past 24 hours have shown us anything, it is that the First Minister will say anything to deflect from the Scottish National Party’s appalling record in office. However, people across the country want the First Minister to focus on the day job. Therefore, will she tell us why the number of unfilled posts for nurses and midwives is at an all-time high?

**The First Minister:** First, I say to Kezia Dugdale that I know what was said in that conversation, and so does she. I am standing here in the chamber of the Scottish Parliament and I am certain of what was said. Do you know what? There is nothing whatsoever wrong with Kezia Dugdale having changed her mind since then, but what is wrong is for her, having held that view, to suggest that people who still hold that view are somehow expressing something unacceptable. That is not legitimate. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** On staff in our national health service, today, there are 12,000 more people working in our NHS than there were when we took office. We have more nurses, more doctors and more allied health professionals in our health service than ever before, and we have more per head of population than any other part of the United Kingdom. That is because this Government is investing in our health service and is doing so to a much greater extent than Labour would be if it was in office.

**Kezia Dugdale:** So there are enough nurses in the health service. That is the latest fib from the First Minister.

**The Presiding Officer:** Ms Dugdale, you cannot use unparliamentary language such as that. Ask another question.

**Kezia Dugdale:** Okay, Presiding Officer. That is other stuff that she has not told the truth about. It was this First Minister—

**The Presiding Officer:** No, Ms Dugdale, the point is to be respectful and courteous to other members and not to impugn their character in that way. I recognise that there is a disagreement about accuracy. However, you must not impugn someone else’s character in the chamber.

**Kezia Dugdale:** It was the First Minister who decided to slash places for student nurses and midwives when she was the health secretary. That is why we have a shortage of nurses and midwives in the NHS in Scotland, which has severe consequences for the care that patients receive. We know from the figures that were released this week that almost 500 operations

were cancelled because of pressures on NHS resources. That is hundreds of people who did not get the treatment that they needed because the SNP's priorities are all wrong. Does the First Minister regret not spending enough time on the day job?

**The First Minister:** In January this year, we announced a 4.7 per cent increase in intakes to pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes. That is an extra 151 places and the fifth successive rise, and the total equates to 3,360 entry places. Under this Government, there has been an average of 1,000 more nurses in training each year compared with the position under the previous Administration. That is this Government's record when it comes to nurse training.

As for cancelled operations, a small number of operations are always cancelled. That can happen for a variety of reasons, but the overwhelming majority of operations in our health service go ahead as scheduled. That is down to the fantastic work that is done by doctors and nurses and by everybody else who works across our health service.

**Kezia Dugdale:** That is yet more fake news from the First Minister. Here is the reality: missed accident and emergency targets; operations that are cancelled because of pressure on NHS staff and resources; and thousands of patients who are trapped in hospitals when they are fit to go home. That should shame the First Minister, except we know that nothing really does.

Tomorrow, we can kick the Tories out of office and get a Labour Government that will work night and day to invest in our schools and hospitals, will deliver a real living wage of £10 an hour and will deliver £3 billion more for public services. Is it not the case that the only way to get a Labour Government tomorrow is to vote Labour?

**The First Minister:** There we have another flip-flop from Kezia Dugdale. Not that long ago, she was telling us all that Jeremy Corbyn was completely unelectable; now, she is blowing with the wind all over again.

The problem for Kezia Dugdale and Labour is that they have spent all their time in the campaign attacking the SNP and letting the Tories completely off the hook. Kezia Dugdale even suggested a couple of weeks ago that there were parts of Scotland where people should actually vote Tory. That is what she said.

The reality is that a vote for Labour tomorrow—a vote for the party that was beaten into third place last year—risks letting a Tory in by the back door. The only party in Scotland that has the strength to take on the Tories is the SNP. If people want rid of the Tories in Scotland and if they want MPs elected who agree with Jeremy Corbyn on more

issues than Kezia Dugdale does, they should vote for the SNP tomorrow.

### Cabinet (Meetings)

3. **Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** To ask the First Minister when the Cabinet will next meet. (S5F-01358)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Tuesday.

**Patrick Harvie:** I share other members' reflections on the tragic events in London. I express the shock and dismay that we felt and our condolences to the people who were affected. I am sure that the First Minister will also want to join me in condemning the US President for his opportunistic attack on the London mayor at a time when Londoners were still coming to terms with what had happened. [*Applause.*]

However, the democratic process does not stop and in these closing stages of an election campaign, there is more at stake than who said what to whom a year ago; there are critically important choices facing our society and our economy. Greens have long argued for investment in the new sustainable industries that will provide jobs for the long term—jobs in the post-oil economy—instead of throwing ever-greater tax cuts and subsidies at the fossil fuel industry, yet the First Minister continues to say that her primary aim is to maximise extraction of fossil fuels. Even one of the newspapers endorsing the Scottish National Party states today:

“Our industrial base has been exposed as too heavily reliant on oil. So far, nothing has been done to replace that”.

How can the First Minister defend continued subsidies and tax breaks for the biggest polluters on the planet?

**The First Minister:** I share Patrick Harvie's view of President Trump's comments about the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. We should all deprecate those comments. At a time when the mayor's city had just been the victim of a horrific terrorist attack, the least that he should have been able to expect was complete support and loyalty from a country that is a long-standing ally of this country.

On Patrick Harvie's substantive question, I do not think that the two things are either/or. The importance of the oil and gas sector to our economy and, currently, to the provision of our energy needs, is such that we have an obligation to support it.

Yesterday morning, at the Oil & Gas UK conference in Aberdeen, I spoke about the importance of that sector and the work that this Government is doing to make sure that we help it

to recover and have that bright future that I certainly think it should have. However, we were also speaking about the ability of the skills that have been developed in oil and gas to be transferred into other areas of our energy sector—renewable energy in particular. There is a great opportunity there.

This Government has a very good record when it comes to renewable energy and meeting climate change targets. We have some of the most ambitious targets in the world and we have met them years ahead of schedule. We are already generating more than 50 per cent of our electricity from renewable energy. We continue to invest in renewable energy to make sure that we are making that transition to a low or no-carbon economy. That, as Patrick Harvie is aware, is a key priority of this Government.

**Patrick Harvie:** There is certainly an urgent need to support people to transition into new industries, as well as to maximise the opportunities from decommissioning. However, there is absolutely a contradiction between maximising extraction and the climate change commitments that the First Minister speaks of.

The First Minister has already condemned Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the US from the Paris agreement but if that agreement is ever to be more than just a piece of paper, it is vital that greater action is taken by all countries. It is undeniable that the world has far more coal, oil and gas than we can afford to burn. The First Minister's former climate change minister agreed, accepting that at least a proportion of what is still in the North Sea must be left there.

Is it not clear, though, that only Green voices are challenging the policy that unites the SNP with all three political parties that have played a role in the United Kingdom Government—the policy of maximum oil and gas extraction? Is it not undeniable that that policy is incompatible with any meaningful commitment to the Paris agreement? How much of the North Sea's fossil fuels does the First Minister believe must be left unburned if we are to make a fair contribution to the Paris goal of limiting climate change to 1.5°C?

**The First Minister:** On some of this—not on all of it—Patrick Harvie and I might just have to agree to disagree. I do not believe that there is that incompatibility. I think that the importance of the oil and gas sector to our economy, and to the development of the skills that are important in developing renewable energy, is such that we should continue to support that sector. Many, many jobs are dependent on activity in the North Sea, and as a result of advances in technology, many of which are being developed here in Scotland, new and innovative ways of using hydrocarbons are emerging that offer that

continued opportunity. We are seeing new hydrogen energy sources, with new technologies such as carbon capture and storage. I think that it is right that Scotland continues to seek to be a world leader in all those different areas of our energy sector.

I return to the central point, which is the Paris climate agreement. I bitterly regret President Trump's decision to take America out of that agreement. We are meeting our climate change targets, we are meeting the targets that we set on renewable energy and we are going further and setting even more ambitious targets. We are leading the world when it comes to discharging our obligations to the planet.

### Cabinet (Meetings)

**4. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** To ask the First Minister what issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the Cabinet. (S5F-01359)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Matters of importance to the people of Scotland.

**Willie Rennie:** I share the sentiments that other members have expressed about the London attacks. My thoughts are with the families and friends of the victims of those attacks.

The national health service statistical report on mental health services for young people that was published yesterday is appalling. I thought that I had got the First Minister on board to take strong action to sort that area. I have asked her about it time and again, and I have heard warm words, but the latest figures show that more young people are waiting for treatment and that they are waiting longer. Why are things worse this year than last year?

**The First Minister:** I do not think that that is the case. I know that we have an election tomorrow, but I hope that, after the election, we can have some consensus on the issue of mental health.

The statistics on child and adolescent mental health services that were published yesterday show some improvement in waiting times and that 10 of the 14 health boards in Scotland are meeting the 18-week standard. That figure is up from only 7 in the previous quarter. Yes, a number of people waited more than a year for treatment, which is unacceptable. At one point, there were 74 people in that situation, which is 1.7 per cent, but that figure was down from 2.4 per cent in the final quarter of 2016.

Like many other countries, we have challenges to address in meeting the increased demand for mental health services. However, because of the investment that we are making and the mental health strategy that we are pursuing, we are



seeing progress, and we are determined to continue to make that progress.

**Willie Rennie:** I can tell the First Minister that there will never be consensus in the Parliament as long as the Government continues to fail on mental health. Here are the facts, year on year. Fewer young people were treated this year than last year, and those people had to wait longer—waiting times are up, and health boards are missing their targets. In fact, it is worse than that: the targets have never been met. The Government's performance on psychological therapies for adults is worse this year than it has ever been before.

That is why ordinary people are now prepared to stand up—we have seen it throughout the election campaign—and tell the First Minister when she is getting it wrong and her Government is failing.

I have been asking about mental health services pretty much every week for three years. The First Minister will say that she has a brand new strategy, but what she will not tell us is that it was delayed for 15 months. Will she guarantee that things will be better than this next year? Can she guarantee that?

**The First Minister:** We are seeing improvements, and we intend to continue to see improvements. We are seeing more investment and more people working in child and adolescent mental health services, with the overall CAMHS workforce having increased by 65 per cent over the past number of years. We have seen the number of nursing posts increase, and we have seen a significant increase in investment in mental health generally—particularly in child and adolescent mental health services.

Willie Rennie asked me about the CAMHS statistics. They show that 83.6 per cent of people were seen within 18 weeks, which is an increase on the previous quarter, with 3,621 people having been seen within 18 weeks and 712 having waited longer than 18 weeks. We are seeing improvements in those areas, but I recognise that we have more to do, which is why we are investing more and following the mental health strategy. We will continue to do so in order that we will continue to see more progress over the next months and the next year.

**The Presiding Officer:** We have a couple of supplementary questions.

**Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP):** How has the First Minister's Government protected Scotland's budget in the face of Tory cuts? [*Interruption.*] It is a good question.

**The First Minister:** It is interesting—[*Interruption.*] The other parties do not want to hear about this. We rightly hear a lot from other

parties about public services, but what people like Willie Rennie do not tell us is that, while his party was in government with the Tories for five years, the budget of this Parliament was cut by £2 billion. That is what Willie Rennie and his colleagues did to the budget of this Parliament.

We have continued to protect what matters in Scotland. That is why we have increased the health budget by £3 billion and will increase it even further over this parliamentary session. We will continue to do whatever we can to protect the budget of this Parliament and to protect our vital public services.

**Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab):** The First Minister will recall that, on 19 May, strike action by further education lecturers in the college sector was suspended to allow negotiations to continue. That came after Colleges Scotland agreed to implement phase 1 of the March 2016 agreement. However, lecturers did not receive the agreed pay rise in their wages at the end of May, and it might be the end of August before the money reaches their bank accounts. Lecturers are angry and feel betrayed, and threats of further strike action are emerging.

That is not what was agreed just a matter of weeks ago, when John Swinney intervened personally and asked the Educational Institute of Scotland Further Education Lecturers Association to call off the strike. Does the First Minister agree that further education lecturers suspended the strike in good faith and should be paid exactly what was agreed without further delay?

When I raised the issue with the First Minister in April, she rightly said that employers should "go the extra mile". Will the First Minister say whether she thinks that employers have gone the distance and explain why the talks are failing despite the Scottish Government's appointment of John Sturrock QC as the facilitator?

**The First Minister:** I was pleased that an agreement was struck that allowed strike action to be called off, because that strike action was in nobody's interest—it was not in the interests of students or the college lecturers who work so hard to deliver education for our students. The agreement was not easy to reach. The Government intervened in the way that Monica Lennon outlined, and agreement was then reached. I expect that agreement to be implemented so that we can make sure that there is no further risk of strikes, which would be damaging to students in our colleges.

**Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP):** Will the First Minister say what progress her Government is making in getting more young people into modern apprenticeships?

**The First Minister:** Just this week, statistics showed that we have exceeded our modern apprenticeships target of 26,000 for 2016-17. Employers are recognising the value of the opportunities that the apprenticeship programme brings to increase skills in our workforce and encourage new talent. The latest modern apprenticeship figures show that we are on track to meet our target of 30,000 modern apprentices by 2020, and we are committed to enhancing the apprenticeship programme in response to the needs of employers.

**Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I agree with the First Minister when she talks about the devastating impact of failed Tory austerity on communities up and down Scotland. However, the question that people are asking is this: when is this Government going to start defending those communities? This year, we see cuts of £170 million to local public services. Our public services are bursting at the seams and cannot continue. Will the First Minister defend public services?

**The First Minister:** Alex Rowley is just wrong. We have had this debate in the chamber many times: there is an additional £400 million of investment for local services this year, compared with last year. That includes extra money for social care and, of course, the £120 million that is going directly to headteachers to help us to close the attainment gap.

In addition to that, this Government is spending more than £100 million on mitigating the impact of Tory welfare cuts such as the bedroom tax. This Government is continuing to do everything that we can to support local services and to mitigate the impact of damaging Tory cuts.

The damage that Tory cuts are doing to communities across this country makes it all the more astounding that so many Labour councillors the length and breadth of this country seem so keen to do deals with the Tories to get them into administration in councils.

**Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP):** Will the First Minister give the estimate for the number of additional children who will be living in poverty by 2021 as a result of Tory tax and welfare policies? *[Interruption.]*

**The First Minister:** I do not think that child poverty is funny. *[Interruption.]* The Tories are laughing at a question about child poverty.

Let me give the answer, which comes not from me or my officials but from the Institute for Fiscal Studies. The IFS estimates that, as a result of Tory tax and benefit changes, by 2021 an additional 1 million children in the UK will be living in poverty. That will take the total number of children living in poverty to more than 5 million, which is equivalent to the entire population of

Scotland. That is why we need strong voices in the House of Commons standing against Tory cuts and against the Tory assault on the poorest in our society.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** With the number of planted questions, I think that we are on "Gardeners' Question Time" today.

This week, a number of middle eastern countries cut links with Qatar because of its support for terrorism. For years, the Scottish Government has sought to develop business links with that country, sending the current transport minister on a trip with the Tory MP Sir Nicholas Soames to develop business links and asking the Qataris to invest their sovereign wealth fund in Scottish schools, roads and infrastructure projects. In the light of the recent developments, has the Scottish Government revised its policy toward the Qatari regime?

**The First Minister:** On a point of fact, the Scottish Government does not currently have in place any contracts with suppliers that are based in Qatar. The Scottish Government will, of course, always make the case for jobs and investment in Scotland, but we expect all countries to comply with international human rights law and we always use our international engagement as an opportunity to promote respect for and understanding of human rights. That is the case with Qatar as it is with other countries around the world.

#### Paris Climate Accord

**5. Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Government will reaffirm its commitment to the Paris climate accord. (S5F-01373)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Yes. The Scottish Government remains fully committed to the Paris agreement. The need for international co-operation is greater than ever and the decision by President Trump to withdraw the US from the Paris agreement is short-sighted, deeply irresponsible and downright wrong. The low-carbon transition presents challenges to all countries, but it also gives important opportunities for our economy and our society, and it is vital for all countries to stay the course. The Scottish Government will demonstrate its commitment by developing proposals for an ambitious new climate change bill over the coming weeks in response to the goals of the Paris agreement.

**Clare Haughey:** Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, and French President Emmanuel Macron have expressed condemnation of the US withdrawal from the accord. Does the First Minister share my view that the United Kingdom Government should have been far more robust in

its response, and that Theresa May should have shown leadership on the issue, rather than lacking the backbone to stand up to President Trump?

**The First Minister:** I—like many members across the chamber, to be fair—would have very much liked the Prime Minister, on behalf of the UK, to have signed the letter that France, Germany and Italy sent to President Trump. Sometimes it feels that the Prime Minister is more concerned with not offending President Trump than with doing the right thing for this country, and that is the wrong approach.

The Paris agreement was secured through very long and difficult negotiations in 2015, following more than 20 years of international consensus building. The focus of all countries should now be on implementation. It is certainly the focus that this Government will have as we make our contribution to taking forward and fulfilling the aims of the Paris agreement.

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con):** As a society, we need to burn and to put into landfill fewer resources. However, the current draft climate change plan does not consider energy from waste. Perhaps that is because, according to the Scottish Government's own figures, it is planning a twelvefold increase in incineration over the next five years. Layered on top of that, councils might be contracted to burn and recycle the same waste. Clearly, that cannot happen. In the interests of the Paris climate accord, will the First Minister agree with the Scottish Conservatives on a moratorium on new incinerator construction?

**The First Minister:** The draft climate change plan is just that—a draft. It is there for consultation and contributions. If the Scottish Conservatives want to make such a proposal, the Government will give it due and proper consideration. Our climate change plan and our draft energy strategy show ambition in this area, and they are both there for consultation so that we can move forward to a position in which we have maximum consensus as we move our country forward and do some difficult things to meet more ambitious climate change targets. We will be doing the right things for Scotland and for the whole of the world.

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** States, mayors, industry and the American public are all rejecting Donald Trump's bizarre attempt to make the US into a rogue state on climate change. He will fail because fossil fuels have had their day. For every one American job in coal, there are three in renewables. Donald Trump is literally tilting at windmills. The First Minister's US engagement strategy commits the Scottish Government to engaging with states and US agencies on tackling climate change. What is being done to deliver that commitment and what

progress will be made in light of Donald Trump's recent announcement?

**The First Minister:** A few weeks ago, I met the Governor of California and signed an agreement to commit Scotland and the state of California to working together on climate change issues. We will continue to explore opportunities to do likewise with other American states. As I have said, I disagree strongly with the decision that President Trump took on the Paris agreement. It is important to stress that, because of the way in which the United States is governed, much of the responsibility for initiatives to tackle climate change lies with the states. States and cities in America have a big role to play and Scotland, the United Kingdom as a whole, if it chooses to, and other countries can contribute by trying to work with those cities and states to take this forward.

Scotland is very actively working in the United States and across the world with regions and cities to make sure that we are making a full contribution, and we will continue to do that.

**James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab):** How does the First Minister's support for the Paris agreement match the introduction of the Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Bill, which will result in a 50 per cent reduction in charges for air passengers, which will increase carbon emissions and reduce the Scottish budget by up to £189 million?

**The First Minister:** As James Kelly is aware, the Committee on Climate Change looked specifically at the issue, and said that if we do anything, whether it be in this policy area or anywhere else, that has an adverse effect on emissions, we have a corresponding responsibility to compensate for it in other ways. The Government absolutely accepts that and it is factored into our thinking and planning on climate change.

We will continue to take the decisions that balance growing our economy and supporting business, which we all accept is vitally important for generating the economic activity and wealth that we need to support our public services, with making sure that we are doing absolutely the right things by our environment and tackling climate change. We will continue to operate in exactly that way.

### General Practitioner Vacancies

**6. Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to reports that more than one in four GP practices have a vacancy. (S5F-01357)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** We have increased general practitioner recruitment and retention funding this year from £1 million to

£5 million as part of a £71 million package of direct support for general practice. In addition, we have increased the number of GP training places and doubled the number of £20,000 bursaries for hard-to-fill training posts.

GP recruitment is challenging, but it is welcome that the recent British Medical Association GP vacancy survey showed that the vacancy rate has reduced by 2 per cent in the past year.

**Donald Cameron:** The BMA has also commented that every unfilled vacancy puts more strain on remaining GPs, who struggle to cover the gaps in practices while coping with the increased demands on their services. Does the First Minister agree with that assessment? Given that staffing today is affected by recruitment and training decisions that were taken several years ago, does she take personal responsibility for a crisis in workforce planning across the national health service?

**The First Minister:** I agree with the general assessment that the member read out and I take responsibility for ensuring that the Government takes action to address the challenge that we and other countries face around GP recruitment.

Investment in GP services has gone up each year under this Government. Funding and direct support of general practice will increase by £250 million by the end of the current parliamentary session as part of our wider commitment to increasing primary care funding by £500 million. The BMA Scottish general practitioners committee chair, Dr Alan McDevitt, has said:

“This is a very positive step in the right direction towards our shared vision of general practice”.

We absolutely accept our responsibility to address the challenges. Possibly the worst thing that we see right now for our ability to tackle recruitment challenges—whether for GPs, nurses or any other part of our public service—and to have the best and brightest from across Europe come to this country is the real and present danger to all our efforts that the Tories present to Scotland and the United Kingdom as a whole.

**Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** What action is the Government taking to recruit more staff into our national health service? Will the First Minister update Parliament on the latest NHS staffing figures?

**The First Minister:** As I have said, we have more staff working in our NHS than ever before—staffing in the NHS is at record levels. We have challenges with vacancies among some groups of staff, which we are working to address, but there are more staff in our NHS, and it is because of the efforts of those staff that patients across the country get the excellent care and treatment that

they get. We should all be very grateful to them for that.

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. A few moments ago the First Minister claimed that the increased aviation emissions that will arise from the aviation tax policy have been factored into the draft climate change plan. In my reading of that plan, there is no such assessment of the increased emissions that will arise as a result of that policy, nor any specific commitments to policies that will mitigate those emissions and reduce emissions elsewhere. Of course I recognise, Presiding Officer, that the accuracy of what is said is not a matter for you, but if there is some other aspect, appendix or codicil to the plan that the Government has neglected to publish, will you please give the Government the opportunity to lay it before Parliament at its earliest possible convenience?

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you, Mr Harvie. You have now offered the Government that opportunity. That is not a point of order.

## General Question Time

14:12

### Economic Growth (South of Scotland)

**1. Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to promote economic growth in the south of Scotland. (S5O-01089)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work (Keith Brown):** The Scottish Government is committed to promoting economic growth in the south of Scotland. Our substantial investment in infrastructure, regeneration and business support helps to deliver inclusive growth and economic resilience by creating and retaining jobs in communities across the area. We are building on our commitment to the area by establishing a new enterprise and skills vehicle for the south of Scotland that will drive economic growth.

**Finlay Carson:** My colleagues and I have long campaigned for a south of Scotland enterprise agency, which must be well resourced, robust and autonomous. Only if the organisation has a fully autonomous board, such as that of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, will my constituents in Galloway and West Dumfries fully benefit from the opportunities that it would present. Unlike the Scottish National Party Government, with its obsession with centralisation, the Scottish Conservatives will always make the case that decision making should happen as close to the source as possible.

The Conservative manifesto has made a commitment to bring forward a borderlands growth deal, which would include councils from both sides of the border, to help to secure prosperity in southern Scotland. Does the cabinet secretary welcome that proposal, which would bring much-needed growth and investment to the south-west of Scotland?

**Keith Brown:** I find it ironic that a party that is closing jobcentres across the country and closing military bases talks about other parties being centralising. The borderlands initiative was first proposed by the SNP Government in 2013. Finlay Carson's constituents can rely on the Tories to talk about such initiatives, but it is the SNP Government that will establish a vehicle for the south of Scotland through enterprise and skills reviews—just as we have taken other actions including establishing the Borders railway and taking action on regeneration.

It is our view that the agency that will be established in the south of Scotland should be autonomous, as Finlay Carson described, and I

have given the commitment that it will be analogous to Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It is quite clear that in this area, as in many others, the Scottish National Party is delivering, whereas all that the Tories have done—over many years—is talk about it.

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** The cabinet secretary will be aware that the borderlands initiative is being taken forward by Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council, working with Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council and Northumberland County Council in England, but to date there has not been a single penny from either the United Kingdom Government or the Scottish Government. It has been left to local authorities to pick up the bill, despite both Governments claiming—as the Scottish Government has claimed again today—to support the initiative.

Will the cabinet secretary tell us exactly what support the Scottish Government intends to provide for the development of a borderlands growth deal, and whether he is aware of any UK Government funding for the initiative?

**Keith Brown:** I am not aware of any direct funding from the UK Government. The Edinburgh city region deal will include Scottish Borders Council, so money will come from both the UK Government and the Scottish Government for it.

We established the borderlands initiative, but it is for local authorities to take such things forward. We would be falling into the trap of being centralising if we were to decide exactly what initiatives should be taken forward. We will rely on the representations and proposals that local authorities make to us, and we will seek to support them. What we do will depend on what those proposals are.

Whether through support such as Scottish Borders Council has had for the Borders railway, or the other infrastructure and regeneration investments that we have made across the south of Scotland, including in Dumfries and Galloway, the Scottish Government will support communities across the area, and we urge the UK Government to do likewise.

### Stakeholder Meetings (Minutes)

**2. Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it does not keep minutes of all meetings between stakeholders and ministers. (S5O-01090)

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Joe FitzPatrick):** I can confirm that the Scottish Government proactively publishes all ministerial engagements, with information on the date, purpose, attendees and subject of the engagement. Formal minutes are taken where

there are discussions on substantive Government business, where policy decisions arise or where there are significant action points.

**Neil Findlay:** Why do the First Minister and cabinet ministers meet corporate lobbyists—for example, representatives of Charlotte Street Partners, including Mr Andrew Wilson, who chairs the Scottish National Party's growth commission—but fail to publish agendas, minutes or records of that or other meetings? Does not that breach the ministerial code or the civil service code?

**Joe FitzPatrick:** To be clear, the Government takes minutes as appropriate, in line with the ministerial code and civil service guidance. That is what we do, and that is what we have always done.

It is also worth saying that this Government is far more transparent than previous Governments. This Government proactively publishes information on when and where meetings are happening. That did not happen under previous Administrations.

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** In addition to there being concern about the lack of minutes being recorded at key meetings, journalists across Scotland have signed an open letter that raises concerns about information requests being repeatedly delayed and emails asking for updates on requests being repeatedly ignored. Surely that gives rise to a transparency problem for the Scottish Government.

**Joe FitzPatrick:** The Scottish Government takes its freedom of information responsibilities very seriously. In fact, the Scottish Government has a far better record than the UK Government on releasing information. In 2016, 85 per cent of valid requests to the Scottish Government resulted in it releasing information, but only 63 per cent of similarly valid requests to the UK Government resulted in information being released.

The Scottish FOI regime is far more robust than the regime that applies elsewhere in the UK. If Alexander Stewart wants to look at how we can provide more information to journalists, perhaps he should speak to his colleagues down south who are, rather than thinking about how they can improve the FOI regime, looking at how they can tighten it up and make it more difficult for journalists and other members of the public to receive information.

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** Has the minister read the journalists' letter criticising the Government on FOI? If not, maybe he can get back to me with a minute that proves that the letter was handed to him. This is really serious. It is unprecedented for journalists to feel obliged to produce such a letter. Will the minister give a more

serious response to the challenges that that presents to us all?

**Joe FitzPatrick:** I confirm that I have read the letter. We are, of course, looking at the matters that are raised in it. An issue that the journalists raised was timeliness in responding to requests. We are working with the Scottish Information Commissioner to improve our response times.

It is worth looking at the facts of the matter. We have a massively increasing number of FOI requests and more are being answered on time than ever before. In 2006, prior to this Government, only 684 FOI responses were answered on time. Last year, this Government answered 1,557 responses on time. We have seen an increase from 61 per cent of responses being answered on time under the Labour-Liberal Administration, to 76 per cent being answered on time under this Administration. That said, we are determined to continue to improve our performance and to look at how we can make this Government, which is one of the most transparent Governments in the world, even better.

### Medical Studies (Young People)

**3. Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to encourage young people to study medicine at university. (S5O-01091)

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville):** Young people at school are provided with experiences and careers advice to raise awareness of a range of available degree opportunities. There are also targeted schools programmes to encourage young people into careers in health and medicine, in particular.

We provide additional funding through the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council to universities to help to improve access to the high-demand professions. The reach programme is linked to each medical school in Scotland to support young people from low-progression schools who wish to study medicine.

In March, we announced funding of £330,000 to deliver pre-entry courses to medicine, which will be used to support secondary school students from socially deprived backgrounds to prepare them better for undergraduate medical education.

**Liz Smith:** The Scottish Government announced an increase of 50 medical undergraduate places for this academic session. I understand that there will be another 40 places for academic session 2018-19. Those additional places do not make up for the reductions over the previous 10 years, nor do they match the 25 per cent increase in places south of the border. Given the chronic shortage of general practitioners in

Scotland, will the minister tell Parliament what advice she has received from the medical undergraduate group? Is the capping system on Scotland-domiciled places working?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** Liz Smith is correct to point to the increase of 50 medical undergraduate places targeted at students from the most-deprived areas. She will also be well aware of the workforce planning requirements that go into the analysis before any decisions on medical places are taken for universities.

I must correct Liz Smith on what she said about there being a cap on Scotland-domiciled university places: there is no cap on those places. Setting the number of medical student places is based on the workforce planning needs of NHS Scotland, which I have mentioned. Although we set the annual intake into medicine, the selection and recruitment of individual students to study medicine is, of course, a matter for individual universities. Indeed, Liz Smith—correctly—points out to me on every occasion that she can that universities are independent organisations, and that it is not for the Government to decide which places are given to students each year.

**Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP):** What support and encouragement is the Scottish Government giving to universities to offer places to study medicine to students from less-affluent backgrounds?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** In reply to Liz Smith, I mentioned the additional 50 medical undergraduate places for the 2016 intake, which universities will use to support the Government's widening access aims. We also have the pre-entry to medicine programme, which will be used to support secondary school students from socially deprived backgrounds to prepare them better for undergraduate medical education.

The reach programme was established to link with each medical school in Scotland. Through that outreach programme—which is aimed at secondary 4 and 5, and includes schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians where we have low progression into higher education and medical careers—pupils will be given greater insight and be encouraged and offered support in their application process.

#### Tail Amputation

**4. Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government how many professional veterinary bodies have indicated support for its legislative proposal to allow the amputation of tails in healthy puppies. (S5O-01092)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna**

**Cunningham):** Only one response from professional veterinary bodies was received to the public consultation that was held between 10 February and 3 May 2016. It was a combined response from the British Veterinary Association and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association. Those organisations were not in favour of the proposal to permit the shortening of the tails of spaniel and hunt point retriever puppies when a vet believes that those dogs are likely to be used as working dogs and risk serious tail injury in later life. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons did not tender a response to the consultation.

**Mark Ruskell:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that very straight and very revealing answer. Organisations such as the British Veterinary Association do not support the Government's statutory instrument because it is fundamentally anti-science. Why does it make sense to amputate the tails of hundreds and hundreds of puppies that are under five days old just to avoid the amputation of one tail in an adult working dog?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I look forward to appearing before the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee next Tuesday morning. It is dealing with the statutory instrument in question.

Although the veterinary organisations that I named do not agree with the proposal, the situation for which it provides prevails south of the border. The member is probably well aware that not all vets are of the same opinion on the matter. Research that was published in 2014 persuaded us that, in limited circumstances that involve only two breeds of dog, shortening the tail tips of the animals by one third is an appropriate way forward.

As I said, I look forward to appearing before the committee on Tuesday morning.

#### Negative Growth (Protection for Low and Middle-income Earners)

**5. Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to protect low and middle-income earners from negative growth. (S5O-01093)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution (Derek Mackay):** The Scottish economy was resilient in 2016—it grew by 0.4 per cent, despite continued headwinds from industry in the North Sea and the uncertainty that the European Union referendum vote caused. Scotland's economic fundamentals are strong. Unemployment is down and employment is up, and in 2016 we secured more foreign direct investment projects than any other part of the United Kingdom outside London for the fifth year

in a row. Independent forecasters predict growth in the Scottish economy in 2017 and 2018.

As well as our actions to support economic growth, we are continuing to help low and middle-income earners. For instance, we have frozen the basic rate of income tax in the current tax year and are committed to making no increases in the basic rate—subject to parliamentary approval—in the current parliamentary session. In addition, we have capped council tax increases at 3 per cent; we have made it a requirement in our public sector pay policy for employers to pay the living wage; and we are continuing with our policy of no compulsory redundancies in the public sector. The risk to Scotland's economy comes from a hard Brexit and the continuation of Westminster's austerity agenda.

**Jamie Greene:** I am sure that the cabinet secretary will be pleased to learn that it is the Conservative Government that has taken 113,000 Scots at the lower end of incomes out of tax altogether.

Just yesterday, the EY Scottish ITEM club report was quoted as saying that the Scottish economy is

“stuck in the slow lane”.

Last quarter's gross domestic product figures show that we are already halfway to a recession, and we are shortly to find out whether that is the case. Given that all that has happened on the Scottish National Party's watch, will the cabinet secretary take personal responsibility for the stagnation in the Scottish economy and apologise to the people of Scotland for it?

**Derek Mackay:** I think that Jamie Greene should apologise for again talking down Scotland and undermining it—as all Conservatives do—when it comes to attracting foreign direct investors and others to live, work and invest in Scotland, on which we have a great track record.

Jamie Greene mentioned taxation. It is really interesting that, the last time I checked, the Tory party manifesto—or what is left of it—did not refer to tax rates. We all know that the Tories propose tax cuts for the richest while hammering the poorest in our society. That is what the Tories are all about.

Scotland's economic fundamentals are strong. We are seeing employment going up and unemployment going down; improved performance in productivity, which is better in comparative terms than that in the rest of the United Kingdom; more registered businesses; more investment in research and development; and record achievement in our exports. We have an economic strategy that will support the Scottish economy, but the UK Government, through the

Tories and the Scottish Tories, is trying to undermine it, whereas they should take seriously their responsibilities to that economic strategy as part of the current governance of Scotland. Of course, that might change shortly, but the Tories should take some responsibility for their inaction on supporting the Scottish economy in their time in office.

### **Homelessness in Glasgow (Funding for Third Sector Organisations)**

**6. Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what funding it has provided to third sector organisations to tackle homelessness in Glasgow since 2007. (S5O-01094)

**The Minister for Local Government and Housing (Kevin Stewart):** Since 2007, the Scottish Government has funded a range of third sector homelessness organisations through the housing voluntary grant scheme and other schemes, with more than £11 million being made available to homelessness projects across Scotland, including those in Glasgow. In 2017-18, funding for Glasgow Homelessness Network, which has been provided since 2008, will continue as part of helping to improve the involvement of homeless people in the delivery of services across Scotland.

The vast majority of the funding that the Scottish Government provides to tackle homelessness comes through a block grant to each local authority. The authorities have the statutory obligation to address homelessness in their areas and use those resources to fund third sector organisations that are tackling homelessness. Despite on-going cuts to the Scottish budget by the United Kingdom Government, Glasgow City Council continues to receive from the overall funding a fair share, which amounts to £1.369 billion of the figure of more than £10.4 billion in 2017-18.

**Johann Lamont:** I do not know what the minister's definition of fair is, but what has happened at the hands of his Government over the last period is certainly not fair to Glasgow. I am sure that he will acknowledge that the scourge of homelessness in modern Scotland shames us all, and I trust that he recognises the importance of tackling homelessness not just by building more sustainable houses but by understanding the causes of homelessness, whether they be abuse, addiction or family breakdown.

Does the minister agree that the role of charities and homelessness organisations is crucial in ensuring the right support for those who are vulnerable to homelessness and in helping to sustain them in tenancies? Furthermore, what assessment has he made of the impact of



sustained cuts to local government funding on the ability of organisations to deliver the services that homeless people desperately need and deserve?

**Kevin Stewart:** I note that Ms Lamont did not take cognisance of the part of my response that was about the Scottish Government's budget being cut year on year by the UK Government. We have done our very best to provide local authorities with moneys for front-line services.

We have strong rights to housing for homeless households. Our recent focus on the prevention of homelessness through the housing options approach has led to consistent falls in homelessness applications in Glasgow, including applications from those who had been rough sleeping. I certainly recognise the value of third sector organisations in delivering services. Glasgow City Council receives funding from the Scottish Government for addressing homelessness. Through working in partnership with local third sector organisations and other partners such as the health service, the council is best placed to make decisions on the appropriate funding for organisations on the basis of the local profile of homelessness.

I welcome the recent statement by the council's new Scottish National Party administration of its intention to hold a homelessness summit in the city, which will include partners from the third sector and housing associations, in order to agree a joint approach to tackling the issue. I only wish that Glasgow had done so under the previous Labour administration.

### **Enterprise and Skills Review (Publication of Phase 2 Findings)**

**7. Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government when it will publish the findings of phase 2 of the enterprise and skills review. (S5O-01095)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work (Keith Brown):** The final report, on phase 2 of the enterprise and skills review, is to be published in late June. Detail on the new strategic board that will co-ordinate the work of the agencies—Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council—was announced on 30 March.

Significant progress is being made across all other workstreams, including progress on recommendations about the new data and analytical function; an improved approach to the development of regional partnerships; and multiple actions that pertain to enterprise and business support, innovation and internationalisation, the latter of which is linked to the trade and investment strategy. Specific plans for the alignment of skills

planning and a full programme for the 15-to-24 learner journey are under way. The review will enter its implementation phase, and the report will outline initial delivery plans for projects.

**Dean Lockhart:** I look forward to the publication of the report on phase 2 of the review.

With the Scottish economy heading towards recession, enterprise policy will play an increasingly important part in turning the economy around. Will the cabinet secretary confirm how many businesses in Scotland have received assistance under the growth scheme that the Scottish Government announced last September as a central part of its programme for government? What financial assistance has been granted to businesses so far under that scheme?

**Keith Brown:** I note the Tories' increasing willingness to talk up a recession in Scotland. That goes beyond being an Opposition party; it is a deliberate attempt to undermine. The Confederation of British Industry and other business organisations have told me that they are sick to the back teeth of Conservatives talking down the economy in Scotland.

An announcement on the Scottish growth scheme will be made imminently, before the recess. Full details will be made known at that time.

It is important to recognise that the Tories have boasted about holding most of the major tools to influence the Scottish economy. If they think that the economy is doing so badly, why do they never ask themselves about the culpability of the Tory Government at Westminster, which controls the majority of functions?

Despite the neglect from the Tory Government at Westminster, we have seen record foreign direct investment again this year and lower unemployment in Scotland than in the rest of the United Kingdom. The UK Government has an increasing balance of payments deficit and a £1.8 trillion debt, and £100 billion has been added to the debt every year since the Tories came to power. I know whose record is more impressive on the Scottish economy, and it is not that of the UK Government.

## Portfolio Question Time

### Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

14:36

#### Galloway Viking Hoard (Acquisition and Display)

1. **Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what representations it made to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer and National Museums Scotland regarding the acquisition and display of the Galloway Viking hoard. (S5O-01069)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The allocation of items under the treasure trove code of practice operates entirely independently of ministers and the Scottish Government, and it is inappropriate for ministers to interfere or make representations to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer on allocations.

I have strongly encouraged both National Museums Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council to reach agreement on a partnership to secure the long-term future of the hoard and access to it for both the public in Galloway on a long-term basis and wider audiences in Scotland. I have proposed a summit for all the parties involved, and I look forward to progressing the significant opportunities for a collection of international significance.

**Colin Smyth:** The cabinet secretary will be aware of the deep disappointment in Dumfries and Galloway at the decision to allocate the Viking hoard to National Museums Scotland. Although she has referred to NMS's proposals to lend a proportion of the hoard to Dumfries and Galloway Council for display at Kirkcudbright art gallery, she will know that, to date, that offer is still very vague. It will mean that the full hoard will be displayed in Dumfries and Galloway only when NMS does not require it in Edinburgh. There are no details of how long and how far apart those loans might be; it is unclear what NMS means by displaying an undefined

"significant and representative proportion of the hoard"

outside those periods; and there does not appear to be any real opportunity for the council to derive additional income from the commercial exploitation of the hoard to offset the costs of transporting valuable items to and from Edinburgh. Will the cabinet secretary ensure that her proposed summit will lead to a proposal that is not dictated by NMS but meets the aspirations of Dumfries and Galloway Council and the local community for a

permanent world-class exhibition of the Galloway hoard at Kirkcudbright art gallery?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I understand the local disappointment in Dumfries and Galloway, but I am determined that the Galloway region will have the opportunity to benefit from the display of the hoard. The most immediate challenge is to raise the £2 million to secure the hoard for the public and the £300,000 for conservation.

As we speak, officials from National Museums Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council are working together to put forward a joint proposal for the display of the hoard that will make the most of the opportunity. I think that the permanent display in Dumfries and Galloway of a significant portion of the hoard can be achieved, but we must also recognise the requirement for the rest of Scotland to have the opportunity to see the hoard as well. There is an opportunity to find a way forward, which is why I moved swiftly to establish a summit. I look forward to hearing the presentation by the council and National Museums Scotland.

**Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** The decision to award the Galloway Viking hoard to National Museums Scotland must not mean that the hoard is lost to Edinburgh. It is vital that we see a large proportion of the hoard returned to Galloway. I thank the cabinet secretary for her response to my letter last week in which she set out the details of the summit to discuss a partnership between the council and NMS. I look forward to receiving further details of that. Bringing the hoard back to Galloway on a long-term, secure basis would bring a great amount of excitement, add to tourism levels and boost the economic and cultural prosperity of the region. Can she assure my constituents that she will do all that she can to ensure that the area will enjoy the full range of economic and cultural benefits associated with the significant find of the Viking hoard?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I am very committed to supporting the visitor attraction opportunities in the south of Scotland. That is part of our manifesto commitment and our programme for government. The Viking hoard offers great opportunities but, of course, the preservation and conservation process must take place before it can be determined how the hoard can be displayed. However, I assure the member that I am committed to ensuring that there is an opportunity for the Galloway region in relation to the hoard. He might want to add to the congratulations to us on managing to secure the "Monarch of the Glen" painting for tour to the Kirkcudbright gallery. I hope that that gives the member some understanding of my commitment and my desire to ensure that the national collections of Scotland are exhibited across the nation of Scotland.

## **Culture and Tourism (Midlothian and East Lothian)**

**2. Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent steps it has taken to promote culture and tourism in Midlothian and East Lothian. (S5O-01070)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The Scottish Government provides on-going financial support for the National Mining Museum Scotland in Midlothian and the national museum of flight, which is part of National Museums Scotland, in East Lothian, both of which are key cultural attractions. As with all areas of Scotland, the fantastic assets of Midlothian and East Lothian are marketed by VisitScotland using marketing campaigns, social media and trade and press familiarisation trips; and through VisitScotland iCentres and VisitScotland information partner programme arrangements with local businesses and community groups.

VisitScotland visitor guides and dedicated regional microsites feature attractions and activities in Midlothian and East Lothian, and wider VisitScotland campaigns feature the area as part of themes around food and drink, for example. Two 2017 year of history, heritage and archaeology partner programme events have taken place in Midlothian to date and two have already taken place in East Lothian, with another two scheduled to follow in September.

**Colin Beattie:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that cultural events such as Musselburgh's riding of the marches, the Midstock music festival in Dalkeith country park and the more recent return of the historic Dalkeith station bell to Dalkeith museum all help to provide substantial financial and cultural benefits to my constituency?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I do indeed. Recent statistics on why people visit the Lothians showed that scenery and landscape account for 60 per cent, and history and culture account for 53 per cent. There are two aspects to consider here, one of which is that we want to ensure that our country is open and welcoming to visitors, which means that anything resulting from Brexit that would mean that visitors had to have visas would be detrimental. Secondly, an issue that is probably as important but more immediate is the future of the European Union nationals who help to support our tourism and culture industries. EU nationals form 10 per cent of those who are employed in the tourism industry in Scotland. It is therefore imperative that the negotiations that are due to start on 19 June establish the importance and recognise the status of EU nationals who live here and contribute to our economy, including the tourism economy, which they also do in the member's constituency.

**Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con):** Sustainable tourism has been given a huge boost in East Lothian with the announcement of a proposed £5.5 million national marine centre in North Berwick, which is a development that should be commended. What plans does the Scottish Government have to support that project?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I had the pleasure of visiting the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick a few weeks ago. I was shown its extensive and ambitious plans for the marine centre, and strongly evident in the plans was the opportunity for education. There have been no formal approaches yet about taking the project forward. The centre has undertaken ambitious fundraising activity and it obviously wants to establish that before it contacts us on the matter. The centre is a fantastic tourism project. It showed vision at the outset when it was established, and it is a very good example for the rest of Scotland of what vision and ambition can do for visitor attractions.

## **Culture and Tourism (Inverclyde)**

**3. Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how National Galleries Scotland helps to promote culture and tourism in Inverclyde. (S5O-01071)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** I am advised by National Galleries Scotland that, at present, it has no active partnerships in Inverclyde but that it is always willing to consider proposals and suggestions from any region of Scotland. National Galleries Scotland has partnerships with Dunoon, Clydebank and Paisley in neighbouring areas but not currently with Inverclyde.

**Stuart McMillan:** On 25 May, the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, of which I am a member, held an evidence session with senior representatives from the various national collections. It was accepted at the meeting that partnership working to take some works to local communities can have positive effects both culturally and for the tourism offering. Would the cabinet secretary welcome that partnership working taking place in Inverclyde? Does she consider cultural tourism to be of great benefit to the local economy in Inverclyde?

**Fiona Hyslop:** Cultural tourism is important to all parts of Scotland and I am keen to see how it can be explored further in Inverclyde. I know that National Museums Scotland already has a relationship with Inverclyde, particularly with the McLean museum and art gallery, and I understand that, when that museum and art gallery opens again after refurbishment, it wants to continue that partnership.

I heard only this morning, when I was in Inverness, about its partnership with National Galleries Scotland. As I said in a previous answer, the Scottish Government has supported the touring of “The Monarch of the Glen”, which is going to four different parts of Scotland, although not to Inverclyde as yet—I think that Paisley is the nearest location for that.

However, opportunities to embrace partnerships between our national collections and different parts of the country should be welcomed, and I will draw the attention of National Galleries Scotland to Stuart McMillan’s interest in his Inverclyde constituency.

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** I echo Stuart McMillan’s comments. If there are opportunities to bring art to Inverclyde, that would be very welcome.

I note that National Galleries Scotland is digitising its 94,000-piece collection. What is the Scottish Government doing to encourage other galleries and museums to reach the widest possible audience through the use of technology and online?

**Fiona Hyslop:** Only this morning, when I was in Inverness at the XpoNorth festival, I chaired a session that was precisely about how museums and galleries across Scotland can engage with digitisation and other technologies. One of the strong messages was that it is not just a question of delivering predetermined digitisation of collections. The involvement and participation of local communities in the type of technology and the type of digitised materials that are used in the curation of local exhibitions is very important. Local engagement is as important as the facility.

We are very lucky and blessed with the collections that we have, and National Galleries Scotland’s extensive digitisation programme brings a whole new area of opportunity for participation in the national cultural life of Scotland.

### Cuba (Relations)

**4. Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to strengthen relations between Scotland and Cuba. (S5O-01072)

**The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan):** We have no plans at present to develop further links with Cuba. However, we are always willing to consider opportunities as they arise where they support the Government’s broader priorities.

**Elaine Smith:** Is the minister aware that, in Cuba, life expectancy for men is 79 years whereas in Glasgow it is 73 years; that Cuba has one

general practitioner for every 884 people whereas Scotland has one for every 1,083 people; that Cuba provides free school meals for all children whereas in Scotland only primary 1 to 3 pupils get free school meals; and that Cuba is recognised as having world-leading education while Scotland has just recorded its worst-ever performance in the programme for international student assessment rankings?

Given Scotland’s increasing crisis in health and falling standards in schools and Cuba’s world-renowned excellence in education and health, will the minister consider what lessons could be learned from Cuba?

**Dr Allan:** Without accepting too many of the many premises behind that question, I can say that the United Kingdom, which has diplomatic relations with the world, has taken some steps forward in its relationship with Cuba in recent years. On 5 July 2011, a formal declaration between the UK and Cuba was signed that has strengthened many of the relationships that we have. Indeed, our relationships with Cuba and other countries mean that we can have full and frank discussions about these and many other issues. However, as I said, at the moment, such formal relations do not exist.

### Major Events (Discussions with United Kingdom Government Agencies)

**5. Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it is having with United Kingdom Government agencies regarding bringing major events to Scotland. (S5O-01073)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** Through bodies including EventScotland and SportScotland, the Scottish Government works closely with UK Government agencies such as UK Sport, and with the devolved Administrations, to help deliver the ambitions that are set out in “Scotland the Perfect Stage: Scotland’s Events Strategy 2015-2025”. That includes projects such as the forthcoming Total world badminton championships, which are being held at the Emirates arena in Glasgow in August this year; the European gymnastics championships, which are taking place as part of the Glasgow 2018 European championships in August 2018; and European short course swimming at Tollcross pool in 2019.

**Richard Lyle:** The cabinet secretary has made reference to a number of successful events hosted in Scotland, and we know that Scotland has a record in successfully delivering major domestic and international events. What role and responsibility does she consider the UK Government to have in helping to promote

Scotland on the international stage, and what actions does the Scottish Government undertake regularly to promote Scotland as an attractive place to host major events?

**Fiona Hyslop:** Scotland's reputation as a welcoming nation and as a country that can competently deliver major events is growing. We want to exploit that and use our experience, so we are continually trying to attract major events. Some of them might be major business conferences or conventions, and some of them might involve sports.

We need to continue to work with the UK Government, given its international reach and its networks, but our reputation as a welcoming nation and a country of first choice to do business with is extremely important. As we go forward, particularly with regard to positioning around Brexit, it is vital that the UK and its networks ensure that they do not undermine that in any way, because Scotland is progressing and advancing with our events strategy. We are ambitious, we are working with partners to do that, and we want that to continue.

#### **Ambassador of Israel to the United Kingdom (Meeting)**

**6. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what issues were discussed during its recent meeting with the Ambassador of Israel to the United Kingdom. (S5O-01074)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** Our discussions included Scotland's relationship with Israel, the Israel-Palestine conflict and issues relating to the Jewish community in Scotland.

I expressed the Scottish Government's concerns about the continued construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land, and the restrictions on Gaza. I also raised a number of issues that have been brought to my attention through ministerial and constituency correspondence, such as the rights of Christians, the restrictions on the gathering of the olive harvest in Palestine and other limitations on freedom of movement and other rights.

The Scottish Government will continue to encourage Israel and Palestine to work together to achieve a negotiated two-state solution to the conflict that respects the rights of all communities.

**Richard Leonard:** I thank the cabinet secretary for her response. In view of the Scottish Government's "Open Government Partnership Scottish National Action Plan", which notes the First Minister's claim that she wants an

"outward looking Government which is more open and accessible to Scotland's people than ever before",

will the cabinet secretary now publish the agenda and minutes of her meeting with the Ambassador of Israel on 18 May this year, and, for the same reasons of openness and transparency, will she publish any preceding or subsequent related correspondence?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I think that I was fairly open and transparent in my answer regarding what exactly was discussed at that meeting. The member has to reflect on the fact that, in relation to our discussions with ministers and ambassadors from other countries, we must respect the diplomatic space in which they can share their views with us and we can share our views with them. We will respect that.

I know that there is interest in this issue, so I have been quite clear and open about the agenda and the content of that discussion, which I have just relayed to the member.

#### **Business Tourism in Glasgow (Scottish Event Campus)**

**7. Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how it supports the Scottish Event Campus to increase business tourism in Glasgow. (S5O-01075)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The Scottish Government recognises that business events are an excellent means to showcase Scotland as a place to invest, study, live and work in and to visit. As well as delivering direct economic impact through delegate expenditure, business events give us an excellent platform to work with organisers to demonstrate Scotland's strength and innovation in our key sectors, especially through linkages to further and higher education.

The VisitScotland business events team continues to encourage at the highest level strategic partnership working with clients that keeps Scotland—and gateway destinations such as Glasgow and Scotland's largest venue, the Scottish Event Campus—at the heart of the global business events industry. Scottish Enterprise has been working with the SEC since May 2015 on any future support for that development. The Scottish Government supports a number of events, including the VisitScotland expo, which was held in the SEC in 2013, 2014 and 2017. There is a variety of other events that I will not go into at this stage.

**Adam Tomkins:** Some £411 million is spent in the Glasgow economy every year as a result of the conferences, concerts, exhibitions and events that are held at the SEC. In 2014, the opening of

the hydro boosted the SEC's concert business. Similar investment is now required at the west end of the SEC site to make a comparable contribution to boosting the SEC's exhibition business. What assistance can the Scottish Government offer to make that investment a reality? The investment would pay for itself in terms of the gross value added that it would trigger in Glasgow's economy.

**Fiona Hyslop:** I understand that that expansion, which is integral to the development of the tourism opportunities in Glasgow, was not part of the original Glasgow city deal. Adam Tomkins may want to make representations to the United Kingdom Government on that.

I have met the SEC to hear about its plans. Only last week, I met Bridget McConnell, who is the chief executive of Glasgow Life, which now has tourism responsibility for Glasgow. I have a keen interest in the matter. Adam Tomkins will be aware of the restrictions and limitations that exist in our budgets and opportunities. However, we have to think big and ambitiously about what is next for Scotland. We had a question about events. Bearing in mind the fact that we have had the Ryder cup and the Commonwealth games, seeking future events and different conventions to come to the city may mean that we need to look a bit more widely and engage in the long term.

I am actively interested in the project, but cannot give Adam Tomkins any detail at this stage.

## Justice and the Law Officers

### Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (Recourse for Dissatisfied Complainants)

1. **Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what recourse there is for people who are dissatisfied with the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner's response to a complaint. (S5O-01079)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** Any complaint about the service that has been provided or about a member of the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner's staff should initially be directed to the PIRC, as it has its own complaint handling process. If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, which is responsible for considering complaints about organisations that provide public services in Scotland.

**Linda Fabiani:** I have concerns, which have come from a couple of constituency cases, that the PIRC service is perhaps not working as well as it should in respect of the relationship between the complainant, the police service about which the complaint has been made and the way in which

the PIRC deals with the complaint and follows it up. If I put some of those concerns in writing, will the cabinet secretary consider them and raise them at his next meeting with the commissioner?

**Michael Matheson:** If Linda Fabiani writes to me with the details of those matters, I will ensure that the commissioner considers them.

Last week, I visited the PIRC and met a range of staff who are responsible for conducting investigations into complaints that have already been investigated by the police and that the PIRC is reviewing as well as cases that the Crown Office has referred directly to the PIRC. The staff there give a tremendous amount of thought to how the cases are managed as effectively as possible, which includes engaging with the complainants on how they are addressing matters. The commissioner is keen to ensure that the service that individuals receive from the PIRC is of the highest standard.

I am conscious that, in the past couple of years, Linda Fabiani has raised several such issues relating to constituents—for example, one related to the way in which data protection matters were handled. Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary for Scotland picked up on that issue when he carried out an assurance review of the counter-corruption unit.

As a result of that, Police Scotland has worked with the criminal allegations against the police division—the CAAPD—of the Crown Office to introduce a new process for considering data protection cases involving police officers, which expedites the process and makes it much quicker.

If the member sets out more detail of those cases in writing to me, I will ensure that she receives a full response from the commissioner.

**Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con):** I, too, have had several constituents raise concerns with me about aspects of the PIRC's work. What consideration has the cabinet secretary given to expanding the remit of the PIRC to allow the commissioner to investigate complaints that are made by serving police officers about other police officers?

**Michael Matheson:** Within the police service, there is a process for handling complaints that have been made by serving police officers about other serving police officers.

One of the areas of work that was carried out as a result of the assurance review by HMICS relates to the counter-corruption unit, which Police Scotland is now changing. A range of different measures are being used to improve how the unit operates and, in that instance, that may be the appropriate route through which your constituent's complaint should be considered.

At present, there are no plans to extend the role of the PIRC into investigating complaints that are made by police officers while they are still in service. However, if the member has specific issues that he wishes to raise with me, I would be more than happy to make sure that those issues are appropriately considered by either Police Scotland or the PIRC.

**Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab):** Given that I, too, have been assisting a constituent in a similar situation for many years and have approached chief constables, the PIRC, the Scottish Police Authority, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the professional standards department, the CAAPD, the Justice Committee, the law officers and various cabinet secretaries over the years, will the cabinet secretary agree now to listen to the genuine concerns of officers who have nowhere else to turn, and will he look specifically at my constituent's case?

**Michael Matheson:** I cannot comment directly on individual cases, and operational issues are a matter for the chief constable, as is set out in the police process for dealing with such matters. Ministers do not have a direct role in investigating such issues. However, I am mindful of the fact that the member has raised the case with a range of different parties through the Scottish Parliament and outwith it, and, if she writes to me, setting out the issues, I will be more than happy to refer the case to the appropriate body for consideration of the issues. Nonetheless, ministers do not have a direct responsibility for investigating individual cases.

#### **Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (VAT)**

2. **David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how much Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have paid in VAT that they have not been able to claim back. (S5O-01080)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** The amount of unrecovered VAT paid by the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service between April 2013 and March 2017 is of the order of £140 million. We will continue to press United Kingdom ministers over the disparity, which could see a cost to the Scottish public purse of £280 million by the end of the current parliamentary session in 2020-21.

**David Torrance:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that, as the UK Government has changed the rules to enable academy schools and Highways England to reclaim VAT, it is reprehensible that it refuses to make the same change for vital emergency services in Scotland,

which would bring them into line with emergency services in other parts of the UK?

**Michael Matheson:** I wholeheartedly agree with David Torrance on the matter. The UK Government could very easily change the rules to enable Police Scotland and the SFRS to recover VAT. It has shown that, where there is a political will, the Value Added Tax Act 1994 can be amended to permit new bodies to recover VAT. The member referred to a couple of examples of that.

Since Police Scotland and the SFRS were created, a range of bodies have been included in the 1994 act, which allows them to recover VAT. Those bodies include Health Education England, the Health Research Authority, the strategic highways company—Highways England—the London Legacy Development Corporation and academy schools. In my view, if it is good enough for all those organisations, it is good enough for Scotland's emergency services.

#### **Reported Sexual Offences 2016-17 (Increase)**

3. **Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the increase in reported sexual offences in 2016-17. (S5O-01081)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** The Scottish Government will publish the validated figures for recorded crime in September. The increase in sexual crime that is implied in Police Scotland's recent report represents a continuation of a long-term trend, similar to that seen across the rest of the United Kingdom.

The full reasons for the growth in recorded sexual crime are complex, but an increase in historical and online cases is part of the picture. Scottish Government analysts, working with Police Scotland, are undertaking a study of crime recording to gain a better understanding of sexual offending in Scotland. The results, which we will publish in September, will inform the response of the justice system and wider public services to those incidents. For now, we want those who are victims of sexual crimes and offences to be able to come forward and report, in confidence and in the knowledge that a responsive justice system will help to ensure access to justice for them.

We understand that victims need specialist support in addition to the specially trained officers who work in Police Scotland's national rape task force and the highly trained prosecutors in the national sexual crimes unit, which is why we have invested record levels of funding in third sector organisations.

**Peter Chapman:** Police Scotland has reported an increase in the number of 16 to 24-year-old

rape victims who met the suspect online. It also pointed to an exponential rise in cyber-enabled sexual crime over the past decade. What is the Scottish Government doing to promote safety online, in particular among children and young people?

**Michael Matheson:** Peter Chapman raises a very important issue. The analytical work that I mentioned already indicates that some of the increase that we have seen in sexual offences has been driven by cyber and online-related crime. That is exactly why Police Scotland is taking forward the policing 2026 strategy, which will look at how the police can ensure that the balance of expertise in Police Scotland reflects much more the new and emerging types of crime. For example, Police Scotland needs to ensure that there is expertise in the organisation to support the police to deal with cyber-related crime much more effectively.

Peter Chapman should be aware that there has been a gradual increase in sexual crime over the past decade that is not peculiar to Scotland but is reflected across the UK and to some degree across western Europe. The analysis that we are carrying out will assist us in ensuring that we focus more sharply on where the increases are taking place and that we take forward appropriate measures to try to prevent such crimes from occurring.

Police Scotland is running a programme in partnership with our education authorities to help young people have an understanding and awareness of the risks that are associated with online activity. That work will continue, and once we have received the results of the study, we can look at what further work can be done to ensure that we prevent such crimes from occurring in the first place.

**Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I acknowledge the cabinet secretary's response that validated figures will be published in September. However, the figures that were published last week also showed that domestic abuse had increased from 57,702 cases to more than 58,500, while the detection rate had fallen from around 81.2 per cent to 74.1 per cent. Can the cabinet secretary outline what he thinks the factors behind those figures are?

**Michael Matheson:** We believe that one of the reasons why we are seeing an increase in domestic abuse is that there is an increase in confidence in reporting such incidents and in the way in which incidents are now being investigated by Police Scotland. For example, when an individual makes a complaint, the police look for previous partners of the individual against whom the allegation has been made. In some cases, one individual makes the initial complaint, and two or

three other individuals then make complaints against the perpetrator. That has resulted in increasing demand being put on our Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in dealing with such cases. We have put additional investment into the COPFS this year to support it in dealing with domestic violence cases.

That growing confidence and the changing nature of the way in which domestic violence cases are investigated have resulted in an increase in cases being reported and recorded.

We need to ensure that we support the organisations that work with women who experience domestic violence, which is why we are providing record levels of funding to such organisations. At the same time, we must ensure that our law is fit for purpose. We introduced the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill in the Parliament so that we can consider how we can much more effectively deal with all forms of domestic abuse—not just the physical abuse but the psychological abuse that is often associated with it.

#### **Scottish Police Authority (Confidence in Chairperson)**

4. **Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has confidence in the chairperson of the Scottish Police Authority. (S5O-01082)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** As the member is aware from the answer that I gave the Parliament on 30 May, we will give thorough consideration to the issues that are set out in the recent reports of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing and the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee, in coming to a determination.

**Jackie Baillie:** I recognise that it was the cabinet secretary who appointed Mr Flanagan to his position, so I appreciate his frustration that Mr Flanagan has not been successful in his role as chair of the Scottish Police Authority. I urge the cabinet secretary to take action to restore trust in the SPA. What lessons have been learned about the role and responsibilities of board members? Have they led to any change in approach on the part of the Scottish Government?

**Michael Matheson:** The member knows that in evidence to the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee, Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary set out the improvements that have been made in the SPA over the past two years, for example in how it scrutinises contact, command and control, or C3, in its approach to stop and search and in its ability to engage much more constructively with Police Scotland. It is therefore wrong to characterise the SPA as not having



undergone changes and improvements over the past two years.

Notwithstanding that, Andrew Flanagan has set out the areas in which he accepts that he has not met the levels that were expected of him. I assure the member that we will give careful consideration to the findings of the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee and the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing and that in due course we will set out the measures that we will put in place to address matters.

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary say when we can expect Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland's report on the Scottish Police Authority's governance review?

**Michael Matheson:** Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland was asked to bring forward its inspection of SPA and to look specifically at governance, as a result of concerns that the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee expressed. In a letter to me, the committee's acting convener welcomed that as an appropriate measure, given the concerns that the committee had raised. I welcome the committee's endorsement of our action. HMICS has indicated that it intends to publish its report by 22 June.

### Violent Crime (Prevention)

**5. Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its work to prevent violent crime. (S5O-01083)

**The Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs (Annabelle Ewing):** The member will be aware that crime is at a 42-year low, and that the numbers of homicides and crimes of handling an offensive weapon are at their lowest since records began.

However, we recognise that there is still more to do. Violence is a complex issue, and we need to tackle the causes and not just the symptoms. That is why our strategy is focused on tough enforcement, coupled with education and diversion activity. We continue to put significant investment into the national violence reduction unit, which aims to reduce violent crime and behaviour by working with partner agencies to achieve long-term societal and attitudinal change, as well as by focusing on enforcement.

**Annie Wells:** Knife crime is a significant problem in some communities in Glasgow. What update can the Scottish Government give on action that it is taking to educate young people about the dangers of carrying a knife?

**Annabelle Ewing:** We continue to invest in a range of initiatives, such as the excellent "No

knives, better lives" initiative, which has now been made available to all local authorities in Scotland. The initiative educates young people about the dangers and consequences that are associated with carrying a knife, and encourages positive life choices, away from violence.

In addition to many others, one initiative that is particularly pertinent to the member's question is Medics Against Violence's secondary school programme. The programme involves some 250 volunteer medics from Glasgow, who have pledged their time to help to educate young people by going into schools and talking about the consequences of violence—in particular, knife violence. The programme has been very successful, and I commend all the medics who have given up their time to take part in it.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** The minister will be aware that recorded serious-assault crimes increased by almost one third between 2014-15 and 2016-17, and that figures from the Scottish Police Authority show that murders have increased by 30 per cent. What specific action is the Government taking to tackle the rise in those most violent of crimes? Will the Scottish Government invest in more community policing, and can the minister give members further information on the diversionary initiatives that she mentioned in response to Annie Wells's initial question?

**Annabelle Ewing:** The overall trend with regard to homicide, for example, is downwards, and with regard to non-sexual crimes of violence, there has been a reduction of 51 per cent since 2006-07. I hope that Mary Fee takes heart from that.

In addition to the initiatives that I mentioned in response to the question from Annie Wells, there is the mentors in violence prevention—MVP—programme, which encourages young people to understand various forms of violence, to be leaders in supporting each other, and to understand that any form of violence or abuse toward one another is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. A total of 108 schools across 18 local authorities are currently engaging with the MVP programme, and work is being undertaken with Education Scotland to accelerate the expansion of the programme in order to reach an additional 30,000 young people in a further 93 secondary schools by March 2018.

In addition to the MVP programme and the work of community-based police officers to whom Mary Fee referred, there is the navigator programme, which is a feature of Glasgow royal infirmary's accident and emergency department that has been extended to the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh's A and E department. There is the "Ask, support, care" campaign that uses the violence reduction unit and Medics Against

Violence to train professionals who interact with women in many aspects of their lives to spot signs of domestic abuse, in particular. We are currently engaged in a range of initiatives. I hope that Mary Fee feels that we are doing everything that we can to tackle violent crime.

## Business Motions

15:17

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of motion S5M-05998, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 13 June 2017

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2015

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Human Trafficking and Exploitation - Making Scotland a Hostile Place for Traffickers and Providing Effective Support for Victims

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 14 June 2017

1.15 pm Members' Business

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Education and Skills

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's Economy, Opportunities for Growth

*followed by* Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body motion: Membership of the Scottish Commission for Public Audit

*followed by* Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body motion: Appointment of Mark Ruskell MSP as a Trustee to the Scottish Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund

*followed by* Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body motion: Appointment of Pauline McNeill MSP as a Trustee to the Scottish Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund

*followed by* Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body motion: Appointment of Alison Harris MSP as a Trustee to the Scottish Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund

*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 Thursday 15 June 2017  
 11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 11.40 am General Questions  
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 2.30 pm Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Questions  
*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Education Governance Next Steps  
*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Recognise and Celebrate Edinburgh's International Festivals in their 70th Anniversary Year  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
 Tuesday 20 June 2017  
 2.00 pm Time for Reflection  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)  
*followed by* Stage 3 Proceedings: Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Bill  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 Wednesday 21 June 2017  
 1.15 pm Members' Business  
 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 22 June 2017  
 11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 11.40 am General Questions  
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 2.30 pm Stage 3 Proceedings: Limitation

(Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of motion S5M-05999, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a timetable for stage 2 of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 30 June 2017.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

15:17

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of two Parliamentary Bureau motions on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2017 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 (Relevant Trafficking or Exploitation Offences and Relevant UK Orders) Regulations 2017 [draft] be approved.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

## Decision Time

15:18

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The first question is, that motion S5M-06000, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2017 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S5M-06001, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 (Relevant Trafficking or Exploitation Offences and Relevant UK Orders) Regulations 2017 [draft] be approved.

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

*Meeting closed at 15:18.*

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.

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