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Tuesday 2 April 2019

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Scottish Parliament

Tuesday 2 April 2019

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

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good afternoon. Our first item of business today is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader is the Rev Dr W John Carswell, who is the minister of Cadzow parish church in Hamilton.

The Rev Dr W John Carswell (Cadzow Parish Church, Hamilton): I thank members for the opportunity to address them today. I come with an invitation to share in the work of transforming our communities. Although I speak as a minister in the Church of Scotland, my invitation is extended to people of all faiths and human philosophies.

I ask three things on behalf of the church, and the first is: give us a job. There are many individuals and organisations that serve Scotland very well, but the church is, and remains, the single largest body for voluntary service in the nation. We feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit those who are in prison, in hospitals and in homes. We lead interfaith dialogue and we hold passionate convictions about the environment. We used to do much more, but now Parliament does many of the jobs that were once ours, and for that I commend it. The difference is that the church does them for free, because it is in its DNA—it is who we are. Give us a job and let us work with you; please do not dismiss us by saying, “We don’t do God.” Let us work together for the common good.

Secondly, we ask you to give us a break. We are being slowly crushed by legislative requirements: health and safety, health and hygiene, data protection, safeguarding and the reporting and record keeping that go along with those well-intentioned efforts. Some churches have the personnel and expertise to fulfil those requirements, but most do not, leaving us with the unhappy choice of either breaking the law or stopping our good works. Our litigious age is a sign of the breakdown of our common trust, one in the other, but legislation will not fix that problem. Give us a break and let us talk about a better solution.

Thirdly, we ask you to give us a hand. The kirk is not as members may remember it. We are more casual, more welcoming, more inclusive, more flexible and more comfortable in our role as servants to all. We are not perfect, but we have opened our doors and taken new interest in our

communities. Some members may not do God. If so, I will not hold it against them. However, if they do community and care about people, I ask them to come and join us and give us a hand.

Give us a job; give us a break; and give us a hand—and may God bless members in the doing of it. I thank you.

[Applause.]

Topical Question Time

14:03

Scottish Police Authority Budget

1. Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the approval of the Scottish Police Authority budget, in light of reports that capital funding shortfalls have left Police Scotland using patrol cars that are more than a decade old. (S5T-01591)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): The Scottish Police Authority considered and approved its budget for 2019-20 at its meeting on 28 March 2019. The total Scottish Government funding for the Scottish Police Authority in 2019-20 is increasing by £42.3 million, which means that the annual policing budget is now more than £1.2 billion. Significantly, that includes a 52 per cent increase to the capital budget.

Police Scotland will continue to ensure that it invests in providing a fleet that is fit for purpose, safe, reliable and sufficiently flexible to be responsive to the dynamic nature of policing, as is outlined in its fleet strategy. Chief Constable Iain Livingstone has said:

“Our maintenance team do an excellent job and we have over 96% of the fleet on the road ... Across a multitude of demands, we are prioritising the capital budget we have been allocated and are investing in the right areas to achieve as much as we can, as quickly as we can.”

Liam Kerr: This week, it was revealed that more than 250 of Police Scotland’s patrol cars are more than 10 years old and that some have up to 200,000 miles on the clock. Last week, the chair of the Scottish Police Federation told her conference that the fleet was a “disgrace”. I have a straight question for the Cabinet Secretary for Justice: does he think it acceptable that officers are having to apprehend criminals in vehicles that are “held together with duct tape”?

Humza Yousaf: For a Tory member of the Scottish Parliament to say that is completely and utterly to cry crocodile tears. When the Scottish Government proposed a capital budget increase of 52 per cent, Liam Kerr and his colleagues voted against it. There was a proposal for £100 million resource protection until 2021, but he and his party voted against it. Police Scotland also had to pay £125 million in VAT that no force in England Wales had to pay, but the Tories have done hee-haw about that.

If Mr Kerr will spare me the crocodile tears, I will tell him a little bit more about the figures that he quoted. On his point about vehicles being more than 10 years old, of 268 such vehicles only five

are on the front line: the vast majority are non-front-line response vehicles. He talked about vehicles that have more than 200,000 miles on the clock: there is one such vehicle, which is a non-operational vehicle that is used as a training tool for armed police. It would have been much better had Mr Kerr seen a bit of the context—perhaps without the crocodile tears—and had supported the Scottish Government, whose budget is increasing capital for the police, as opposed to the Tory Government, which is taking away through VAT that no other force, in England and Wales, has to pay.

Liam Kerr: I hear the cabinet secretary’s response, but he knows full well that the Scottish Conservatives cleaned up the Scottish Government’s mess on VAT for police and fire services and put £25 million back into the front line each year.

Last week, the Scottish Police Authority approved its annual budget. Thanks to the Scottish National Party’s cuts to its capital budget, it says:

“Repairs and maintenance of buildings will be reduced. Worn-out, inefficient cars will not be replaced and the force will continue to rely on several outdated and disconnected IT systems.”

The cabinet secretary frequently hides behind the “operational matter” defence, but he cannot do so this time. The SNP has been in charge of the police service for nearly 12 years. Again, I ask the cabinet secretary a straight question—he seemed to struggle with my previous one: does he agree that our police officers deserve better than that?

Humza Yousaf: Better than a Tory Government that pinches £125 million from them but does not do so from police forces in England and Wales? Mr Kerr points at me, but he should be pointing at his colleagues south of the border, who have stolen that money from Police Scotland.

Let us look at the Tories’ budget plan, which would have taken £575 million out of the Scottish budget. Frankly, if Mr Kerr and his party were in charge, our police officers would be riding around not in police cars but in rickshaws. There is the issue of the VAT, and there is also the Tories’ budget plan, which would have taken £575 million out of Scottish policing and out of budgets in general.

Let me also correct Mr Kerr by giving him a little bit of context about the figures that he mentioned. The average age of fleet vehicles is five years and the average unmarked police car mileage is 57,000 miles, not 200,000 miles. Overall vehicle availability is 96.4 per cent, against a benchmark of 95 per cent in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Of course, budgets will be constrained, no doubt—in significant part—due to the decade of

austerity that the Conservative Party has imposed on us. Instead of carping from the sidelines and crying crocodile tears, perhaps Mr Kerr should support the Scottish Government's budget proposal of a 52 per cent capital uplift.

We will continue to invest in the police service, while his party continues to decimate it.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): As the Liberal Democrats' freedom of information request uncovered, a quarter of the police force's fleet has clocked up between 100,000 and 200,000 miles. Front-line officers say that the fleet is not just a disgrace but also inadequate. Recently, in Fife, only two of nine police vehicles were roadworthy. The lack of resources was a consistent theme in the 2015 police staff survey, which was supposed to be repeated in 2017. Will the cabinet secretary ask the national force to bring forward the long-overdue survey in order to find out what staff now think about the tools that they are given?

Humza Yousaf: Again, I am not here to interfere in operational matters for Police Scotland, but the same context that I described applies in relation to the question that Liam McArthur asks. I remind him that, although I had a go at the Conservatives for withholding the VAT, it was Sir Danny Alexander, who was at the Treasury at the time, who made the decision to withhold it. It would be helpful to have Liam McArthur's support to get that VAT back from the UK Government.

As I said, we will continue to invest in the police. There is a £100 million revenue protection for the police and a 52 per cent uplift in capital.

Where Police Scotland can get feedback—be it from the trade unions, such as the Scottish Police Federation, or, indeed, directly from its members—the member is, of course, welcome to encourage Police Scotland to do so, because feedback from police officers is important. I note that when we gave them an historic 6.5 per cent pay rise, the feedback was that that was welcome. I always listen to police officers. I will continue to listen to them and to have engagement with the Scottish Police Federation.

I understand why Liam Kerr will not do it, but it would be helpful if other political parties, such as the Liberal Democrats, got on board and demanded the £125 million of VAT back from the UK Government.

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): For the avoidance of doubt, will the cabinet secretary reiterate what percentage capital uplift there is for the police in the Scottish budget this year? Will he also remind the Parliament which parties voted against that increase?

Humza Yousaf: All the other political parties, with the honourable exception of the Scottish

Green Party, voted against a budget that has seen a 52 per cent uplift in capital, revenue protection for Police Scotland and an historic pay rise for police officers, which the Scottish Police Federation has described as the best uplift to police officer pay in 20 years. Those political parties will have to answer for that.

There is a genuine question in and around the capital allocation, and I am happy to explore that. I have said publicly, on the record, at the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing that I am happy to look at the question of the capital allocation. However, let us not talk down the good work that the maintenance and fleet repair team at Police Scotland are doing. They are not just keeping our vehicles on the road, but ensuring that 96 per cent of our vehicles are on the road responding to emergency incidents. It should be congratulated as opposed to belittled by the other parties in this Parliament.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): The papers that were submitted to the SPA board last week expose issues with the capital budget that go far beyond simply the fleet. They show a £43.1 million capital allocation against a request for £99 million and a capital budget that is the fifth worst in the UK despite the fact that we have the second largest police force; indeed, in comparison, the Metropolitan Police's capital budget per officer is almost five times higher than that of Police Scotland. Has the cabinet secretary had discussions with the senior officers who submitted those papers about their concerns about the capital expenditure shortfall in the budget?

Humza Yousaf: Again, I make the point that I have made to other political parties: the member voted against a budget that gave a 52 per cent uplift; and, not only that, but his colleague sitting next to him, Alex Rowley, is the only one who came with any budget proposals—it is honourable that he came, but he was the only one who engaged. In fact, if we had listened to Labour's plans, there would have been a 3 per cent cut, never mind a 52 per cent uplift in Police Scotland's budget. Really, the member must reflect on his position before he comes here and demands more money.

On the capital question, I have engaged with Police Scotland, which tells me that the majority of its capital ask—a significant part of it—is for the digital, data and information and communications technology project, which is, of course, very important. We will look at the position and explore it, as the member would expect me to interrogate any ICT project. Part of the capital is for fleet, part of it is for estate and a significant part of it is for ICT. I have great sympathy for that but, rightly, we

will make sure that we evaluate it, and we will come forward with future spending reviews.

Integration Joint Boards (Funding)

2. Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to support integration joint boards with funding shortfalls. (S5T-01593)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman): Our budget this year provides investment of £711 million in social care and integration, which represents a 29 per cent increase on last year. Additionally, the “Review of Progress with Integration of Health and Social Care”, which was published on 4 February this year, identifies a range of actions, including on integrated finances and financial planning, all of which are to be delivered by March 2020.

Kezia Dugdale: The leaders of the Edinburgh board have refused to accept its funding deal, which was due to start yesterday. It has made £11.6 million worth of cuts already, but it still faces a further funding black hole of £12.6 million. Board member Mike Ash said:

“We can’t go on pretending we can deliver the services people expect with the money we have.”

If he is being so honest, why can the cabinet secretary not be? Edinburgh does not have enough money to care for its vulnerable, does it, cabinet secretary?

Jeane Freeman: I will repeat the answer that I gave to the previous question. I am being completely honest—there has been a 29 per cent increase in the budget this year. I remind Ms Dugdale that that increase is against a 6.8 per cent cut in real terms to this Government’s budget from the United Kingdom Government between 2010-11 and 2019-20. I do not accept that this Government has done anything other than absolutely prioritise the health budget, including for health and social care. However, I require integration authorities to look at how they can reform the delivery of their services to get the best value and deliver what patient care needs, and that applies to both the health board and the local authority.

As I am sure Ms Dugdale is well aware, the point of integration is to devolve such decisions to integration joint boards, which should be best placed to determine what their local populations need, with significant additional funding from the Government. I do not accept the premise of Ms Dugdale’s question. The Government, along with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, will continue to engage with the integration joint boards to help them to do the work that we need them to do in the areas in which they face difficulties.

Kezia Dugdale: The cabinet secretary needs to lift her head from a spreadsheet and look at exactly what is happening in the real world. In order to balance its books, the Edinburgh board is considering cutting mental health services and slashing its drug and alcohol partnership funding. On top of that, a freedom of information request from my office shows that 160 people in the city are getting incomplete care packages, more than 600 people are waiting for a package to start and a whopping 1,200 people are waiting to be assessed. If Edinburgh cannot afford to stand still, how on earth will 2,000 of my constituents get the help that they desperately and urgently need?

Jeane Freeman: It is a bit ironic to have someone from the Labour Party suggest that I should live in the real world. Trust me, I live in the real world. It would be helpful to move away from the rhetoric and focus on the plan that was jointly agreed between COSLA, including all the Labour-led and other authorities, and the Government to increase the pace and delivery of integrated health and social care, which has seen significant success in many parts of our country.

Every single one of our IJBs needs to improve what it is doing, but COSLA and I have committed to direct action to intervene and support where necessary. However, once again, I remind members in the chamber that, if we want to devolve decision making to local bodies such as IJBs, we have to allow them to make decisions and not constantly ask the Government to jump in and fix things when we do not like those local decisions. We have to allow local flexibility but, where it does not meet the overarching priorities of the Government, we will of course act to assist the boards to do so.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): It is not about fixing things; it is about stopping them from being smashed in the first place. Across Scotland, there are proposals to close care homes for alcohol and drug partnerships, and primary care transformation funds, which the cabinet secretary says she is passionate about as a way of driving forward general practitioner reforms, are being raided. The integration of health and social care is something that we all agree on across the chamber, but it is being put at risk—this is not how it was meant to be.

How will Scottish National Party ministers deal with what is a growing financial crisis across our IJBs? The cabinet secretary wrote off £150 million of debt for health boards, and it is clear that our IJBs are going to be in a similar position. What is she doing to monitor that and to work with IJBs to help them to address the record debt?

Jeane Freeman: I redirect Mr Briggs to two things, the first of which is the 26 per cent increase in the funding for health and social care

integration. If you want more money for that, you will have to say where it will come from. I do not want to repeat what Mr Yousaf just said, but it takes brass neck to ask for money and resources for an area when you and your colleagues did not support the overall budget. I also redirect you to the joint review of integration and the actions that were taken as a consequence of that; the evidence that Councillor Currie and I gave to the committee on which you sit; the work that is going on with the IJB finance officers and the finance director in the Scottish Government; and the joint work that we are doing with COSLA to assist the IJBs with their financial planning so that they can work their way through any financial difficulties.

I do not accept that there is a financial crisis—I never accept, Mr Briggs, the hyperbole that you choose to use to get tomorrow's newspaper headline. It is not true, and you need to deal with this matter seriously.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I encourage all members—not just the cabinet secretary—not to use the term “you”. Do not address each other; instead, refer all your remarks through the chair and talk about each other in the third person. Do not say “you”; otherwise the debate becomes very personal.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I am aware that Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board manages its health budget without using a set-aside model. Will the cabinet secretary confirm that the implementation of a set-aside budget has aided integration and say whether health boards and IJBs have discretion over its use?

Jeane Freeman: Ms Harper has pointed to an important part of the overall financial package for health and social care integration. It includes not only what is called set-aside funding but the significant reserves that some of our IJBs have and which have not been allocated for any specific purpose. Part of the overall work that we have agreed with COSLA is to put all of that into the mix not only to ensure parity of funding across all our IJBs but to get the best out of those funds.

What is referred to as set-aside funding is actually an allocation of money, the best use of which is determined by the IJB, given its responsibility for the planning and commissioning of local services. Some of that money might, with the IJB's agreement, be used by a health board to deliver certain services, particularly around the unscheduled care that the set-aside money is targeted at covering. Of course, it does not have to cover only that, but the point is that the IJB is the decision maker in this area, and we have issued clear additional guidance to our health boards and IJBs to ensure that they understand that. Indeed, that will be part of the discussions that we will

continue to have with IJB finance officers and our health boards.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): Last month, the cabinet secretary wrote to the Health and Sport Committee to say that her expectation was that budgets for all integration joint boards would be in place in advance of the start of the new financial year. Will she confirm that budgets for Scotland's other IJBs for 2019-20 have now been agreed? When does she expect them to be made public?

Jeane Freeman: I think that there were two budgets outstanding, but I understand that one of them has now been confirmed and agreed. My understanding, therefore, is that the majority of budgets for IJBs have now been agreed.

There are one or two areas where we do not believe that the local authority has passed on the full amount from the additional £160 million that went from the health portfolio to local authorities for additional provision for integrated health and social care. I am meeting Councillor Currie this afternoon to go through a number of areas, including the overall budget and individual IJB situations.

As for publication, the budgets should be published in the coming weeks, but I will endeavour to get a final cut-off time and ensure that Mr Macdonald is made aware of it.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I worry that the cabinet secretary's discussions with COSLA are failing to focus on the key issues. A former health secretary argued in Parliament a month or so ago that there needs to be bridge funding to allow the transfer from acute to primary care to take place. That is clearly not happening today. Bedblocking is increasing further. Does the cabinet secretary agree with that? The former health secretary also talked about the Alaskan model. There is a crisis—it is not about who blames who. The people trying to access community care in Scotland are feeling that crisis when they do so.

Jeane Freeman: The set-aside money was designed largely to act as a bridging fund. For example, the IJB in Dundee used the set-aside money and some of its reserves to engage in a service redesign and transformation to ensure that the services that it was planning and commissioning could be delivered sustainably in the long term. Some IJBs have sought to use their reserves and, in part, the set-aside money to do precisely that. I have made that point before when we have discussed the integration of health and social care. Across the 31 partnership areas, some are doing well in some aspects of their work, others doing less well and so on. It is a mixed picture, which is why the work with COSLA is

targeted to look at those IJBs where improvement is required, either in financial planning or in the work on delayed discharge. The statistics that were published today show a reduction in the number of delayed discharges over the previous month—it is not good enough yet, but it is going in the right direction.

That is the kind of focus that we have between the Government and COSLA, in addition to the regular work that my officials engage in directly with the chief officers and finance officers as well as with the health boards. We are aware of the challenge and are trying in the integration review and the actions from it to take specific targeted action. In addition, as Mr Rowley knows, work continues to try to resolve the specific issue in Fife of the legacy deficit that the IJB started with. We are moving in the right direction and are focused. That is not to say that there is not more that we can do, and we are open to any additional measures that members think we should take.

Point of Order

14:27

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I am pleased that we will have the opportunity to debate the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 this afternoon. As you will be aware, it is an issue that many people across society are deeply concerned about, as we have seen from the rally outside Parliament, at which many people have been calling for changes to strengthen the bill.

Those people knew that they had to organise a rally outside Parliament, because the rules on events inside Parliament state that

“events and exhibitions must respect the wide range of existing channels for influencing parliamentary business by not lobbying on parliamentary business under current consideration”.

I was therefore surprised that members walked to the chamber past a large corporate exhibition for the fossil fuel industry, whose very existence is directly relevant to the climate crisis that the bill exists to address. Aside from the existence of that industry being relevant to climate change, the material that is promoted today includes explicit discussion—for example in a document about energy transition and low carbon—of low-carbon targets and Government climate policy.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Mr Harvie is making a political point and should get to the point of order.

Patrick Harvie: Why do apparent double standards exist that mean that pro-climate action campaigners must organise events outside the Parliament but the fossil fuel industry, which is implicated in causing the crisis, is lobbying inside the Parliament on a day on which we are debating the bill?

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Harvie. It is open to any member to organise an event or an exhibition. Such events and exhibitions, which are planned well in advance, are covered by the events and exhibitions rules, not by the lobbying rules, which are a different matter altogether. That is not a point of order for the chamber.

Mr Harvie is pointing at his laptop. I hope that this is a further point of order, rather than an argument about the previous point.

Patrick Harvie: I am, of course, happy to accept your ruling that the matter that I raised is not a point of order, but I would be grateful for some clarity on how members can be reassured that the rule that I mentioned will be consistently applied in the future, when it has not been today.

The Presiding Officer: That is not a point of order. There are plenty of procedures to deal with such matters outside the chamber.

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Our next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-16697, in the name of Roseanna Cunningham, on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, at stage 1.

14:30

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): I thank the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee for its stage 1 report. I am pleased that it supports the general principles of the bill and recognises that it will maintain Scotland's place among countries that are at the forefront of global ambition on climate change, and that it will make target setting more transparent and accountable. Those are exactly the reasons why we introduced the bill in the first place.

I intend to summarise the Scottish Government's view of the bill and to set out our response to the lead committee's recommendations. I will focus on three main areas. First, I will focus on Scotland's headline target and the upcoming advice from the Committee on Climate Change. Secondly, I will focus on the importance of transparency and rigour for the framework within which the targets are being set. Thirdly, I will focus on the vital question of how the on-the-ground-measures that will be used to achieve the targets should be agreed.

The Scottish Government has been absolutely clear about achieving its long-term goal of net zero emissions as soon as possible. Throughout the bill process, we have been consistent in our intention to set a target date for that in law, as soon as it can be done credibly and responsibly. The bill includes the most ambitious statutory emissions reduction targets of any country in the world for 2020, 2030 and 2040, and it means that Scotland will be carbon neutral by 2050. Those targets follow the CCC's 2017 advice on the highest-ambition Scottish response to the Paris agreement that remains within the limits of feasibility.

In its stage 1 report, the committee has acknowledged the world-leading nature of the targets in the bill, as have a number of leading international figures, including Laurent Fabius, the architect of the Paris agreement, who has described the bill as a

"concrete application of the ... Agreement".

The bill clearly delivers on the Scottish Government's commitment always to strive for the most ambitious credible climate targets. However, I recognise that the evidence continues to evolve at a rapid pace. In particular, the special report, "Global Warming of 1.5°C" that was published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last October, represents a very significant step forward in the scientific evidence that underpinned the Paris agreement, and I am delighted that the lead authors of the IPCC's report are in Edinburgh this week for a major scientific meeting, as part of their preparations for their next assessment review.

In responding quickly to the IPCC's report, the Scottish Government joined the Welsh and United Kingdom Governments in jointly commissioning from the CCC further independent expert advice on targets. That advice is scheduled to be published on 2 May. If the CCC advises that higher targets for Scotland are now credible, the Scottish Government will act quickly, in line with that advice. I emphasise that important point: if, in its advice in May, the CCC advises that a date for net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases can now credibly be set, we will act to amend the bill to that effect at stage 2.

The Scottish Government recognises the urgency of the call to action on climate change. That call has been set out through the science of the IPCC, and is now being expressed very eloquently to us by our young people. I believe that some of those young people are here to watch this afternoon's proceedings.

The devastating flooding that Malawi is currently experiencing is making it painfully clear what is at stake for communities around the world. All too often, it is those who have contributed least to climate change who are hit hardest by it.

In the light of some confusion in the ECCLR Committee stage 1 report on our approach in relation to the ambition of near-term targets to reduce emissions, I clarify once again that we have already asked the CCC to provide updated advice on the appropriate levels of all Scotland's future targets, including those for 2020 and 2030. If the CCC advises that higher near-term targets are now credible, the Scottish Government will act quickly to put such targets in the bill at stage 2. Whatever targets are agreed by Parliament will then shape the update of the current "Climate Change Plan: third report on proposals and policies 2018-2032".

I want the CCC's advice next month to inform Parliament's deliberations on the bill. I note the ECCLR Committee's intention to seek for the remaining stages a timetable that will allow it to take further evidence, following publication of the CCC's advice. It is my hope that the committee will

be able to find a wide consensus around a set of targets that reflect the highest credible level of ambition.

I turn to the framework around the headline emissions reduction targets. The Scottish Parliament's Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is already the toughest statutory framework on climate change in the world. Scotland remains the only country to have set statutory annual targets to reduce its emissions, and has ensured annual scrutiny here in Parliament. We were the first to include in our targets a fair share of emissions from international aviation and shipping, and I am pleased that Wales has now joined us in doing that.

Scotland's approach is working well. As members know, Scotland has almost halved its emissions since the 1990 baseline, and the last three annual emissions reduction targets have been met. As the ECCLR Committee recognises in its stage 1 report, the bill makes a range of changes to improve further the transparency and accountability of the 2009 act target framework, while maintaining its rigour. For example, the bill's provisions will measure progress towards targets based on actual emissions from Scotland, and the bill establishes the clear default position that no international carbon credits can be used to meet domestic targets.

The ECCLR Committee has proposed further changes to the target framework. The Scottish Government accepts many of the proposed changes and will explore updating the definition of Scotland's fair and safe emissions budget so that it is more directly linked to the Paris agreement, including the aim that it has set for global temperature.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Just for clarity, can the minister confirm whether the Scottish Government has completely abandoned its plans either to cut air passenger duty or to eradicate it altogether?

Roseanna Cunningham: It would be helpful if members were to focus on areas that are within my portfolio. Colleagues will deal with specific issues that arise in relation to their portfolios.

The additional changes to the framework, combined with those that are already in the bill, will ensure that Scotland continues to have the most rigorous, transparent and accountable framework of climate change legislation anywhere in the world.

That, in turn, will ensure that the framework continues to fulfil its purpose of driving effective on-the-ground action to reduce emissions. The Scottish Government recognises that highly ambitious climate change targets have to be matched by an equally ambitious package of

delivery measures, if they are to be credible and meaningful.

The approach that was established by this Parliament's 2009 act is for ambitious evidence-based targets to be set in legislation, and then for the Government to introduce regular and comprehensive climate change plans that set out how the targets will be met, with Parliament playing a key role in scrutinising the plans.

I note the committee's view that it might have preferred to include specific delivery measures and targets in the bill. Although I understand the desire to consider headline targets and delivery measures side by side, I consider that what is most important is that we get the best possible package of delivery measures for the people of Scotland. The Scottish Government is of the view that the current approach remains the best way to achieve that outcome. Setting out delivery measures through regular strategic plans allows measures to be updated as circumstances and technologies evolve. The plan process means that a wide range of policies can be considered so that we find the most beneficial pathways overall.

To put a specific set of delivery measures directly into statute now would risk compromising the approach and might lead to less effective overall planning—potentially even by binding us to delivery mechanisms that prove to be ineffective or that will be overtaken.

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): Does the cabinet secretary concede that the bill is strong on ambition but rather weak and short on costed solutions? The financial memorandum is, at best, unclear in that regard, so can the cabinet secretary give any clarification?

Roseanna Cunningham: John Scott is a member of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, which has taken evidence from a number of people who have flagged up the point that long-term costing for climate change is not simple, and that the further out we go, the harder and more vague it becomes. The bill is about target setting, and a lot of the detail will be discussed in considering the climate change plans. I know that the member and some of his colleagues are very keen for that aspect of costing to be part of the discussion: I therefore expect that it will be.

In that context, I recognise that it is vital that the climate change plan process works as well as possible. I also recognise that there is scope for improvement in the process, so I welcome many of the constructive suggestions that the committee has made. The bill already includes the addition of new annual statutory sector-by-sector reporting for monitoring delivery of climate change plans. As has been requested by the committee, we will

bring forward the timing of those reports from October to before the summer recess. The Scottish Government has also committed to exploring lodging a range of amendments, including amendments that would specify a structure of chapter headings for future plans.

We have already committed to looking again at the content of the current plan as soon as the bill is finalised. I have noted the committee's recommendation on the timing of that update, and I will consider that carefully with my colleagues. We will provide a further response to Parliament once the CCC's advice on target levels is available, but prior to the start of stage 2.

The transition to our being a carbon neutral and then a net zero emissions country will be transformational. The current climate change plan includes plans to phase out the need for new fossil-fuel vehicles by 2032, and effectively to decarbonise all buildings by 2050. Although there will be immense co-benefits and opportunities, hard decisions will be needed in many areas. As the IPCC made clear in its special report, everyone will have to act—Governments, businesses, communities and individuals.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Does the cabinet secretary accept that, if we are to make the just transition that everyone talks about, we certainly need to do a lot better than we are currently doing on employment in renewables in this country?

Roseanna Cunningham: I think that there is broad agreement on the need to do that. If I have time, I will talk a little about the just transition, which is central to a lot of what we are doing.

Everyone who is calling for even higher target ambition must also, if those calls are to be credible, be prepared to support practical on-the-ground measures to deliver the additional emissions reductions. A number of the policy levers that are needed to deliver the transformational changes to create a carbon-neutral Scotland remain reserved to Westminster.

For example, decarbonisation of heat depends on UK Government decisions on the future of the gas network. The potential for industrial-scale deployment of carbon capture, usage and storage depends on decisions about conservation of critical infrastructure in the North Sea. Faster decarbonisation of transport in Scotland could be achieved by enabling Scotland's electricity network companies to make investment decisions that differ from those that are made in other parts of Great Britain.

More broadly, an approach to UK taxation that is coherent with high ambition on climate change and inclusivity could enable a faster pace of decarbonisation that is fair for all. The UK

Government is able to tax goods and services to reflect the environmental harm that is inherent in their production or consumption. Through broad business taxation powers, including corporate taxes and reliefs, the UK Government is able to influence investment decisions and the structure of the economy. That is why it is so important that the forthcoming CCC advice will consider UK as well as Scottish and Welsh targets.

I again thank the lead committee for the constructive recommendations in its report. Climate change is a defining and far-reaching issue on which cross-party consensus is especially important. The general principles of the bill—of Scotland striving for the highest ambition on credible targets, and doing so within a transparent framework that provides strong roles for independent expert advice and parliamentary scrutiny—are ones on which I sincerely hope we can all agree. I look forward to our debate.

I am proud to move,

That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill.

The Presiding Officer: I call Gillian Martin, the convener of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee.

14:45

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): As convener of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, I welcome the opportunity to highlight the committee's views on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill.

Climate change is the biggest environmental and societal challenge that we face. It represents the single greatest threat to our existence on this planet, and it is the most significant intergenerational justice issue of our time. Many of us in the chamber have children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and it is their world that we are fighting to save. They are telling us loud and clear that we need to do more. They are organising outside this Parliament every week and demanding that we act. We must listen and ensure that we acknowledge the urgency and gravity of the task at hand.

The bill presents us with a timely opportunity to examine Scotland's current ambition, and to explore what we can all do to limit global warming and tackle climate change now. We all recognise the urgency of the situation, so we need to increase and accelerate our action in the near term. We also need to recognise that the benefits and cost savings of early action far outweigh the costs of climate change itself. Increasing our climate change ambitions will offer clear potential

for innovation, jobs, the economy, the environment and the wellbeing of the people of Scotland and beyond. We want Scotland to be at the forefront of exploring, developing and investing in those opportunities and the technology that will help us to reach our emissions targets.

The Scottish Government has stated that it is working towards

"a low carbon economy that will help to deliver sustainable economic growth and create a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland".

We believe that the bill represents a significant step in the right direction, by strengthening Scotland's existing climate change legislation and setting Scotland on the path to achieving the ambitious targets that are set out in the Paris agreement.

The bill sets a target of a 90 per cent reduction in all greenhouse gases by 2050, and it allows for a target of a 100 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the baseline—known as a net zero target—to be created at a future date. It also introduces more challenging interim targets, including a 66 per cent drop in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, with a 78 per cent decrease envisaged by 2040. We welcome the introduction of more challenging interim targets and note the cabinet secretary's points about accepting the UK Committee on Climate Change's revised advice.

Although we recognise that this is a framework bill, our exploration of the issues that it raises has taken us far beyond figures and percentages. We travelled across the country and found communities eager to support Scotland's ambition to be a global leader. We held outreach events in Glasgow, Elgin and Kirkcaldy, as well as one here in Parliament. At those events, we asked participants to set out the changes that they would personally be prepared to make in order to achieve more ambitious climate change targets. One of the more memorable visits was to Wallacestone primary school in Brightons, where we met the school's eco group—a group of young future leaders who were brimming with ideas on how we can move forward together. We also held several formal evidence sessions with stakeholders from across Scotland, as well as with experts who are tackling climate change issues in Sweden, in order to gain an international perspective.

The evidence that we heard throughout our scrutiny of the bill at stage 1 served only to emphasise the scale of the challenge that we face, as well as the immediate need for action. We identified several significant issues that still need to be addressed, and provisions that still require strengthening, in order to ensure that Scotland fully contributes to meeting the challenge of limiting temperature rises.

We are conscious that the bill was drafted ahead of the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on limiting global temperature rises to 1.5°C. The committee supports the report's findings and urges the Scottish Government to ensure that the stark evidence presented in it is taken into account at stage 2.

The targets in the bill were based on the advice from the Committee on Climate Change in 2017. As we have said, updated advice from the Committee on Climate Change on the targets that we should be seeking to achieve will be published in early May.

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): Was the committee disappointed by the Government's late response to the stage 1 report?

Gillian Martin: Obviously, I am speaking on behalf of the committee. It is always good to have time to consider a Government response, but we were aware of the fact that we were given considerable time—extra time—at stage 1 to put together our report. We have to be mindful of the fact that we were given many weeks of extra time earlier this year.

We have recommended that the bill should reflect the most ambitious targets that are set out in the forthcoming advice from the Committee on Climate Change and that the Government should provide an explanation if it acts contrary to any advice from the CCC.

We identified several other areas that needed to be addressed. As the IPCC's report states, we have a crucial 12-year period. If we do not get things in line, we will find it incredibly difficult to get back on track. With that stark warning in mind, we need a greater sense of urgency to ensure that global temperatures do not rise to dangerous levels in the near term. Therefore, we ask for clarity to be provided on the temperature limit that the bill seeks to work towards. We recommend that that should be 1.5°C and that it should reflect the most ambitious scenario of the CCC's forthcoming advice.

We also need a greater focus on transformational behaviour change at the individual, institutional and systemic levels, so we ask the Scottish Government to prioritise, promote and incentivise behaviour change.

John Scott: I note Gillian Martin's comments on behalf of the committee on limiting the temperature rise to 1.5°C and our preparedness to take advice from the Committee on Climate Change.

The cabinet secretary has talked about a "credible" scenario. Would Gillian Martin be happy

to concede that the cabinet secretary has made a valid point in that regard?

Gillian Martin: I will concede that, because targets are all very well, but we need pathways in order to achieve them, or else we will fail. We cannot afford to fail in reaching our ambition.

We noted that

"Climate justice requires further focus"

to ensure that everyone is supported in the transition to a decarbonised economy and society. No one should be left behind. Therefore, we ask the Scottish Government to continue to place an emphasis on a just transition and to consider all steps necessary to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are protected.

We noted in our report that

"Further consideration is needed on the possibility of establishing an independent Just Transition Commission",

which could be underpinned by statute.

Alex Rowley: I welcome what the committee's report said about that and note that the committee also said:

"Further consideration should be given to setting sector specific targets within the Bill."

On a just transition, we know that transport, for example, has performed fairly poorly and that agriculture has a long way to go. However, there is sometimes the view in those sectors that they are not quite sure what they are meant to do and what support they should get. Should the committee push further on setting sector targets so that we understand better what is going on in those sectors and what needs to go on in them?

Gillian Martin: I take on board Alex Rowley's view on that, but we do not want to constrain ourselves, because we do not yet know where the innovation will be. We recommended that, in their support for businesses, business support networks and business support agencies such as Scottish Enterprise prioritise low-carbon innovation. As I said, we do not know where the innovation will be. If we set strict sectoral targets, we might constrain development.

We believe that the Government needs to take a holistic approach to climate change across all sectors and that further work is needed on target setting and identifying pathways for key sectors. Investment in and support for innovation, knowledge exchange and technology transfer and support to sectors such as agriculture and transport will be vital to meeting the targets.

In our report, we asked the Scottish Government to consider introducing sector-specific targets and to provide further clarity on the

targets that it has already set. We have also asked it to clarify the costs and opportunities associated with setting revised targets and to consider the limitations of the TIMES model.

We believe that further clarity on and safeguards in the use of carbon credits are necessary. We also believe that there should be no fixed period for parliamentary scrutiny of climate change plans and that monitoring reports should be published in time for parliamentary committees to consider them in their budget scrutiny. I thank the cabinet secretary for her response on that today.

As a developed country, Scotland has a responsibility to lead action to ensure that future generations inherit a world that is sustainable. A secure and fair future for the planet lies at the heart of what the bill is trying to achieve, and experts have advised that that will only come about through transformational change.

I have been inspired—we have all been inspired—by the children and young people who have participated in climate strikes across Scotland. We hosted 13 climate strikers at our committee this morning and some of them are in the gallery this afternoon. In 12 years' time, they will no longer be children. They will be adults dealing with the consequences of our actions now. We have a choice to make. Do we help them now or do we hinder their future? We want to see greater urgency and action across all parts of Government—

The Presiding Officer: Convener.

Gillian Martin: The bill represents a significant step in the right direction. I commend the general principles of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament and recommend that they be agreed to, but, as highlighted throughout our report, the committee has raised several significant issues that need to be addressed. The committee, therefore, invites the Scottish Government to address those issues at stage 2.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you convener. I call Maurice Golden, to be followed by Claudia Beamish.

14:55

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con): The numbers sound small—a rise of 1.5°C or 2°C. Yet those seemingly small temperature increases would have profound effects on humanity: tens of millions of people would be impacted by sea level rises, hundreds of millions would face drought, and billions would be exposed to extreme heatwaves. The environment would see catastrophic changes too: almost all coral reefs

would be lost, the Arctic would be regularly ice free, and scores of species would be impacted. Indeed, as the RSPB has highlighted, we have already seen wildlife affected right here in Scotland.

The question is: what must be done to avoid that? Much of the debate around the bill has, understandably, been on what targets should be set for emissions reductions, and especially on the potential for net zero emissions.

First, though, clarity is needed on exactly how the bill responds to the Paris agreement. I note that the ECCLR Committee's report recommends that the bill should explicitly reference the temperature targets that are being aimed for, with a 1.5°C limit suggested. Moreover, the committee recommends that the bill should also include a commitment to avoid an overshoot scenario. Both are sound proposals. I am mindful of the consequences of an overshoot scenario, having raised the issue last year with Professor Jim Skea from the IPCC. He was clear that the environmental consequences would be disastrous—not to mention the economic impact of having to cope with subsequent higher adaptation costs.

It is not just the long term that we should be concerned about. The IPCC report suggests a sense of urgency and raises the issue of what actions we are taking in the near term, particularly on interim targets. Both the UK and Scottish Governments have sensibly sought updated advice on our long-term targets from the UK Committee on Climate Change, and I welcome the same approach for the 2030 target. Of course, we will hold the Scottish Government to account in line with the advice that is received. It is important that we do so, because progress in reducing emissions will be achieved only if it is rooted in an evidence-based approach. The bill affords us an opportunity to embed that approach at a fundamental level across all Government departments.

I was pleased to see that the ECCLR Committee takes a similar view on monitoring and reporting, echoing the case that I have consistently made for climate change thinking to be factored into every portfolio. The suggestion is that, in practice, climate plan monitoring reports are made available in time to inform budget scrutiny, and that ministers should report on the long-term impact of their spending decisions rather than just the immediate impact. The latter point lends extra strength to the idea that individual ministers should be held accountable for delivering specific sections of the climate plan. That accountability would produce a greater emphasis on actions that are achievable—and it is worth noting that the committee has recommended that

the bill should include a definition of “achievable”. That measure would give the public, businesses and stakeholders confidence that policy decisions are rooted in practicality.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): Maurice Golden may have noticed the Scottish Government’s response to the committee’s report, which suggests that it does not intend to take further action, particularly on agriculture, beyond what it already laid out in the debate in the chamber on 10 January, when it explicitly took the view not to link future farm support to action on climate change. What is the Conservative view on that? Do you support farm support being dependent on action on climate change?

Maurice Golden: I was disappointed by the tardiness of the Government’s response to the committee report, which did not allow parliamentarians time to fully digest it.

On the specific question about agriculture, I see farming, land managers and the agriculture sector as a whole as part of the solution in tackling climate change. Payment should very much be part of that. An incentivised system should work for farmers and our climate change efforts. In addition, fantastic techniques are available, including no-till farming. We have to ensure that we not only foster the sector, but make it accountable. This and future Scottish Governments should be scrutinised on that.

We must closely monitor the situation when the CCC releases its updated advice on reaching net zero. The cabinet secretary has already confirmed that she will adopt any technically feasible pathway to the targets. Ultimately, that will result in consideration of sectors beyond those that have already seen significant emissions reductions. For example, the 49 per cent overall emissions reduction that we have seen has been largely driven by a 69 per cent emissions cut in the energy sector and a 73 per cent cut in the waste sector. Those are welcome achievements resulting from a combination of public, private and third sector actions and a favourable policy landscape from both the UK and Scottish Governments.

However, that success masks a lack of progress in other areas, such as the housing sector, where emissions are down by only 21 per cent, or transport, where they are down by just 3 per cent. Conversely, success must not breed complacency. The latest waste figures show that the recycling rate is down while the volume of waste and the amount incinerated is up. Clearly, there is need for further action: action that is based on evidence, informed by relevant voices and has at its heart the principle of just transition.

Let us consider agriculture. NFU Scotland is broadly supportive of the current strategy and is willing to engage on further measures. For it, progress is, as I have highlighted, more a question of resources and recognition of the nature of the sector, rather than just a question of stretching targets. Therefore, we propose direct capital funding and technical support, which would enable farmers to produce better environmental and economic outcomes. It would recognise that they are part of the solution.

That same principle applies to other businesses: they must feel that they can contribute and they must have confidence in the changes that we ask them to make. However, a recent WWF Scotland survey found that just one in six small businesses felt they had the right direction from the Scottish Government about their role in climate change. That should be a wake-up call to make a better business cases for action on climate change. When businesses are invested in the process, the results can be extremely impressive. For example, the Scottish Leather Group in Renfrewshire has developed a world-leading low-carbon leather production technology, which has reduced the carbon footprint from 10kg of CO₂ per 1m² to less than 1kg.

I have mentioned the housing and transport sectors. With the former, the Parliament has indicated that it wants to take action, and the Scottish Conservatives led cross-party efforts last year to bring forward energy efficiency and heat waste reduction targets by a decade.

In transport, targets have been set to phase out petrol and diesel cars and reduce sectoral emissions by 37 per cent by 2032. That ambition is laudable but, with just 1 per cent of Scotland’s 2.9 million cars currently being electric, there is a question over the level of detail and the feasibility of that. Perhaps a way to kick-start progress would be—as the Scottish Conservatives have suggested—to ensure that, where possible, electric vehicles are the default in all public procurement by 2027.

In sector after sector, there is a need to go further. I understand calls to commit to maximum reductions as quickly as possible. That is why I welcome the opportunity to explore these issues in as much detail as possible as the bill progresses through Parliament.

15:06

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I am proud to open for Scottish Labour. This is the first parliamentary debate on a bill that holds monumental significance for the future of our country, our standing in the world and the joint battle against man-made climate change. I am

also pleased to support the recommendations that are set out in the stage 1 report of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee.

In this stage 1 debate, I must recognise the tireless work that has already been undertaken to get us to this point. I want to thank the clerks and all stakeholders for their briefings and support, as well as those who were out at the demonstration today, which focused our minds. I also thank those who gave compelling evidence to the committee, and the school students—some of whom are in the gallery today—who have made sure that this Parliament really sits up and listens. It was fantastic to meet young climate activists this morning in the committee. They are clear that they did not create the climate emergency, yet it is they who will experience the drastic effects of adults' slow action or inaction, across the globe and here in Scotland. Those young people, led by the brave Greta Thunberg are an inspiration, sending messages of urgency and equity that cannot be ignored.

It is welcome that the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee has produced a pretty strong and consensual statement of action on climate change. We can proudly say that, despite some differences with regard to pace—along party lines, in various ways, beyond the committee—there is unanimous, cross-party agreement in the committee for our report. The report recommends that the bill should

“include an explicit reference to the temperature the targets are seeking to achieve”

and it

“recommends this should be 1.5°C”.

It also says:

“The Committee accepts that a net-zero target is a clearer message to understand than 90% and would send a strong signal, emphasising the need for significant change.”

It recommends that the Scottish Government should

“reflect on the possibility of establishing a Just Transition Commission with statutory underpinning”,

that it should

“continue to place a priority on intergenerational justice”

and that it should

“continue to focus its work on how Scotland should account for its fair share globally.”

Scottish Labour welcomes the committee's report. We considered the Scottish Government's response as best we could, given that we had only 24 hours in which to do so—other committee members have made that point.

We welcome the agreement of the committee and the Government to strive for greater transparency, for improvements to the TIMES model output and for the creation of a more comprehensive link between the international Paris agreement and national targets with, in the words of the Scottish Government, a

“fair and safe emissions budget”.

One of the most important points in the report is the statement that a net zero emissions target would

“send a strong signal, emphasising the need for significant change.”

That is absolutely correct and, although it is disappointing that the Scottish Government considers itself unable to make that commitment without the approval of the UK CCC, I look forward to that advice and the Scottish Government's response.

In response to the committee's recommendation 272, the Scottish Government said that Scotland's relatively small size is relevant to its climate ambition. Scottish Labour strongly refutes that assertion. We may be small, but our capacity for innovation knows no bounds, and historical industrial emissions must be accounted for and responsibility must be taken. We must be inspirational climate change action leaders.

The Scottish Government's openness to a statutory just transition commission is also welcome, following on from its support for my amendment calling for further consideration of that. While we are in the process of transitioning to a net zero economy and society, we will need proper guidance and advice from industry experts, environment experts and trade unions in order to find a fair and rapid way forward, and we must be rigorous about testing for injustice when delivering the targets.

The Scottish Government is clearly unshifting in its intention that the scope of the bill should remain narrow. I am not convinced that that is the best approach. However, it is positive to have a commitment from the Scottish Government to look again at the current climate change plan, which runs to 2032, once the bill's passage is over. The updating of policy intentions in line with stricter targets will be vital if we are to ensure that action is not delayed.

In addition, in relation to delivery on the targets, it is promising that the Scottish Government will explore commissioning further work to assess the current low-carbon investment landscape, particularly in the context of the Scottish national investment bank.

The debate about how best to tackle each sector is interesting. I urge the Scottish

Government to commit to requiring all cabinet secretaries and ministers to account for their portfolios, thereby embedding climate change concerns in everyone's work. As we heard, sectors such as agriculture and transport need to speed up the rate at which their emissions are falling, and that will take support, direction and robust policies from Government. The bill could be the place for a firmer requirement on the Scottish Government to set out how its decisions contribute to meeting the targets.

There is much to be proud of in the stage 1 report and in the response from the cabinet secretary, but there is still much further to go. We are following in the footsteps of the 2009 act: there is collaboration and agreement, as well as a driving ambition to set targets that will make a real difference to the lives of affected workers and communities here in Scotland, people in the global south, who will be hit the hardest, and the young people of today and tomorrow.

We are facing a national environment and climate emergency. That is a declaration that Scottish Labour and UK Labour can both make. Scottish Labour supports the ECCLR Committee's stage 1 report, which provides strong ground from which to move forward. I welcome the report and this debate.

15:11

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): I welcome this stage 1 debate and the opportunity to step up our climate laws to the monumental challenge of keeping the world below 1.5°C of global warming.

At times, the stage 1 report was not an easy one on which to find consensus. Some of the harder questions have been pushed to the UK Committee on Climate Change to answer. However, the report allows us to move on to stage 2, at which there will be clear choices to be made about strengthening the bill.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 might be world leading in its annual targets, but it lacks a world-leading net zero target and a far-reaching 2030 goal to secure the future. We need the bill to deliver the changes that are necessary.

Those changes require us to look unpleasant truths in the eye and turn them into opportunities. It is about Government setting clear goals for transition, with time to plan and bring the jobs of the future into reality today. It means acting, as New Zealand has done, to plan ahead for the next generation beyond oil and gas and for a net zero farming sector—because if we cannot make decisions today for future decades, we are simply condemning communities to abrupt and inevitable economic shocks in future.

To avoid such shocks, a just transition commission needs to be underpinned in the bill. The commission must have a remit to speak truth to power and guide us through the complex challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

The business of transition needs more than just a chapter in the climate change plan. It must be central to the purpose of Government, with innovation and productivity growing only in a low-carbon way from now on.

It is not good enough to point to examples of where enterprise agencies are steering low-carbon work. This mission needs to run right through the core of all Government business, with no policy contradictions and all effort in the same direction.

The same goes for Government spending decisions. It is welcome that the Government wants to discuss further how the budget process could be strengthened through the bill, building on the commitments that were secured through last year's budget deal with the Greens.

One of the few clear positives that I took from last week's debate on climate change was that there is a consensus in this Parliament that we must keep temperature rises below 1.5°C. That is the only credible response, and it needs to be reflected in the bill at stage 2. We are either on the right side of history or we are not. Going over 1.5°C will mean death for millions. It will mean droughts, floods and heat waves that lead to mass climate migration. It will mean development in the global south going into reverse. It will mean collapsing economies, and it will mean wars over resources that we take for granted, such as water.

We have to give people in the south room to breathe on this tiny planet. After centuries of colonialism and industrialisation, how can we deny people their birthright and their future because of fear of the industry lobbyists who are standing in the way of change at home?

The 1.5°C goal must be reflected in the bill, but I am disappointed by the Government's response to the report, which was issued yesterday and seems to weaken the much stronger position that it took on 1.5°C in the debate just last week. Although there is an acknowledgement that the emissions budget in the bill needs to be linked to the Paris goal of "well below 2°C", the Government backtracks in the very next point when it starts to explain that Scotland makes a very small contribution globally and that it is not confident that a 1.5°C goal will be met. So much for world-leading ambition. Perhaps the person who wrote that needs to talk to the person who wrote the Government's amendment for last week's debate. If the UK Committee on Climate Change was not asked how to avoid the "overshoot scenario", in which the planet heats beyond 1.5°C and millions

of people are killed, the cabinet secretary should avoid any further confusion and make sure that she has that advice.

It is clear that an acceleration of action is desperately needed in the next decade, rather than the current trajectory, which will cost lives. If we consider land use, the committee has a strong consensus on the need for better management of land to drive action on climate change and for farming to be the solution rather than the problem. However, the Government's response points to low key voluntary programmes and even highlights its position during the debate on agriculture on 10 January, in which the Government rejected an explicit climate change objective for future farm support.

There is strong cross-party agreement in the committee that measuring what the farming sector does, from carbon sequestration to productivity improvements, must be understood, incentivised and counted. It is not good enough for Government to say that this stuff is hard to do on a farm level; it must be integral to individual farm support payments. In this morning's committee meeting, we heard direct from IPCC scientists that New Zealand and Ireland are ahead of the game with regard to farm inventory accounting—it is time that we caught up, because we are running out of time.

After last week's debate on climate change, I started to question whether this Parliament is fit for dealing with the biggest existential crisis that faces humanity. It is clear that growing numbers of people—especially young people outside the Parliament—are making up their minds on that question right now. This is our opportunity to restore faith and to show that politicians can reject short termism; can look to a future beyond our political careers; and can do the right and necessary thing to correct the errors of what has come before us, so that we can give the gift of the future to all those who will come after us.

15:17

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): It is customary to start by thanking the committee for its work on the stage 1 report but, given the magnitude of the issue and the complexity of the bill, "thanks" seems somewhat inadequate. Nevertheless, I congratulate Gillian Martin and her colleagues, not least on reaching unanimity, and I acknowledge the contribution that has been made by all those who gave evidence and, indeed, who have provided helpful briefings for today's proceedings.

After last week's dummy run, this afternoon's debate gives Parliament a chance to flesh out where we should be setting our sights to match

the gravity and urgency of the challenge with the ambition that is necessary to avert the catastrophic consequences of climate change. Whatever our disagreements over the detail—and there will be some—I hope and believe that we are more likely to be successful in that if Parliament ultimately comes to a united and unified view by the end of stage 3.

Scottish Liberal Democrats are proud of the part that we have played to date in framing ambitious legislation and policy. We remain committed to doing so, again, for this bill and related strategies. However, we should not be under any illusions—the easy wins and low-hanging fruit have largely been grabbed. What comes next will require greater effort, more difficult choices and increased resources. Unfortunately, the Government's bill falls short of meeting that challenge. The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund and others have pointed out that, despite what the cabinet secretary has said, it fails to enshrine the Paris agreement. Explicitly aligning the bill with the 1.5°C global temperature goal would be one way of moving us in the right direction, and I echo the sentiments of the ECCLR Committee in that regard.

Of course, the Paris agreement also enshrines the principle of equity. The ECCLR Committee is right to acknowledge that, as a developed nation, Scotland has a greater responsibility for global warming that should be reflected in the targets that are set in the bill. As Lord Deben, the chair of the UK Committee on Climate Change, fairly observed:

"When you look at the capacity of some countries to meet the targets that they are prepared to sign up to, it is clear that we in the richer countries have to do more."—*[Official Report, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, 23 October 2018; c 22.]*

That is what equity means in practice, and it is what we need to achieve through the bill. That is what those in the global south—who have contributed least to the creation of climate change, but are already enduring its worst impacts—have a right to expect. It is also why the targets that we set need to be as ambitious as possible. I still believe that achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 is stretching, but feasible. Should we be going faster? Absolutely, if that is underpinned by the evidence and independent expert advice. I note that WWF Scotland, Scottish Environment LINK, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and others advocate bringing forward the net zero target to 2045. They are absolutely right to keep our feet to the fire, but I am conscious of Lord Deben's response to the ECCLR Committee on target setting, in which he cautioned:

"It is not sensible to espouse a target without being clear about what it really means. You can have any old target, but it will not work if you cannot come down to the terms for

how you will get there.”—[*Official Report, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, 23 October 2018; c 33.*]

Mark Ruskell: When Parliament set the target for renewable energy, were we clear about how we were going to achieve that?

Liam McArthur: As I said, we should set stretching and ambitious targets, but if we pick and choose the points at which we accept the advice of the UK Committee on Climate Change, we move into difficult territory. It is right that we sought revised advice from that committee, but to distance ourselves from that advice would leave us in a position in which substantiating and justifying our approach becomes more problematic.

Of course, the public also expects us to face up to the urgency of the threat posed by climate change, and not simply to postpone taking hard decisions. That is why I have considerable sympathy with calls for an emissions reduction target of 80 per cent by 2030. Again, that needs to be aligned with the advice from the UK CCC, but the view of the IPCC that

“rapid, far reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”

will be needed over the next 12 years cannot be ignored.

That is also the clear message from young people. Last week, like other members, I highlighted the local dimension of the climate strike campaign. I will quote Jessie Dodman from Papa Westray, a pupil at Westray community school, who wrote to me, saying:

“The Scottish Government’s Climate Change bill offers a good first step but needs to be delivered more quickly and effectively before the predicted deadlines for irreversible change in 2030.”

She added:

“Scotland and the UK are investing millions in roads, bridges and ferries but not nearly enough in making sure all transport is carbon neutral.”

As well as offering me a chance to reiterate my call for the Scottish Government to help to fund replacement of the internal ferry fleet in Orkney with one that is more fuel efficient, Jessie’s comments underscore one area—transport—in which more urgent action is desperately required. Heat and agriculture are perhaps two other obvious ones.

In identifying how we achieve the emissions reductions that we need to see, it is worth bearing it in mind that while advances in technology will undoubtedly help, we cannot innovate our way out of the problem and behaviour changes will be necessary.

On the question whether we should look to set sectoral targets, again I find myself in agreement with the ECCLR Committee. Its stage 1 report suggests that

“sectors need a clear understanding of what they are expected to deliver”

and adds that

“sectoral disaggregation of the targets is required and as our understanding of what is necessary in each sector develops, a move to sector specific targets may be appropriate.”

That is one of the key roles for the just transition commission, and another good reason for putting it on a statutory footing.

Before I conclude, I will touch briefly on agriculture. That sector needs to do more, and there is an appetite for it to do so. However, that is best achieved collaboratively—by using carrots as well as sticks, rather than the more confrontational approach that, unfortunately, is adopted by some. As the NFUS says, emissions are an inevitable consequence of our food production. They can and should be reduced, but there is an argument for looking at how the positives from agriculture can be more fairly balanced alongside the negatives. Ultimately, however, farmers and crofters must be seen as part of the solution.

The clear and present threat that is posed by climate change—both here and internationally—has been exposed by the latest IPCC report. It demands a more urgent and ambitious response from the Scottish Government and the Parliament. I am determined to continue to work with colleagues across the chamber to ensure that, as we have done in the past, we can meet that challenge collectively.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): Before we move into the open debate, I note that we have a little time in hand so members may take interventions and have the time made up. I ask for speeches of six minutes.

15:24

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): With the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, we showed leadership in tackling the scourge of climate change, and we can and will do so again with our Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill. I deliberately say that it is “our” bill rather than the Government’s bill because in a Parliament of minorities, the Government is merely the midwife; we must all be the bill’s parents.

In 2009, the Parliament united to support our bill, and as we consider whether to support the general principles of the new bill, the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee has

shown the way by unanimously agreeing its report. That does not mean that any of us has resiled from the detailed differences that we will explore as the bill proceeds, but we have to put some of our differences on hold in order to agree the next steps, and that will continue to be true throughout the bill's passage.

For my part, I have already written two stage 2 amendments—I saw the cabinet secretary flinch when I said that. One is to put into the bill the zero carbon target that is implicit within it, and the other is to add to the long title a reference to the world's need to restrict global temperature rise to 1.5°C. I cannot see any way that we could make it legally enforceable in those terms, but others may do so.

It is vital that we continue to challenge one another and ourselves on every proposal, including the ones that I have just described, but in the end we must return to agreement if we are to succeed in moving our fellow citizens with us to protect our planet and all life that depends on it. That means that we must be prepared for compromise, but it does not require us to advertise what compromises we might contemplate before we actually make them.

In essence, we are writing a corporate plan for our country's future—a model process, actions and method for other countries to follow. We are but a small speck on the globe's surface, but that small speck can be the fulcrum over which we leverage others' actions. However, a corporate plan is mere hot air if it is just a piece of paper. It has to lead to individual change. For that reason, I want to talk about some of the things that we in the Parliament can do—the practical things that we can do on the ground to contribute to reductions.

I will illustrate that. In my first full year in the Parliament, I claimed for 19,391 miles in a car at a rate of £49.03 per mile. [*Laughter.*]

Stewart Stevenson: It was 49.3p per mile. Did I say something different?

Members: You said “pounds”.

Stewart Stevenson: If only. Presiding Officer, are you not glad that everyone is listening to my every word? [*Laughter.*]

I also claimed what would have been £369.67 had I been able to use a senior railcard, as I now do. Therefore, 96 per cent of my travel costs were for car miles. In the year that has just ended, I claimed for 6,387 miles at 45p per mile and £2,707 for public transport. Only 51.5 per cent of my costs are for car miles now, and my mileage is less than a third of what it was in 2002-03.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): I wonder what costs the member puts on democracy given the lack of representation that

people in very rural constituencies who do not have the luxury of a train station might experience if their members were unable to visit them by car in order to represent them properly in Parliament.

Stewart Stevenson: My personal activity rate, measured by the number of surgeries and the number of entries in my diaries, was broadly the same in the year that has just ended as it was in 2002-03. If I can do it, others can. We also have modern technology. Why do we not do online video surgeries with our constituents so that they can engage with us without leaving home? That idea was just made up on the spur of the moment. I am talking about what we can do to set an example. I am not saying that everyone can do it.

Elaine Smith: Will the member take an intervention?

Stewart Stevenson: I ask the member to forgive me. I will make a little more progress on cars, if I may.

The marginal cost of a car mile is falling steeply as hybrid propulsion becomes more pervasive, and for all-electric vehicles the fuel cost is now down to 3p per mile. I am going to write to the Presiding Officer at the end of this debate to suggest that we reduce our expenses per mile, initially from 45p per mile to 30p per mile, and that we commit to tapering it to zero by 2032, which coincides with our going electric, because the marginal cost of driving becomes almost zero.

We should also keep our cars for longer; I plan to keep mine for 10 years. I have a paperless office in the Parliament, which saves money. Other people can do that as well. [*Interruption.*] Okay, my speech is on paper—I have a 99.5 per cent paperless office. [*Laughter.*]

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Stewart Stevenson: I will. I will regret it, but I will.

Neil Findlay: Would the member care to hazard a guess how many of the people who access the electric vehicles grant are from the lowest socioeconomic groups? I have tried to find that out from the Government, but I cannot get the information.

Stewart Stevenson: I will not hazard a guess. However, I know that there are a lot of electric vehicles out there, because there are 6,500 charging points in Scotland and, as time goes on, more vehicles will be available at cheaper prices. Let us hope that that happens sooner rather than later.

We are also encouraging active travel for our citizens. I propose that we stop allowing MSPs to claim for short taxi journeys—initially journeys of

less than a mile, less than 1.5 miles by 2021 and less than 2 miles by 2026. I am going to write to the Presiding Officer about that, too.

I walked 81.3 miles in March. It is not very much—only 2.6 miles a day—but how far did everyone else in the chamber walk?

If we, as individuals, do some of those quite simple things, we can have credibility and a dialogue with the citizens of Scotland. I have given only a couple of examples. If I had another hour to speak, Presiding Officer—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Which you do not have, thank you.

Stewart Stevenson: —I could give another 100 examples.

15:31

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): I declare an interest as a farmer, landowner and food producer.

Roseanna Cunningham: And as a car owner.

John Scott: I am a car owner as well, cabinet secretary. I will not be doing any virtue signalling in my speech, I can tell members that now.

I welcome the opportunity to speak in this stage 1 debate. I thank all those who have given evidence, in whatever form, to the committee. I thank our clerks, and I thank the wider public and our young people for their active engagement in the process.

Although we all share the ambitions to reduce the speed of climate change and the rate of temperature rises, we need to find a practical way of achieving them. The Scottish Conservatives want our nation to be one of the lead nations worldwide in getting to net zero as quickly as possible. Although we are concerned about the difficulties and cost of pioneering and delivering on that ambition, we are also excited by the opportunities that it may offer to our scientific and business development communities. It is a long-held business mantra that the prize goes to those who can turn a challenge into an opportunity, and Scotland as a whole will need to buy into that concept. As I said in the climate debate last Wednesday, it may be our young people who help drive it forward more quickly, by influencing their parents. I welcome the young people who are in the public gallery today.

Ambition is not lacking, but easily reducing greenhouse gas emissions and keeping temperature rises to 1.5°C will be very hard. We are in a limbo land: we are debating the principles of the bill today while awaiting further advice from the Committee on Climate Change on 2 May. However, the consideration of various fundamentals of the bill are not dependent on the

CCC's advice or on pathways being demonstrated.

The most obvious fundamental is the cost of pursuing targets. The Parliament and the people of Scotland need a better understanding of what is going to be expected of them, and the cost to them, as the financial memorandum for the bill is—at best—unclear on that point. A figure of £13 billion appears to have been almost plucked out of thin air, with TIMES modelling not accurately applying to the two sectors that are most perceived as needing to do better—namely transport and agriculture. That, of itself, calls into question the reliability of the whole TIMES modelling process.

Stewart Stevenson: Will the member take an intervention?

John Scott: If it is brief.

Stewart Stevenson: Does Mr Scott regret, as I do, the fact that there is not a costing for the cost of doing nothing, which, I think it is generally accepted, will far exceed the cost of doing something?

John Scott: I have only Mr Stevenson's word for that, but by and large, I accept what he says.

The accounting methods and models used to arrive at the figure that I have mentioned, and other figures as high as £55 billion, were not clearly explained to the committee and left us all—at best—confused. If the Government cannot easily explain the likely cost burdens to committee members who are willing and endeavouring to understand them, how will it get its message over to the taxpayers and the businesspeople who are going to have to fund them? Although yesterday's response from the Scottish Government to the stage 1 report acknowledges those concerns, it does little to address them, noting as it does that the bill is about raising ambitions, not about delivering costed solutions.

Another cost that will not change, no matter what the Committee on Climate Change says, is the physical and mental health cost of expected and required behaviour change. The lifestyle changes that the Scottish Government and we as a Parliament are apparently expecting the people of Scotland to make will leave many individuals and businesses feeling threatened and financially pressured. The Scottish Government will have to be very careful about how it is perceived as it presses for modal shift—that is to say, moving people out of their cars and into electric vehicles or on to trams, buses or bicycles, or just on to pavements, given that more of us are expected to walk to work.

With regard to the agriculture sector, lifestyle and business model changes will undoubtedly be

required for the increased delivery of the public goods that is demanded by the bill and environmental non-governmental organisations. A welcome start to such progress would be a more realistic appreciation, understanding and measurement of the contribution that land managers and farmers already make to climate change reduction, if that were measured in a more holistic way. Mark Ruskell has already alluded to this issue, but not everyone will know or think it reasonable that a farmer planting trees on his land or allowing renewable energy projects such as wind farms or hydroelectric schemes or, indeed, peatland restoration schemes on his land receives no credit in terms of carbon reduction for doing so. Indeed—and more important in this context—the agriculture sector receives no credit for that type of land use on agricultural land.

The measurement of climate change-reducing industries is driven by IPCC standards, but a parallel and more realistic way of measuring the benefits of different types of whole-farm land use, particularly here in Scotland, is required. I welcome the Government's acknowledgement of that in its response and its offer to work further with the committee on the matter, and I suggest that the Scottish Government look to New Zealand and Ireland for good examples of how that should be done.

Turning very briefly to housing, I support Maurice Golden's view that we need all homes to have an energy performance certificate rating of C by 2030, and I earnestly encourage the Scottish Government to work harder to deliver that. Its response suggests that ambition to improve housing is only for others, not for the Scottish Government.

We await the further evidence from the Committee on Climate Change on 2 May and hope that, if it expects still greater effort from the people of Scotland to reduce the threat of climate change, it will explain and demonstrate credible pathways to doing that, and the likely cost involved.

15:38

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): I do not think that it is overdramatic to say that the possibility of a climate catastrophe is the biggest global issue of our time. Indeed, we should never tire of saying it until it is well and truly planted in the mind of every citizen in this country and beyond.

Six months ago, we all got a wake-up call when the IPCC warned the world that

“rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes”

were needed to tackle the climate crisis effectively. I was therefore pleased to see the Scottish Government hosting nearly 200 climate scientists this week at the John McIntyre conference centre in Edinburgh at the third working group of the IPCC. They were looking at ways of equipping Governments with the information that they need to act now, keeping in mind the goals of the Paris agreement and national ambitions to achieve net zero emissions. The final report, which is due for publication in 2021, will provide Governments with scientific information to underpin responses to climate change in the context of sustainable development.

Of course, all of that is happening in the week of this stage 1 debate and the release of some interesting statistics from Stop Climate Chaos Scotland's YouGov poll. According to the poll, 78 per cent of respondents are either more concerned or as concerned about climate change as they were 12 months ago; one in three are more concerned about climate change now than they were a year ago; and 70 per cent support Scotland taking greater action on transport, food and homes to tackle climate change. It is encouraging to see new polling that highlights that people in Scotland are getting the message, recognise the seriousness of the situation and want more action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As Gillian Martin, the convener of the ECCLR Committee, mentioned, we had the benefit this morning of meeting young climate change protesters at an informal meeting of the committee. It is fair to say that they did not hold back in letting us know all that we need to do, and that we need to do more. There is no doubt in my mind that the recent climate strikes have acted as a catalyst to show that there is not only justification, but an appetite for urgent and more ambitious action from Governments across the world, not just here in northern Europe.

Turning to the stage 1 report, I add my thanks to the committee clerks for the work that they have done. The committee recognised that the Scottish Government selected the more ambitious of the two options proposed by the CCC, which highlights what will be required from Governments around the world to keep temperature rises closer to 1.5°C than 2°C. However, we also noted that the Scottish Government is awaiting further advice from the CCC in the light of the 2018 IPCC report, as are we all. It is therefore welcome to see in the Scottish Government's response to the ECCLR Committee's stage 1 report its reiteration that it

“has been clear that if the CCC advises on 2 May that higher target ambition is now credible then we”—

that is, the Scottish Government—

“will act on that advice”.

I was pleased to hear the cabinet secretary confirm that in her opening speech.

The ECCLR Committee's report states:

"A 90% target is stretching and challenging and a net-zero target will present further challenges but there are also great opportunities. The benefits and cost savings of early action far outweigh the costs of the effects of climate change."

However, we have to bear in mind that setting targets that are too high too soon could have a detrimental impact on Scotland's economic growth. Striving for the most ambitious targets possible, based on the best available advice, is admirable, but it must not compromise the wellbeing of the people of Scotland.

That brings me to farming. I am grateful to the NFUS for its briefing in advance of the debate, which recognises that climate change is a critically important issue for Scottish farming. I am also grateful for the WWF briefing, which highlights the report that it produced with Vivid Economics, providing a pathway for agriculture to reduce emissions by around 35 per cent while maintaining current production levels.

There is no doubt that farmers and crofters will have an important role to play in helping to tackle the climate change challenge, and it is important that agriculture is seen as being part of the solution, not part of the problem, as other members have stated this afternoon. It should be noted that reducing emissions from farming beyond those that can be achieved through efficiency and technology would mean reducing the amount of food produced in Scotland and instead importing from abroad. That may result in a reduction in emissions in Scotland, but would result in increased emissions elsewhere.

Several witnesses who gave evidence to the committee spoke of the potentially disproportionate impact that a badly managed transition could have in rural areas and on those working in the agricultural sector. I am sure that none of us in the chamber wants to see land abandonment in the Lowlands or the Highlands and Islands, which could be an outcome if we are not careful.

I want to touch quickly on carbon capture, use and storage, as I am keen to see progress on the carbon capture and storage plant that is proposed for Grangemouth in my constituency. The ECCLR Committee welcomes the recent shift in the UK Government's position on CCS and has recommended that the Scottish Government continues to work with its UK and international counterparts on the development of CCS technology. We call on both Governments to utilise all levers at their disposal domestically to evaluate the merits of CCS and consider the

merits of early development and implementation of that technology. It is encouraging to see the Scottish Government's response detailing the establishment of the CCUS leadership group, support for the acorn CCS project and funding for a Scottish universities collaborative on CCUS. That is progress indeed.

15:44

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): I thank the committee for its work and note that the committee had extra time to look at the issue, as mentioned by the committee's convener, Gillian Martin, in response to my intervention. However, other members had little time to consider the Government's response, and I express my disappointment at that.

Although I am not a member of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, I welcome the opportunity to speak on a vital subject that should—and, increasingly, does—concern all of us. As we know and as other members have mentioned, school pupils around the world have been on strike to raise awareness of climate change. They want to ensure that future generations are not denied the right to a healthy planet.

As the committee's report notes, the issue of climate change raises particular challenges for intergenerational justice. We have a duty to protect the environment and natural resources for future generations. Alan Munro of Young Friends of the Earth Scotland warned the committee that the Government risks

"passing on the burden for ... radical transformative action to young people".—[*Official Report, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee*, 20 November 2018; c 15.]

In an open letter about the effects of climate change, young activists say:

"People did die, are dying and will die because of it, but we can and will stop this madness."

As Claudia Beamish mentioned, the young people's movement was launched by Greta Thunberg, a young woman who first missed school in Sweden to protest in 2018. I understand that she has recently been nominated for the Nobel peace prize. It is apposite that it was a young woman who started the movement, as women and girls suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change. The tasks of producing and gathering food, collecting water and finding fuel for heating and cooking are often the responsibility of women, and climate change is making those life-supporting tasks much more difficult.

The committee's report cites the Paris agreement, which names important rights such as

gender equality and the empowerment of women as fundamental to achieving climate justice. The report recommends that

“climate justice requires further focus to ensure Scotland has the necessary structures in place to engage and support the most vulnerable through the period of transition, as well as a responsibility to developing nations.”

Many organisations have been campaigning on that issue for some time. There was a large campaign outside the Parliament today, which many members took the opportunity to join in, and there are many campaigners in the gallery. The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund—SCIAF—knows from its consistent work in developing countries that people who were already living in extreme poverty are suffering the most severely as a result of climate change. The most recent cyclone that struck Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe affected more than 2 million people and caused indescribable devastation. When I visited Malawi on a previous occasion, I saw the aftermath of such an event, when people lose shelter and do not have access to food because of flooding.

Jessica Swart, a CARE spokesperson, commented that, following a natural disaster such as a cyclone, women and girls are particularly vulnerable. Climate scientists have confirmed that such disasters will only become more severe as a result of climate change. The effect that those events have on real lives underpins what we are trying to do. In response to the IPCC’s report, the committee recommended that the Government should seek further guidance on whether its 2030 target is still appropriate, and we have heard that the Government intends to wait until 2 May to consider that.

The committee’s report shows that 0.5°C of difference would result in several hundred million fewer people being exposed to climate-related poverty. As we know, 70 per cent of the world’s poorest are women. We also know that 80 per cent of the people who are displaced by climate change are women. The UN has highlighted the need for gender-sensitive responses to the impacts of climate change, yet the average level of representation of women on national and global climate negotiating bodies is below 30 per cent, which is just not good enough. The Women’s Environmental Network specifically makes the point that

“Until social inequality is addressed, climate change will only get worse.”

I turn to another issue. During stage 1, the committee heard evidence on the importance of monitoring other harmful emissions, such as methane, and acknowledged the potential for targets to positively impact on air quality. I believe that fracking would challenge our ambitions.

Fracking is an issue of major concern in my community. As MSPs, we have a responsibility to protect our communities from harm. Fracking has proven deeply unpopular in every community in the UK where it has been trialled. Pollution, noise and dangerous tampering with the very ground on which we have built homes are justified concerns. I believe that a practice that is banned in Germany and France is not safe here in Scotland. Aidan O’Neill QC confirmed recently that we have the power to ban fracking. As fracking would put at risk the ambitions of the targets that are set, it is time that the Government used that power.

SCIAF notes in its submission to the committee:

“The 2020 and 2030 targets proposed in the Bill essentially maintain current levels of ambition and are, therefore, inadequate, and a 90% target by 2050 would represent a huge missed opportunity to lead the world in climate change legislation.”

In a briefing to MSPs, SCIAF adds:

“We must see this Bill for what it is—an opportunity for this Parliament to make a bold and world leading commitment to save the poorest, and all of us, from this impending disaster. At a time when concern over climate change is at an all-time high, this Bill is an opportunity for this Parliament to do something truly remarkable, in the name of the poorest who are already suffering the effects of climate change, and for the sake of the next generation, whose future is in our hands.”

That is why we need the Government and this Parliament to tackle climate change with urgency and not push it on to the shoulders of today’s young people. I look forward to seeing amendments to the bill at stage 2, including the introduction of a statutory just transition commission.

15:50

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our age, and Scotland’s international leadership on climate change means that our plans must be ambitious, credible and affordable. That is exactly what the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill delivers.

The bill is set against a backdrop of Scotland being a world leader in tackling climate change and on the circular economy. Scotland’s low-carbon transition is well under way. Our emissions have almost halved since 1990 and we continue to outperform the UK in delivering reductions.

We have a target to generate the equivalent of 100 per cent of gross annual electricity consumption and 11 per cent of heat consumption from renewable energy by 2020. In the UK context, Scotland continues to lead on renewable energy, with 75 per cent of Scotland’s gross electricity consumption coming from renewable

sources—an increase on the 70 per cent figure that was achieved in 2017. Importantly, Scotland's renewable energy electricity currently makes up 24 per cent of the UK's renewables output.

Of course, our ambitions extend beyond that as we set forth towards Scotland creating a circular economy. We are the first country in the UK to commit to the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers to improve the rate and quality of recycling. I have seen that scheme operating at first hand, at a local Nisa store owned by Mr Abdul Majid. Mr Majid piloted the scheme and the generous people of Bellshill asked that the money from their returns be donated to St Andrew's Hospice, which does amazing work caring for those who require palliative care. Not only is the scheme helping with recycling, but it is having a positive impact on the community, thanks to the generosity that has been shown. The deposit return scheme is just one of the elements that the Scottish National Party Government is introducing to tackle our throwaway culture; other elements include the establishment of an expert panel on environmental charging and other measures to tackle the issue.

In 2017, across Scotland, for the first time we recycled more than we sent to landfill. Since 2007, Scotland's household recycling rate has improved by more than 13 per cent, from 32.2 to 45.6 per cent. Let us all hope that that trend continues.

The Scottish Government's approach makes sure not only that we continue to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, but that we are resilient to climate change impacts. This week, the Scottish Government will meet its 2018 programme for government commitment to welcome 220 of the world's top climate scientists by hosting a meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to discuss its sixth assessment report; once again, that reiterates the Government's unwavering commitment to international leadership on the issue.

However, we can always go further—and, with this bill, we are doing that. The bill sets out the Scottish Government's commitment to reduce emissions by 100 per cent, with ambitious interim targets that strengthen Scotland's world-leading position on climate change. The 90 per cent target will be even tougher than the 100 per cent goal that has been set by a handful of other countries, because our legislation will set more demanding, legally binding annual targets covering every sector of our economy.

Finlay Carson: Will the member give way?

Richard Lyle: No. I do not have time.

By 2030, Scotland will have cut emissions by two thirds and, unlike other nations, we will not use carbon offsetting—whereby other countries

would be paid to cut emissions for us—to achieve our goal.

We have a moral responsibility to fight climate change, but Scotland's academic and engineering expertise, coupled with our outstanding natural resources, mean that fighting climate change is also an economic opportunity, which is waiting to be realised.

It is important to reflect the fact that there are some who criticise the bill as not ambitious enough. The message is clear: the bill means that Scotland will have the toughest climate legislation in the world. Sweden has legislated for a 100 per cent target in 2045, but up to 15 per cent of that can be met through the use of international credits. New Zealand has committed to legislate for a 100 per cent target, but has not yet set out details of how that will be met. France, Iceland, Norway and others have made political commitments to net zero, but have not set out plans to legislate for that. Of course, in typical fashion, the UK Government has acknowledged the need to legislate for a 100 per cent target but has not yet set out details of how it can do that. I believe that our SNP Government is making a commitment in the bill to realise our ambitions and to tackle a most important issue.

I pay tribute to the work that our young people are doing. We have seen climate strikes by schoolchildren and other young people in Scotland and across the UK. Some people were quick to criticise them, but I am not. As far as I am concerned, it is their world and their future. It should be a reason for great optimism that young people are taking a stand on climate change. It is right that we are all challenged to see what more we can do. We all have a moral responsibility to do what we can to prevent and mitigate the effects of climate change for future generations.

Scotland has been praised as a world leader, but the urgency of climate change means that it is right that we are all challenged to constantly reassess our approach and see where we could do more. We must harness the energy of our young people and challenge ourselves to go further. In the bill, we are doing just that—we are taking action to deliver the change that we need. We have to do it, to safeguard our future, our children's future, our grandchildren's future—including my grandchildren's—and the future of generations to come.

15:56

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con): I join members across the chamber who are delighted to see such a bill coming before the Scottish Parliament. As someone who has been involved with renewable energy companies and

worked towards improving our environment for most of my life, I very much welcome the bill. I refer members to my entry in the register of interests and in particular to my interests relating to agriculture, forestry, land management, housing and renewable energy.

For members who may not be aware, I point out that my background is one of environmental consultancy, rural development work in Azerbaijan, renewable energy, sustainable construction and numerous conservation projects. From planting trees and restoring peatlands to saving our red squirrels and championing the pearl mussel, almost all of my activities look to improve our natural environment. I am proud of the work that all of those projects have done in not only improving our environment but doing so in a sustainable manner, creating jobs and ensuring that businesses function.

It is clear that the bill has interested many people, and I am sure that many more will contribute as it progresses through Parliament. In my constituency, groups such as Tarland climate change group and St Ternan's in Banchory have already voiced their concerns, and I look forward to working with them to ensure that their points are taken into consideration.

I will focus first on housing. The debate coincides with tomorrow morning's stage 2 consideration of the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill, in which I am due to speak to my amendments. I am seeking to gain support for the identification of residential buildings with low levels of energy efficiency and which require improvements to achieve an energy performance certificate band C or higher by 2030. Last year, the Parliament voted in support of a motion calling for the same commitment from the Scottish Government and I hope that tomorrow's stage 2 consideration will be the first step in achieving that.

It is not only members who are looking for improvements in EPC ratings of homes across Scotland—WWF Scotland has repeatedly called for similar action for a variety of reasons. The first reason is that the measure would naturally reduce energy costs for home owners by moving more people out of fuel poverty and allowing them to live in warmer homes. Secondly, and importantly for the bill that we are considering today, having more energy efficient homes would be a huge step in reducing carbon emissions. WWF Scotland has noted that it is supportive of such measures but is keen for targets to be set in the bill for improving energy efficiency in our homes.

A second area requiring serious attention is our agriculture sector, which would need to reduce emissions significantly to play its role in a net zero target. We of course support NFU Scotland's

position that food production is always likely to remain one of the biggest emitting sectors and that a net zero target does not mean reducing agricultural emissions to zero.

However, the NFU in England now believes that it can reduce its emissions to 35 per cent by 2045, so we await the Scottish Government producing a similar achievable road map. There is no doubt that our farmers are experiencing at first hand the effects of climate change. They accept that more needs to be done to reduce their contribution towards carbon emissions, but they cannot achieve that alone. NFU Scotland has called on the Scottish Government to provide better support so that farmers can become part of the solution to climate change.

A third area that affects climate change is transport. Transform Scotland flagged up that the Scottish Government's current climate change plan and transport proposals are deeply inadequate. Given the lack of ambition for clean green buses and the zero progress on the electrification of rail routes to Aberdeen and Inverness, there is much that can be done here in Scotland to benefit the environment and our economy.

We want the Scottish Government to set ambitious targets, and the Scottish Conservatives will support that ambition. However, it is clear that the Scottish Government is still not being ambitious enough, and the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee is rightly concerned that there is not sufficient assessment or promotion of the positive opportunities for the economy of setting a net zero target. Stop Climate Chaos Scotland briefed that it would like the bill to set a target of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 or earlier, citing evidence from WWF Scotland and Vivid Economics that shows that Scotland is capable of achieving such a target.

Although a net zero target is clearly the preference of many organisations, we must work on building a pathway to ensure that it is possible. We must reach for ambitious targets, but we need to be mindful about making them realistic. We need to ensure that we have sufficient skilled jobs to make the necessary transition, that businesses work with emerging technologies to improve their emissions, and that sectors work together. As the Confederation of British Industry Scotland points out, we need to ensure that there are collaborative policy frameworks across the whole of the UK, because climate change is an issue without borders.

We are very supportive of the bill at this stage, but we will try to strengthen it at later stages. I look forward to working with members, constituents

and organisations to hear how we can achieve our shared ambitions.

16:02

Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): I thank the young climate change activists in the public gallery, who are very welcome, because their enthusiasm has kept us all going.

Today, we are debating, and will vote on, one of the most significant issues that faces humanity. Curbing global warming to a 1.5°C rise demands that we accelerate action. For decades, the scientific consensus has been that global warming exists and that it is anthropogenic—that means that it is a result of human behaviour. High consumption and having little regard for the consequences, even following early warnings of climate change, meant that our behaviour did not change. Humanity's failure to act over the past decades has caused 1°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, which cannot be undone. Headlines are already showing the harm that that rise has done to coral reefs and the effect that it has had on species loss and rising sea levels. With regard to migration, it is clear that people are being forced to move due to climate change-related issues such as flooding and poor agricultural productivity.

Estimated anthropogenic global warming—remember, that means that emissions that have originated from human activity—is increasing at a rate of 0.2°C per decade due to past and on-going emissions. According to the IPCC, warming from anthropogenic emissions from the pre-industrial period to the present will persist for centuries to millennia and will continue to cause further long-term change in the climate system. One example of a continuing change is the rising sea levels. I repeat the point: the emissions that have already been accrued over the period in which we have failed to tackle climate change will affect the planet for centuries to millennia to come. That inactivity has to stop.

Today, we have the opportunity to vote for a bill that could shift Scotland's path towards a sustainable future. We have extensive scientific knowledge to draw on to help us to take the bill through Parliament, and, as a nation, we are equipped with abundant natural resources that will enable us to transition more fully to using renewable energy.

The 2015 Paris agreement, which the bill responds to with an increase in our targets, and the IPCC's 2018 report inform us with greater evidence and reasons for action than ever before. We know from that report that reaching and sustaining net zero global anthropogenic CO₂ emissions and declining net non-CO₂ radiative

forcing would halt human-influenced global warming within several decades. We also know from the IPCC that the maximum temperature that will be reached will be determined by what we and other policy makers across the world are doing now. Global warming will be determined by culminated net global human-caused CO₂ emissions up to the point that we achieve net zero. That means that we have to act as quickly as possible—we have to act now.

Elaine Smith: Earlier, we heard about paperless offices from one of Bill Kidd's colleagues. Does Bill Kidd agree that we should be encouraging our engineers, for example, to look at the lack of recycling of new technology and the ever-increasing scramble for things such as new mobile phones? Such things are not recycled enough, and that is a problem.

Bill Kidd: Elaine Smith is absolutely right. We have to address the capitalist madness that means people have got to have a new toy every five seconds. That does not do anything about recycling the old toys. I thank Elaine Smith very much for raising that issue.

Climate change is serious, and it requires cross-party and global action. Everyone—irrespective of their political allegiance—needs to back radical and rapid change. The next generation will, quite rightly, hold us to account, and we must act on its behalf and on behalf of generations to follow.

An increasing number of people in Scotland—seven out of 10—agree that tougher action on climate change is needed. Greta Thunberg—whom Elaine Smith, I think, mentioned earlier—is an incredible 16-year-old who inspired 1.4 million school pupils to strike against climate inaction. She has been nominated for the Nobel peace prize. Incidentally, I found out only yesterday that she is related to Svante Arrhenius, who won the Nobel prize for chemistry in 1903 and was the first person to use basic principles of physical chemistry to calculate the link between increases in CO₂ and the earth's surface temperature. Everybody should watch Greta Thunberg's TED talk, in which she spoke profoundly about our responsibilities. She commented:

“the one thing we need more than hope is action. Once we act, hope is everywhere.”

That statement has stuck with me. We should not be afraid of action or change; rather, we should embrace them.

In that context, I am pleased with the Scottish Government's quick response to the IPCC's report and its commitment to seek fresh advice. I trust that, as soon as a pathway towards net zero emissions and curbing emissions to 1.5°C is drawn up, it will be followed. I believe that

independent advice will be published early next month.

I can see that I am near the end—of speaking only, I hope—so I will jump forward.

According to the Tyndall centre for climate change research, transitions to a sustainable path would secure jobs in Scotland for at least two generations in the renewable energy sector and related sectors. Improved air quality would be another positive benefit. We could also use the approach to tackle fuel poverty by creating energy-efficient homes that are powered by renewable energy. We can be smarter and, crucially, we can use this turning point in history to build a future that is fit for generations to come.

16:08

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): With all those big words and the history lesson from Mr Kidd, I thought that he had lifted Stewart Stevenson's speech, but it was far more interesting than what we usually get from him. I am glad that Stewart Stevenson was not here when I said that.

I came into elected politics after years of campaigning on environmental issues in my community. I saw big, powerful companies exploiting the land around my community to make huge profits from their plans to rip up the countryside for opencast activity, to fill in previously opened-up countryside with landfill or to take over land for energy production with little thought or care for the impact on the water, the air, the climate or the community—and certainly with little care for the impact on local people.

That was my introduction to political campaigning, and I have retained a strong interest in the issue to this day, because the environment and climate change go to the very essence of the politics that I believe in. It is a class issue—absolutely. By that, I do not mean the way in which it is depicted in the media, as an issue for the chattering classes. It is not, because it chimes 100 per cent with the politics that I believe in—politics with a socialist philosophy.

In order to address climate change and to ensure that there is justice for all our people, not just the powerful and the rich, we have to show international solidarity and co-operation, deal with all people equitably, and use and distribute the world's resources in a sustainable way. If we are to deal with climate change, we have to act on those principles.

If the world's climate continues to heat up, we know who will be affected most: it will be the poor, the weak, the vulnerable and the isolated who suffer most—as we see when we look at marginalised communities, whether in the Amazon

in South America, in sub-Saharan Africa or, indeed, around our own coastline and marginal lands. It will be the low paid who suffer from increased food and energy costs and whose homes are the least energy efficient. It will be the poor who will suffer most from the impacts of air pollution and respiratory illness. It will be the marginalised and the isolated whose land will be flooded or eroded, whose farms will turn to desert and who ultimately will be displaced, homeless and stateless, or will become refugees, as often happens when war breaks out because of conflicts over resources or land. That is the reality of climate change for the most vulnerable people not only in our society but in societies across the world.

One of the most frustrating local issues that I have had to deal with during my time in Parliament has been that of wind energy. I am a great supporter of wind energy, but I have watched us waste one of the greatest opportunities that we have had, as speculators have come in with applications for wind farms in communities—one of the latest in my area is from an Austrian viscount—in the hope that they will get permission. Very often—most of the time—they do.

The consequence is that, every time the turbine turns, the profit flutters off to the board rooms of Paris, Bonn, Amsterdam, Madrid or Copenhagen when that money could go back into our communities to fund services, to ensure that houses come up to proper energy standards, to go into decarbonisation projects and to ensure that those communities can then enthusiastically endorse the roll-out of wind energy. Instead, we have hugely wasted that opportunity. Almost all of it has been exploited by the private sector when it could have been community owned and led by the people. Let us not repeat that mistake with offshore wind energy as it is rolled out.

Earlier, I asked the minister about air passenger duty, but she failed to give us an answer. How can she claim to support the strongest action on climate change while, at the same time, seeking to develop a policy that expands air travel? It just does not add up.

When will we see a watertight ban on fracking? As we know from Elaine Smith's speech and from Queen's counsels' advice, we do not have such a ban at the moment. I have to say to the Government that we do not need another consultation on fracking; we need a ban that is watertight.

Many of the relatively easy things have been done on climate change. We now need big ideas, some of which may make only small but incremental differences. Scottish Labour wants to expand and better regulate public transport. We want to expand bus travel and make it a free

service across the country. I have heard people criticise us for our ambition. If such people had been around when the national health service started up, they would have said, "Oh no, Mr Bevan, that's far too hard. Don't even attempt it." It is essential that we do these things, and I hope that others will come on board with our approach.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): Come to a close, please.

Neil Findlay: We have to aim high in this debate. The Scottish Government has a plan, and we suggested changes to it to make it more robust. I hope that the Parliament as a whole takes the lead.

16:15

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): This is, indeed, an important debate in which to participate, as we have heard from members' very thoughtful speeches. The close attention that is being paid by the young people in the public gallery is testament to the debate's importance.

Our is the first generation to know that how we are living is impacting on the planet, and we have a duty to do something about that. All of us have a duty to leave the planet in a better position than that in which we found it, and knowing more about the effects that our mode of living is having makes doing so even more important. Of course, the information changes all the time, with more research on different aspects of our way of life and on different parts of the earth, so we must not set our actions in stone but be flexible while maintaining our goals.

Many people who are involved in the climate change field are constructing various models of how to progress. It is the Government's task to make proposals that are credible and deliverable, and it is for all parties to coalesce around those proposals, as the long-term planning that is required goes well beyond one parliamentary session. The proposals must be credible because, whatever we do, we must take our population with us. Changing behaviour must be achievable. People will want to know what proposals mean for them and their way of life—they need to know what changes to make to their everyday lives and what will be available to help them to achieve those changes.

It is not credible, for example, to expect everyone to become vegan or to ditch their car if they live where there are no buses or alternative forms of transport available. If we tell people that they will not be allowed to fly, they will not come with us and support the proposals. Proposals have to be achievable if they are to mean anything and are to have a chance of success. We must

harness the commitment and enthusiasm of our younger generation, to encourage older generations to make the required changes.

We need to remind ourselves and our constituents constantly that Scotland is a world leader on climate change already and that our ambitions in the bill are being watched carefully worldwide. It is not often that devolved legislatures are invited to contribute to climate change conferences, yet our First Minister and cabinet secretary have contributed frequently. There have also been discussions in the media between our First Minister and world leaders in the field such as Al Gore.

I am proud that Scotland will not use carbon offsetting, which I do not find very ethical. Other countries already have their own problems to deal with. As Elaine Smith said, we have seen recent terrible flooding in countries in southern Africa.

The fight against the effect of climate change is a moral responsibility for Scotland. We are fortunate to have academic and engineering expertise. That expertise, along with our outstanding natural resources, means that meeting our climate change targets is possible and that we can see the issue as an economic opportunity and not just a threat.

Many of our young people want to work in the fields that advise companies on their climate change responsibilities and how they can change their practices to meet them, as well as on their corporate social responsibility policies in relation to the issue. My daughter, for example, works in this area, and the work is increasing exponentially.

Several members have noted that the agriculture sector produces a high level of carbon emissions. Because of the nature of most the land in Scotland, agriculture is likely to remain an emitter. However, it can also play a huge part in the removal of greenhouse gases through tree planting, soil management and the protection and restoration of wetland and peatland. As Professor Andy Kerr, the executive director of the Edinburgh centre for carbon innovation, said to the committee:

"overall, we are not worried so much about exactly which sector emissions reductions come from; the issue is more about whether we are delivering them overall."—[*Official Report, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee*, 23 October 2018; c 17.]

It is important that there is a greater, wider debate and honesty, around these issues.

As I have said, we are fortunate in that we have access to people with expertise, including the people in the centre for ecology and hydrology and the James Hutton Institute, in my constituency, as well as its crop research centre in Dundee.

It is important that, under this legislation, we continue to include our fair share of aviation and shipping emissions in our targets. No other country does that.

Patrick Harvie's attack on the oil and gas industry this afternoon was really ill judged. It should be noted that Scotland is already beating its climate change targets while supporting a strong and vibrant domestic oil and gas industry.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Watt is just closing, Mr Harvie.

Maureen Watt: The just transition commission was established to advise Scottish ministers on the manner of transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

I support the bill proceeding, and I look forward to Scotland maintaining its position as a world leader on climate change.

16:22

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests and my membership of the NFU Scotland.

As a member of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, and as a former farmer and now Scottish Conservative spokesman on the natural environment, I am delighted to be speaking in the debate. I join members in thanking the clerks, and in thanking the stakeholders who have provided evidence, including the young climate change activists who have been with us today and have been outside the Parliament.

However, as other committee members have done, I must express my frustration and disappointment at the failure of the Scottish Government to respond timeously to our report: 24 hours before the debate is far from enough time for us to respond constructively. The Scottish Government will happily grandstand on past achievements and talk tough on tackling climate change, but responding to the report only a day before the debate sends out a poor signal not only to those of us in the chamber, but to our communities, including the young activists who joined us this morning and who want meaningful and fact-based actions that stand up to scrutiny. It has left us little time to digest just how the Government is planning take on board the committee's recommendations on how we can make progress on tackling climate change.

We must all play our part in tackling climate change, and we must strive to ensure that the right

balance is struck in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The committee heard extensive evidence from various organisations. Whatever their position on net zero emissions, they absolutely agree and recognise that although transformational change will not happen overnight, this generation must, without fail, be the generation that puts in place the policies that will safeguard the future of the planet and future generations.

I believe that our stage 1 report has taken the correct science-based and evidenced-based approach to understanding the drivers, impacts and future risks of climate change, and how we can reduce emissions. That science-based approach will give clear direction in setting targets and, ultimately, in achieving a net zero target as the science shows the pathway.

In the light of the recent IPCC report, the UK Government and the Scottish Government wrote to the UK's CCC for further advice on setting potentially more ambitious emissions reduction targets.

I sincerely hope that a scientific pathway to achieving net zero can be identified and that we can have options to take it. There is also a case to be made for stretch targets, to encourage further investment in innovation.

I look forward to the Committee on Climate Change's report that will be published on 2 May, and to scrutinising its advice and evidence at the ECCLR Committee. I hope that the Government will allocate the time that is needed to ensure that we have good and robust legislation that ensures that we can make the right choices for Scotland and the global environment.

By "the right choices", I mean policy decisions that consider the wider implications, such as by ensuring that displacement of production does not occur by pushing demand-driven production to other parts of the world where the impacts are more damaging. A forced reduction in livestock production in Scotland, for example, would result only in the demand for meat being met by increased imports—potentially from South America, which would result in further reduction of our invaluable rain forests. The right choice in this case is accelerated and increased investment to improve animal husbandry and grass and feed production. It is arguable that enhanced and more efficient production will have a greater impact on reduction of greenhouse gases.

We need to change the narrative when it comes to agriculture and land use. Far too many people take the lazy option, particularly non-meat eaters—the vegan and vegetarian brigade—who portray agriculture as the villain of the piece, when

science suggests that to a great extent it can be the solution.

Innovation and technology can be at the heart not only of emissions reduction targets but of a new revived and economically sustainable agriculture industry. We must seize new opportunities. I call on the Scottish Government to place greater emphasis on developing new technologies, and to give a clear commitment to action that drives private investment and accelerates change.

Mark Ruskell: Finlay Carson has probably never tried a Greggs vegan sausage roll. He might want to acknowledge that consumer trends are towards reducing meat consumption. Surely he recognises that that creates an opportunity for Scottish agriculture to respond, through horticulture products and through better quality meat, but less of it, being sold.

Finlay Carson: When we are looking to pick the low-hanging fruit, turning the whole Scottish nation into vegetarians is probably one of the last options that we need to consider.

Jim Skea, from the IPCC, said that, in setting the long-term direction, there is a clear need for research and development into

“land management, bio-energy with carbon capture and storage, and ... afforestation”.—[*Official Report, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee*, 23 October 2018; c 8.]

There are many technologies that we can use and actions that we can take now to make quick gains. The Government can create an economy that can seize the low-hanging fruit.

The need for action is not lost on the public. A poll that Stop Climate Chaos Scotland conducted ahead of the debate shows that one in three Scots is more concerned with climate change than they were a year ago; indeed, almost 80 per cent of respondents are either as concerned about climate change as they were 12 months ago or more concerned than they were 12 months ago. The poll also highlighted that seven in 10 Scots support taking tougher action to reduce emissions in transport, food production and homes, in order to tackle climate change.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Come to a close, please.

Finlay Carson: I am a member of the ECCLR Committee, and I stress that I will support the bill at decision time. It marks an important step forward in tackling climate change.

We should not rush the process. The cabinet secretary's response at stage 1 hints at her wanting a stage 2 debate before the summer recess. That smacks of not taking action. We cannot afford to squander this opportunity. Climate

change is an issue on which Parliament must not take a path that does not leave a positive legacy for future generations.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I stress to members that “Come to a close” means “Come to a close.”

16:28

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I will do as I am told, Presiding Officer.

I am pleased to be speaking in this debate on climate change, which is one of the most pertinent issues of our time. Few reasonable people could argue that climate change does not require immediate attention, so it is unfortunate that around the world some people are making baseless arguments to fit their own political agendas. Nothing highlights that more than President Trump pulling America out of the Paris climate agreement.

It is easy to stand here and criticise policy makers or leading businesses around the world that are denying or ignoring the extent of the environmental crisis that faces our planet. We can directly control only what we do here in Scotland through the Scottish Parliament. I believe that we are making positive strides forward, but there is still more to do.

I welcome the committee report. The following part of the executive summary was extremely accurate. It states:

“Climate change is an intergenerational justice issue and the committee believes we need to act now to help ensure future generations inherit a world that is sustainable.”

I do not think that anyone could argue with that.

It is only in the past 20 years or so that I remember anyone talking about recycling: 20 years ago, everything seemed to go in the same bin and to landfill. In the recent BBC documentary about waste, a site that had been used for landfill in the 1970s was dug up, and plastic items and clothing in it had not degraded at all. The onus is on us all not just to recycle but to re-use. We live in a materialistic and disposable society in which, unfortunately, instead of continuing to use older items that have begun to show their age, we bin them and buy something new.

In 1995, I was studying in Dortmund in Germany, where I learned a lot. It was the first place that I had visited where recycling of glass, newspapers and plastic was taking place, but when I came home, recycling did not exist in Inverclyde and Scotland.

The price these days of many items of clothing makes it very easy and affordable just to ditch them, but transportation to Scotland of the vast

quantities of those products comes at an environmental cost. Many such items come from the far east—from China, Vietnam and Thailand. Those imports from across the oceans have a massive environmental impact, and we are all guilty when we consume those products. In 2017, Scotland for the first time recycled more than we sent to landfill. I welcome that progress, but it took a long time to get to that point.

It is fitting that the Scottish Parliament is debating climate change and transport in the same week, because they are intrinsically linked. Last year, rail travel increased yet again, but it is disappointing that we have seen a drop in bus travel. The Scottish Government has doubled its investment in infrastructure to support cycling, and is working to increase the number of charging points for electric cars.

The IPCC report touches on the fact that all businesses and individuals have a part to play. I welcome last week's announcement from McGill's Bus Service Ltd in my constituency, which has invested £4.75 million in 26 new buses to meet the new ultra-low emission vehicle standards. That is part of a £24 million investment over the past five years to improve its environmental impact.

Alexander Burnett unfortunately could not take my intervention earlier, but it is crucial that everyone has their part to play. Finlay Carson and even vegans have their parts to play as well. The way in which Mr Carson responded to my Green colleague was unfortunate: I will defend my colleague because I genuinely think that it was an unfair attack on him.

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill means that Scotland will have the toughest climate change legislation in the world. No other nation has committed to targets that are as ambitious as Scotland's, which is testament to the determination of the Scottish Government. By 2030, Scotland will cut emissions by two thirds. Unlike other nations, we will not use carbon offsetting, in which countries would be paid to cut emissions for us in order that we could achieve our goals. I welcome that.

The Scottish Government has said that it will go even further if the UK Committee on Climate Change advises that a more ambitious target is now feasible, as the cabinet secretary said in her opening comments. The bill provides for annual targets, so that the Scottish Government can be held to account for progress every year. No other country has annual targets: most countries that have domestic climate change targets have only interim targets for 2020 or 2030.

I do not think for one minute that members of the Scottish Parliament or the public are shy about challenging Governments or politicians. They

never have been and they never will be, and I welcome that.

I thank the younger people who are in the gallery today and who are pushing this agenda for our nation. I genuinely believe that every generation needs to leave the planet better than it was when it was handed over to them. We do not own the planet; we are merely its custodians in our time here.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to closing speeches. We are very tight for time. Alex Rowley has no more than six minutes, please.

16:34

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): As other members have done, I thank Gillian Martin and the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee for the work that they have done in producing the committee's stage 1 report. Scottish Labour members will support the motion on the bill at stage 1.

I will focus on a couple of areas. The possibility of establishing an independent just transition commission that would be underpinned by statute needs further consideration. I hope that the Scottish Government will take that point seriously, and that it will seek to establish such a commission so that we can make progress.

Liam McArthur spoke about the low-hanging fruit that has been picked so far. That is true. However, while we have done well, factors such as the closure of Longannet power station were great contributors to that success. The next stage will be much tougher. If we are to achieve the net zero target we will need to ensure that there is a just transition

The evidence to date shows that the Scottish Government needs to do much more work. Transform Scotland says that transport is our largest source of emissions and that there has been almost no progress in the sector since 1990. While other sectors of the economy have made progress, there has been a failure to decarbonise Scotland's transport. Transform Scotland also talks about Scotland's fastest-growing emissions source, which it says is aviation.

Earlier, Neil Findlay put to the cabinet secretary a question about whether the SNP Government's policy is to cut air passenger duty by 50 per cent or to get rid of it completely, neither of which would appear to illustrate joined-up government. The cabinet secretary's response was to say that the policy does not fall within her brief, but comes under that of another cabinet secretary. That highlights the lack of joined-up thinking and joined-up government when it comes to that issue and the just transition.

Alexander Burnett talked about housing and fuel poverty. In my view, the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill, which is currently making its way through the parliamentary process, lacks ambition and clarity on how we will achieve some of its objectives, such as being able to have energy efficiency ratings built in to private rented sector properties. We have no detail on how we are to make progress on that and how we are to pay for what needs to be done.

If we want to take people with us on such matters, we need to create opportunities and jobs. So far, there has been a failure to do that. Burntisland Fabrications is now unlikely to get any of the jacket structure work for the latest round of offshore renewable energy projects. That is a tragedy: most of that work is being done abroad. We can imagine how that company's workers and the unions that represent them feel about the just transition. The Scottish Government needs to do far more on that.

As Neil Findlay also pointed out, there has been a missed opportunity on community ownership of renewables—a complete failure on public ownership at local level. This morning, I read a brief from a community energy company that has been successfully established in Nottingham. The Scottish Government needs to think about being a bit more ambitious about how we engage in and involve ourselves in such things, so that we can look to good practice elsewhere. Why are no jobs being created in Scotland, and why are there so few jobs in our renewables sector? What is the Government's role in that? I believe that the Government is failing in those areas.

We must also consider what we are told by various organisations. For example, SCIAF says:

“For developing countries, and for millions of people living in poverty, missing that 1.5°C target is literally a matter of life or death. Warming over 1.5°C means millions more people exposed to drought, heatwaves and floods, and intense competition for resources, leading to unprecedented levels of climate migration.”

That is another big threat.

This is stage 1 of the bill's progress. We support the committee's report, but we believe that we can be far more ambitious. We need very much to focus on the just transition so that workers in Scotland know that there will be a transition and that jobs will be protected as we move forward to tackle climate change and reach the net zero target. I hope that other parties in the Parliament will support that.

16:40

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I refer to my entries on farming and renewables in the register of members' interests.

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this excellent debate, especially having had the privilege of being on the ECCLR Committee for some of the time that it was taking evidence on the issue. I pay tribute to the committee—its convener, its members and its clerks.

Back in 2018, when the committee began looking at the bill, I met various organisations, charities and individuals both in the committee and outside it, and they impressed on me the need to be radical and ambitious when legislating. It was clear back then and it remains clear today that decisive action is required, and I sincerely welcome the fact that, on climate change, there is a broad consensus across the Parliament on what is necessary. WWF Scotland is surely right to state:

“climate change is the biggest crisis facing the world, and Scotland must act urgently to meet this challenge”.

Although it is this Parliament's role to set out the legislative framework and debate the extent to which we will go forwards in the struggle against the effects of climate change, we should also recognise those people across Scotland who are campaigning for climate change mitigation day in and day out. As the recent demonstrations involving young people have shown, there is an intergenerational passion for the issue. Those demonstrations and the one outside Parliament today remind us that we need to get this right not just for the current generation but for future generations, too. That point was made by Gillian Martin, Claudia Beamish and Angus MacDonald, among others.

Similarly, we must also bear in mind those on the ground far from this place who are already doing their bit to reduce their carbon footprints and particularly to cut emissions where possible. The wide variety of sectors across Scotland will ultimately need to adapt to any legislative changes that we initiate. Indeed, many sectors have already begun to adapt voluntarily. An example is housing, where businesses are looking at different ways to build more energy-efficient homes. Maurice Golden spoke about that. In particular, there is the Passivhaus movement, people from which I recently had the privilege of meeting in the Highlands.

In transport, bus companies are beginning to invest in green buses and are retrofitting existing vehicles to reduce carbon output. In Scotland's food and drink sector, the Scotch Whisky Association has noted that the whisky industry is

“close to achieving zero waste to landfill”

and that

“In 2016 non-fossil fuels accounted for 21% of ... energy use, up from 3% in 2008.”

Many representative bodies across Scotland acknowledge the need to take action now. Particularly notable are the words of CBI Scotland, which says that it supports the

“increased ambition to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions”,

because in that way

“we protect the economy, society and the environment”.

It is clear that there is broad recognition across society that action is needed, and that many are doing all that they can to enact such change.

Others have spoken about agriculture, and I will dwell on that for a moment. Scottish agriculture has recognised that it faces a challenge to reduce its carbon output, but it is clear from my conversations with farmers and crofters that the sector not only prides itself on its existing stewardship of land but is positive about making further changes in the way that it works and operates in order to cut emissions, whether that involves investing in new machinery to improve efficiency, planting new hedgerows and trees to sequester emissions or investing in new feeds to reduce methane output.

The ECCLR Committee’s report notes that Lord Deben said that

“credit and gratitude should be afforded to the farming community”

for the work that it has done so far. Much of that work has been carried out voluntarily by farmers and crofters for years or even decades. In pursuing the aims and ambitions of the bill, we must ensure that we do not overburden the livestock sector, which has enough struggles already with unnecessary regulation and impossible targets.

NFU Scotland has said that climate change is “critically important”. It believes that

“we will achieve much better outcomes in the long run if people are encouraged to tackle emissions rather than be forced to through the use of regulation”,

and that, if farmers are able to take a voluntary approach, it

“potentially also enhances their business”.

According to the Scottish Government’s climate change plan, the agriculture and related land use sector has seen a 25.8 per cent fall in emissions between 1990 and 2015, because of, for example, sustained efficiency improvements in farming and better fertiliser management. That is positive and it further highlights the actions that our farmers and crofters are taking to manage land more sustainably.

Representatives of the sector have raised concerns about how carbon capture calculations

are made. The vice president of the NFUS questioned whether

“carbon capture calculations properly identify what is being sequestered by our hills, uplands and peatlands and fairly balance that against emissions from the livestock grazing”.

If it does not, that sequestration should be promoted.

I acknowledge Mark Ruskell’s work on the committee on the measurement of on-farm activity. We will all be aware of farms, such as Kirkton and Auchtertyre farms near Crianlarich, that have been researching how different breeds of sheep are better adapted to changing climate in Scotland’s upland hills. Langtonlees farm in the Borders has sought to install new turbines to exploit the fact that it faces a westerly wind, and it has invested in a slatted shed, which has meant a reduction in the amount of tractor fuel that is required to bale, gather and haul straw back to the farm. Those are just some real-life examples of how our farmers are rising to the challenge of reducing carbon output.

I will turn briefly to another point that others have made: how the changes that we make can help some of the poorest countries around the world. Many countries face the brunt of the devastating impacts of climate change and it is not only our duty to make changes, but a moral responsibility. Neil Findlay was absolutely correct when he said that it is an issue of international solidarity and the effects of climate change on the poor. Those who suffer most will be those who are least able to bear it.

Last month, with other members, I had the pleasure of taking part in the launch of SCIAF’s wee box campaign. The funds that were raised from that and other activities that SCIAF run all year round help to support projects such as the climate challenge programme Malawi, which supports communities that are affected by climate change.

The Scottish Conservatives support the bill at stage 1. We recognise the need to act and be ambitious, and we believe that actions to limit global warming should be focused on those that provide for jobs, innovation and investment in technology. Before we can set a net zero target date, an identifiable pathway to zero emissions needs to be outlined and the potential consequences understood. We must do all that we can to meet the calls from the IPCC to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C and curb the devastating effects of climate change for future generations.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Roseanna Cunningham to wind up the debate.

16:48

Roseanna Cunningham: I thank all members for their various contributions to today's debate. There were a lot of speakers, so I am afraid that I will not be able to mention everyone in my closing remarks.

However, I feel that I should respond to the issue of the late arrival of the Scottish Government's response to the committee report, which was raised by more than one member. I note that rule 9.8 of the standing orders lays down a strict timetable for committee report publication. There is a protocol for Government response, but people who read that protocol would discover that it actually goes so far as to allow for post-debate publication, which I am sure would have led to me getting even greater pelters than I have had this afternoon. In an ideal world there would have been more time for us to make a response, but it was a very large report with a lot of recommendations and, sadly, there was just not enough time for us to be able to respond earlier.

A number of strategic issues came up more than once and I would like to pick up on some of the key themes. First, I appreciate that the Scottish Government's evidence-based approach to target setting has led to the somewhat unusual situation in which we are awaiting further advice from the CCC at the time of the stage 1 debate. I do not think that any of us would have wanted to be in this position, but that is where we are.

It is right that Scotland responded quickly to the Paris agreement with legislative proposals and the introduction of the bill. Indeed, we are one of the first countries to have done so—not that one would notice from the tenor of the debate. It is also right that we asked for updated CCC advice in the light of the new evidence in the IPCC special report. Clearly, we now need to wait for the CCC advice on 2 May. The Scottish Government will act quickly to amend the bill if the CCC says that even more ambitious targets are now credible, and I will keep the Parliament fully informed of our response.

In my opening statement, I emphasised the importance of Scotland's evidence-based approach to tackling climate change. The committee's stage 1 report has recognised the important role of the independent expert advice from the CCC as statutory adviser, but the Scottish Government is also mindful of a wide range of other evidence. Last month, I had a good meeting with Vivid Economics, the authors of the recent WWF Scotland-commissioned report on pathways to net zero emissions in Scotland. That report drew on 2018 work from the Royal Society on greenhouse gas removal technologies; both reports have become available since the CCC last provided advice on Scottish targets, and I am very

grateful to both organisations for their positive and constructive contributions. I have also recently visited the greencow facility at Scotland's Rural College to learn more about research on and innovation around climate-friendly farming, and the Scottish Government is, of course, proud to be hosting this week's meeting in Edinburgh of the world's leading climate scientists as they prepare the next IPCC review reports.

I am listening carefully to all credible sources of evidence, but I heard Claudia Beamish talk about the Government waiting for the CCC's approval. She somewhat overlooks the fact that the CCC is embedded in the 2009 act as our statutory independent scientific adviser.

Claudia Beamish: I take the cabinet secretary's point, but it is my understanding that, although the legislation exists, it is possible for this or any Scottish Government to give reasons for not accepting the CCC's advice and, indeed, to go further than it. After all, the Government did not accept all the advice that it received on the climate change plan.

Roseanna Cunningham: Those calling for us to go beyond the CCC's advice—and there have been a few in the chamber today—must consider what that would mean for an evidence-based approach more widely with regard to targets. It would undoubtedly result in distracting arguments about which evidence to follow when the real aim is meeting the goals of the Paris agreement, and it would walk away from certainty and scientific evidence and instead put opinion in the driving seat.

We all need to act if the Paris agreement goals are to be met—and by “we”, I mean not only all countries, but all communities, all individuals and all businesses. As not much has been said about businesses this afternoon, I will say something now about them. Some are leading the way in this: I recently had a meeting with one major global firm whose Scottish operations have reduced their emissions by 35 per cent since 2010. Their efforts have also helped to save money. For example, they established a behaviour change scheme for staff that allowed an individual worker to identify energy wastage from the programming of equipment, and the issue was addressed not only in that plant but in others using the same equipment. That is just one example of practical action from businesses; there are many more, and I have asked those businesses to use those examples in positive ways by going out and making that point to their colleagues in other business areas.

Scotland has halved its greenhouse gas emissions, and we should all be very proud of that world-leading achievement. The bill will provide the framework for delivering the second half of the

decarbonisation journey all the way to net zero. The opportunities and challenges in the second half of that transition will, of course, be very different from those that we have experienced so far, but what remains unchanged is the value of political consensus. I entirely appreciate the level of interest in and expectation around the next climate change plan; once we have received the CCC's updated advice, we will look again at the current plan, which will need to be reviewed after the passage of the bill. However, climate change plans are major strategic documents that affect all parts of our economy and every person in Scotland. There is a trade-off between their rapid production, including stakeholder and public consultation, and the extent and robustness of their content.

On the issue of costs, which was mentioned by John Scott and others, future Governments will decide what actions to take to deliver the targets, the costs of which will be affected by future scientific understanding and the availability of technology. It is not reasonable to expect to be able to describe those future costs with accuracy. In any case, as Stewart Stevenson interjected, the cost of not tackling climate change will be greater.

It is vitally important that the remainder of Scotland's decarbonisation journey is fair for all. The Government is committed to a transition that continues to bring together our social, economic and climate objectives and that leaves no one behind. The need for a just transition was raised by a number of members, including Claudia Beamish and Alex Rowley.

The just transition commission that we have established has been tasked with providing the Scottish Government with practical advice on how to maximise the opportunities and manage the challenges of decarbonisation in relation to fair work, tackling inequalities and poverty and delivering a sustainable and inclusive labour market. The independent commission, chaired by Professor Jim Skea, started work in January and will advise on how to shift to a carbon-neutral economy in a way that is fair for all. The committee has asked the Scottish Government to further consider how the bill can reflect our commitments to a just transition. Following the debate on that in Parliament in January, I confirm that we are giving the matter further consideration and I will provide an update to Parliament before stage 2 begins.

The committee has asked the Scottish Government to give further consideration to the possibility of setting sector-specific emissions reduction targets. We will do so and provide an updated response once the CCC's advice is available. Again, I must remind members of the multiple interconnections between sectors that

sector targets could make substantially more difficult to factor in, which would be to the detriment of overall success. That is particularly the case with agriculture, which a number of members mentioned, where the inventory does not reflect all that farmers do to reduce emissions and data revisions can have a disproportionate effect on specific sectors. Our current view remains that the existing framework of economy-wide targets is working well and provides the necessary flexibility to respond to changing circumstances.

This is a vitally important bill for every person, business and community in Scotland. The bill strengthens Scotland's place as a world leader in tackling the defining global challenge of our time. It sets the most ambitious targets of any country in the world and ensures that those always remain under review. It further strengthens our already uniquely rigorous framework of accountability around the targets. It will support action effectively over the years and decades to come, as Scotland delivers net zero emissions as soon as possible.

Mark Ruskell: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. The protocol between the Parliament and the Government in relation to the handling of committee business sets out in paragraph 41:

"The Scottish Government should normally respond to any committee report not later than:

a. two months after publication of the report; or

b. where exceptionally the debate is to be within the 2 months of publication, a week before the Chamber debate the report."

Members received the Government's response to the stage 1 committee report on the climate bill at 12.43 pm yesterday. That gave us barely 24 hours to read and digest the implications of the Government's response ahead of this afternoon's debate on this critical legislation. No letter was issued to the committee to explain the nature and reason for the delay.

Presiding Officer, I ask for your advice on whether the protocol has indeed been breached and, if so, what your advice is to the Government and Parliament on this matter.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I thank the member for advance notice of the point of order. I note that the issue was raised at a meeting of the Parliamentary Bureau earlier today and that the cabinet secretary referred to it in her concluding remarks.

It is the case that a protocol exists covering the issue of how the Government should respond to committee reports. The protocol covers best practice. However, it also covers the circumstances in which the Government is not able to respond to a committee in good time and

has to respond on the day of the debate. I believe that that is the situation that the Government has found itself in. I suggest that the member—or the committee—pursues the matter with the Government directly.

I thank the member for the point of order and I am sure that the Government has noted the point he makes.

Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament (Revisions)

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee debate on motion S5M-16420, in the name of Bill Kidd, on revisions to the “Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament”. I invite Bill Kidd to speak to and move the motion.

16:59

Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): Last November, I made an announcement to the chamber on behalf of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, in which I drew the Parliament’s attention to the committee’s report on the importance of confidentiality in relation to reports by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland about MSPs’ conduct.

The report detailed a series of breaches of the code’s provisions, some of which had resulted in information about a complaint appearing in the media before and during the committee’s consideration of the commissioner’s report. The leaks meant that the committee had to carry out its responsibilities while the media were reporting on and speculating about details of the case.

I announced the committee’s intention to review the code of conduct’s rules on confidentiality, and motion S5M-16420 invites members to agree to some revisions to the code that strengthen and clarify those provisions. Members will already be familiar with the changes that are proposed, because all MSPs were consulted on them in January. We took the opportunity to look at confidentiality more widely, and some of the changes in the report relate to the work of committees and the handling by staff of confidential documents.

I take the opportunity to again remind all members of the importance of the confidentiality provisions and the part that they play in preserving the ability of all committees and members to undertake the work of the Parliament in an orderly fashion, without being undermined and pre-empted by external comment and speculation.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees to amend the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament by making the revisions set out in Annexe A of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee’s 1st Report 2019 (Session 5), *Code of Conduct for MSPs - proposed revisions to Rules on Confidentiality of the Complaints Process* (SP Paper 493) with effect from 24 April 2019.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on revisions to the code of conduct.

Decision Time

17:02

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): We come to decision time. The first question is, that motion S5M-16697, in the name of Roseanna Cunningham, on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-16420, in the name of Bill Kidd, on the “Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament”, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees to amend the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament by making the revisions set out in Annexe A of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee’s 1st Report 2019 (Session 5), *Code of Conduct for MSPs - proposed revisions to Rules on Confidentiality of the Complaints Process* (SP Paper 493) with effect from 24 April 2019.

Stalking Awareness Week 2019

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-16208, in the name of Rona Mackay, on stalking awareness week 2019. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament welcomes Stalking Awareness Week, which takes place on 8 to 12 April 2019; recognises that the Suzy Lamplugh Trust has released a report, *Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind - Two Years On*, which looks at the progress that statutory agencies have made to better protect victims of the crime of stalking and highlights best practice; understands that recorded offences of stalking have more than doubled since 2012 in Scotland, with young women being the most prevalent victims; notes the particular impact that stalking has on the mental health of victims, and commends Action Against Stalking for the support and advice it provides to victims.

17:04

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): I am pleased to have the opportunity to highlight stalking awareness week, which takes place from 8 to 12 April, and I thank all members across the chamber who supported my motion.

Imagine having to look over your shoulder at every waking moment and being afraid to look at your texts, check your emails or walk up to your own door. Stalking is a horrible, insidious crime that has a profound effect on victims, mentally and physically, and it can sometimes culminate in serious violence. A stalker's actions—for example, sending flowers to the victim—may, at first glance, seem like a kind, romantic gesture, but such an action signifies, "I know where you live," or "I know where you work." It strikes fear into the victim's heart.

The alarming news is that the number of reported incidents of stalking—it is a vastly underreported offence for reasons that I will explain—has doubled in the past five years. The latest figures from the 2017-18 Scottish crime and justice survey reveal that the number of stalking incidents has more than doubled since 2012, with a total of 1,376 reported stalking incidents in Scotland in 2017-18. One in four young women aged 16 to 24—26.9 per cent—has been a victim, and that is just those who reported it to the police, which is a fraction of the true figure. In 41 per cent of cases, the stalker was not known to the victim—they were a stranger stalker. I find that shocking.

The most common type of stalking and harassment is unwanted messages by text, email and messenger or posts on social media sites. The number of such incidents will only increase unless something is done to stop them.

Ann Moulds, the founder of the excellent charity Action Against Stalking, knows only too well the devastating effects of being a victim of stalking. Ann founded the charity after a horrific personal experience with a stalker. She has allowed me to tell her story to illustrate how it affected her life. She says:

"He was a sadistic sexual predatory stalker who chose to remain anonymous throughout his 2-year campaign of unrelenting terror and abuse.

This man, whoever he was, had forced himself into some delusional relationship with me without my knowing or my consent ... the impact this was having on every aspect of my life was every bit as cruel as the sickening act he wanted me to be a part of.

What started with a simple, but filthy, Valentines card in 2004 soon escalated to sexually deviant photographs, items of women's lingerie posted to my home, and silent and disturbing phone calls in the middle of the night.

I knew he was watching me—he told me so—and letters outlined a slow and unfolding violent and sadistic fantasy of bondage, rape and torture that he believed would one day be his reality and I would enjoy it.

Such was his delusion he had even chosen his location. My stalker knew all about me but I knew nothing about him.

Eventually, too scared to go out, my home became my prison. His freedom became my incarceration. Living with constant fear, anxiety and uncertainty soon took its toll.

I was suffering from nervous exhaustion, I lost weight, my hair started to fall out, I suffered uncontrollable migraines and chest pains. I was scared I was going to have a heart attack ... or a stroke.

I didn't think I would survive this and like a deck of cards, every aspect of my life slowly started to crumble and there was nothing I could do to stop it."

Presiding Officer, I think that more or less says it all about stalking. We must do more to protect victims of this offence before more people are terrorised.

To reduce the number of people who are stalked, we need to dramatically increase the number of convictions for stalking. In a landmark move, in 2014, the Crown Office and Police Scotland raised the profile of stalking to a priority-listed crime, which complements the recent wave of Scottish Government legislation that aims to tackle psychological harm. That legislation includes the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, which came into force yesterday; it legislates against coercion and control and recognises that child witnesses of abuse are victims, too.

Stalking became an offence in Scotland in 2010. Prior to that, stalking was generally prosecuted using common-law offences such as breach of the peace. Currently, the only protection available to victims is a non-harassment order, which must be pursued through the civil courts, often at the victim's own expense, at a time when they are at their most vulnerable. Civil actions for NHOs are very rare, often because the victim simply cannot

face a journey through the justice system at such a time or cannot afford it if they do not qualify for legal aid.

I am in the draft proposal stages of introducing a member's bill that would allow the police to apply directly to a civil court for a stalking protection order on behalf of the victim. The order would prevent the harassment from escalating or continuing and would give victims much-needed protection. The order would last for a maximum of two years but could be renewed, and breach would be a criminal offence resulting in a custodial sentence. A similar bill was passed at Westminster last month, and victims living in Scotland must have the same protection. The Westminster bill related only to stranger stalking, but I propose that my bill would have a wider remit that would include partners and victims of domestic abuse, in relation to whom the incidence of stalking is extremely high.

Stalking has a severe, long-lasting and life-changing effect on its victims, who can suffer nightmares, panic attacks, guilt, thoughts of suicide, loneliness, fear and terror. Stalking can damage relationships with families, romantic relationships and relationships with friends and neighbours, and it can affect the victim's career, finances and entire domestic life. It is something that no one should have to go through. We must stem the tide of this insidious crime now and send a clear message to stalkers that they will be stopped and prosecuted before more people's lives are ruined.

17:10

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): I congratulate Rona Mackay on gaining cross-party support for her motion on stalking awareness week. I think that this is one of the best members' business debates that we have had, and I am genuinely pleased to speak in it, because the issue is important and raising awareness is paramount.

I reflected on stalking when I read the 2017-18 Scottish crime and justice survey, which aimed to find out more about crimes that are not reported to the police. That is important, because we know that two thirds of crime goes unreported. At section 9.1 of the survey, respondents were asked whether they had experienced one or more of various incidents that are defined as stalking, which include having someone waiting outside their home or workplace on more than one occasion, being followed on more than one occasion and having intimate pictures shared without their consent. Incredibly, the survey found that more than 10 per cent of adults had experienced at least one type of stalking or harassment in the past year.

As the motion rightly flags, the survey also suggests that the issue appears to be gendered, with more than one in four women aged between 16 and 24 apparently having been the victim of stalking or harassment, and that recorded offences of stalking have more than doubled since 2012. Crucially, the survey tells us that only around one in 10 of those who were victims actually report it. Clearly, more needs to be done to protect victims of stalking, and that means looking at what can be done and at what we in the Parliament are doing to protect victims.

One incident that I had in mind when I was putting my speech together was reported in *The Courier* recently. It involved a woman who was stalked following the tragic circumstances of her father's death. The stalker taunted and harassed her in an horrific campaign, and he was eventually sentenced to 21 months in prison. However, on appeal, the sentence was ruled too severe and he was instead ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work in the community, despite the fact that he knew where she lived, where she went to college and other personal things about her. One can only imagine the mental trauma for that poor woman on his release. As a Parliament, we must tread very carefully in relation to releasing criminals back into the community in those circumstances.

In that case, the stalker was brought in, questioned and sentenced but, in many other cases, complaints are lodged with the police and, for various reasons, nothing results. For example, a young woman who reported that she was being stalked at various places, including her workplace and on her walk home, lodged six complaints with the police but, according to the brave *Herald* reporter who spoke out about his extraordinarily courageous daughter's experience, the man was unfit to be interviewed, and because the social worker or an appropriate adult could not be located, there was no charge and no conviction. Therefore, the man could continue showing up at the girl's place of work, which he did, and there was nothing that she or security could do to stop him.

To my mind, stories such as those and the sheer numbers of people who are victimised by stalking validate the importance of raising awareness of stalking. However, awareness is not enough. The motion rightly commends Action Against Stalking, but it is important to highlight that, just last week, the founder of that organisation said:

"The Scottish Government need to raise their game."

After pointing out that there is no dedicated strategy or dedicated funding and that the issue is not a priority for the Scottish Government, she went on: "That has to change." Indeed. I associate

myself with Rona Mackay's comments in that regard. Perhaps the minister will address that point directly in closing the debate and show that change is coming.

Reading those women's stories and recognising the prevalence of stalking convinces me of the value of raising awareness and of stalking awareness week. I hope that, following the debate, the Parliament can make substantial progress in raising awareness of the issue and ensuring that victims of stalking feel better protected, better able to come forward and better supported when they do so.

17:14

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): I congratulate my friend and colleague Rona Mackay on securing this evening's important members' business debate on stalking awareness week 2019. It is a particularly timely debate, as has been mentioned, given that yesterday marked the coming into force of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018. The act criminalises, for the first time in Scotland, coercive and controlling behaviour.

Stalking is rooted in control, as its definition—to pursue or approach stealthily—conveys. The ways in which individuals can control others have long changed since Glenn Close's infamous bunny boiling. These days, coercion often happens electronically, in ways that are far more difficult for traditional policing to intercept.

Members might remember the case of one of my constituents, which was reported on in August last year. My constituent's ex-partner hounded her at her home in Fife. He took screenshots of private conversations on her phone and repeatedly sent her text and social media messages. He threatened to disclose sensitive information about her to her employer. He admitted to taking a photograph of her drying herself as she came out of the shower. He bombarded her with texts to tell her that he knew exactly where she was, after planting a mobile phone in the boot of her car. In short, he made her life a living hell by stalking her. In sentencing the accused last year, the sheriff described his actions as "sustained, sophisticated and sinister". However, he avoided a jail sentence and was instead sentenced to 180 hours of community payback.

As has been said, Ann Moulds is the driving force behind Action Against Stalking, the only national dedicated stalking charity. Although Ann's experience is different from that of my constituent, there are similarities. In last week's *Evening Times*, Ann spoke about the community service order that was served on her stalker, saying:

"It wasn't right ... My stalker got help to 'rehabilitate' him, and my life was a mess."

Therefore, I am glad that last year the Cabinet Secretary for Justice gave a commitment to establishing a victims task force, which will take evidence directly from victims and victims groups on their experiences of the justice system.

Last year, my friend Mairi Gougeon MSP began another important part of the reform of stalking legislation. That work focuses on introducing stalking protection orders, with the police allowed to apply directly to the court when there is evidence of stalking. Currently, to secure a non-harassment order, victims themselves need to take legal action through the civil courts. There are obvious reasons why some victims of stalking would not want to do that, so I am delighted that Rona Mackay will now take those proposals forward.

As has been mentioned, just last week, figures from the Scottish crime and justice survey confirmed that more than one in four young women have been the victim of stalking or harassment in Scotland, with 26.9 per cent of females aged 16 to 24 experiencing at least one incident in the previous year. In Fife, 139 cases of stalking were reported to the police in 2017-18. However, most victims of stalking do not tell the police—only 9 per cent of cases were reported and recorded, which means that only around one in 10 told the police, as Liam Kerr mentioned. I hope that the Government will take the time to reflect on those figures, and I strongly encourage consideration of an education campaign to raise the profile of the offence of stalking, much like the work that the Scottish Government has done on domestic abuse and coercion in the past 12 months.

There is certainly a link between domestic abuse and stalking. Half of those who had experienced stalking and harassment had also experienced partner abuse. However, 41 per cent said that the offender was someone whom they had never met, so any education campaign would also need to consider the equal prevalence of stranger stalking, which has been mentioned and which is often enabled by technology. Indeed, 67 per cent of those who had experienced stalking or harassment last year had received unwanted messages by text or social media communications.

Ultimately, stalking is about control. Using an app to track someone's movements, following their existence on social media and accessing their text messages remotely from another app are all ways that technology allows individuals to exert control over others. Fundamentally, however, stalking ruins lives. It creates fear and alarm, and it isolates people by causing anxiety. It is a crime.

As MSPs, we all have a duty to remind the country of that message during stalking awareness week and beyond.

17:19

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I congratulate Rona Mackay on securing this important members' business debate. I look forward to hearing more about her proposed member's bill, because a victim should never be responsible for their own protection.

I also pay tribute to Ann Moulds from Action Against Stalking. Rona Mackay outlined Ann's terrifying personal experience of stalking. Ann was instrumental in getting the law changed in Scotland such that stalking was made a crime.

I remember the first time I met Ann Moulds. She came to see me to persuade me to add stalking to my Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill. Stalking was recognised as a sinister act, but it was not a criminal offence in its own right, and it was dealt with through common law—as a breach of the peace, for example. I did not believe that my bill was the right place for it. However, the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill was going through Parliament at the time: it was a better vehicle with which to criminalise stalking.

We therefore worked on an amendment to that effect. Ann Moulds not only persuaded me to do that; she also persuaded the committee to accept the amendment. Members can imagine that there was reluctance to accept it, given that the committee had not taken evidence on stalking at stage 1, but she convinced the committee by her sheer tenacity. That made my job of getting the amendment through so much easier. Ann knew first hand about the terrifying nature of the crime, and she wanted to protect others from having to go through the trauma that she had gone through.

Stalking is an extremely difficult crime to define for legislation. Seemingly innocent actions can take on a sinister bearing just because of the context. As Rona Mackay said, a bunch of flowers, which would normally be welcome, can be absolutely terrifying.

I vividly remember one of the examples that I was given when I was working on the amendment that I mentioned. A woman left a note to herself on the kitchen table to buy a loaf of bread before she left for work. When she came home that night, the note had been replaced by a loaf of bread. In most circumstances, that would be a kind gesture, but it takes on a whole new meaning when we learn that she lived alone and was being stalked.

When something is sometimes a crime and sometimes not a crime, depending on the context,

it is very hard to legislate for it. However, we achieved that with stalking.

The increase in cases of stalking is concerning. Some of that increase might be due to the fact that there is now legal protection, which makes such crimes easier to report and identify. That will account for some of the increase, but I believe that a lot more opportunities are available to those who would be stalkers. Jenny Gilruth talked about how new technology makes stalking much easier: social media help others to track people. The ability to do that can be helpful in the right context, but when stalking is involved, it can be terrifying.

It is also hard to identify both the crime and the perpetrator. As I have explained, actions that can be innocent can also be sinister. That makes it difficult to show that the actions are crimes.

Stalkers can be very devious. A stalker can be a stranger, or can be known to their victim. They can be very close to their victim, and they can get pleasure from watching the real distress that their actions can cause. In some cases, the stalker is an ex-partner. The relationship may not have been abusive, but the impact of ending it might have led to the ex-partner becoming a stalker. They might be unable to accept that the relationship is over. Stalking takes many forms and is therefore difficult to identify and cope with.

Ann Moulds not only changed the law: she also campaigns against stalking. To this day, she is providing, through Action Against Stalking, information, training and support to victims. Her work has provided a lifeline to others, so I commend her for it.

17:23

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): I, too, congratulate Rona Mackay on securing the debate for stalking awareness week, which is next week. I am making this speech on behalf of a number of women in my constituency who have raised the issue with me. I thank East Ayrshire Women's Aid and, of course, Ann Moulds of Action Against Stalking, who has been mentioned already, for taking the time to provide valuable briefings for the debate.

Under the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, a stalking offence occurs when

"A person ... engages in a course of conduct ... on at least two occasions"

that causes another person to feel "fear or alarm", and where the accused person intended, knew or ought to have known that their conduct would cause fear or alarm.

Ann Moulds's pioneering work has become internationally recognised. Most notably, it

contributed to the 2010 act. It has subsequently been adopted in England and Wales and has been included in the Council of Europe's Istanbul treaty. Huge credit is therefore due to Ann and her organisation for leading the way on the issue.

As recently as 2016-17, the Scottish crime survey highlighted that only 20 per cent of victims chose to report stalking to the police. It is important to remember how low that figure is. It is clear that there is an opportunity to improve awareness and to offer encouragement to people to report what is, in fact, a criminal offence.

In my discussion with East Ayrshire Women's Aid, it advised that, in its experience, stalking is most often perpetrated by former and current partners. Of the 300 to 400 women who are supported by East Ayrshire Women's Aid each year, a significant number experience continued harassment after they leave an abusive partner.

The continuing public perception is that stalking is limited to somebody following a person about, turning up at their home and causing fear and alarm with their presence. However, it is important to be clear that stalking comes in many forms—only physical ones. Unwanted phone calls—whether completed or not—continue to be used as a means of intimidation and, sadly, the digital and social media revolution provides an easy route for stalkers to gain access to their victims.

As Jenny Gilruth said, according to the recently released crime and justice survey's findings, 67 per cent of victims experienced stalking that used social media, text and messaging systems to intimidate them. Ayrshire Women's Aid advises that some reported experiences have included trackers on phones or cars and hacking of Facebook accounts. Stalking has, indeed, gone digital.

I know that the police in East Ayrshire undergo online training to recognise the offence of stalking, and they have annual practical training in recognising the offence. Police Scotland in East Ayrshire has advised that, as a result of that training, more than 90 per cent of stalking cases that are reported to them result in the perpetrator being charged, although the numbers of victims who come forward are still pretty low. That is an encouraging statistic, and I hope that it gives the public confidence to report instances of stalking. However, in East Ayrshire in 2018-19 there were only 23 recorded crimes of stalking and 16 detections of the crime, which perhaps confirms that more needs to be done.

Scotland has been at the forefront of criminalising stalking and championing the rights of victims of stalking—women and men. It is good to recognise that Action Against Stalking continues to deliver much-needed support and advice, not

only for victims but for the statutory agencies. The organisation knows that we are only beginning to understand the impact of stalking. It can and does have a severe and long-term psychological impact on victims, some of whom relocate and change jobs to escape and feel safe again.

The maximum penalty under the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 act is five years, and the new Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 can carry a 14-year sentence, yet both acts place psychological harm as the governing criteria in establishing the offence. That is probably something for the Government to reflect on as we move forward.

I thank Rona Mackay again for bringing this important matter to the attention of Parliament.

17:27

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): I join other members in thanking Rona Mackay for enabling the motion to be discussed, and for her powerful and moving opening speech. The work that she is doing on the issue is to be commended, and I will be interested in considering her bill more fully when it is introduced.

It has been interesting to listen to all the speeches from across the chamber. The same themes have popped up again and again. Very few members will not be aware, from their constituency work, of individuals—particularly women—who have been the victims of stalking. Members will know how difficult it can be to ensure that support is in place for those individuals when they need it most.

One of the most frustrating things is that a lot of people think of some aspects of stalking that have been mentioned, such as flowers or photographs, as trivial, funny or—I have heard this suggested—quite flattering. In listening to members' contributions and hearing conversations during my constituency work, it has been clear to me that people do not find such actions pleasant or trivial. In fact, they can make people's lives a misery.

We must ensure that that message gets out. Today's debate is a really good way of sending the signal that people in this Parliament, and throughout the criminal justice system, take stalking seriously and recognise that it destroys people's lives and takes away their rights and dignity, so that they are unable to enjoy the same freedoms that the rest of us do.

That takes me to another point that I have picked up in the debate, which is about the different forms that stalking takes. Willie Coffey and Rona Mackay mentioned the online element to stalking. When people hear what others are subjected to in that context, stalking takes on a

whole new meaning. As a member of the Justice Committee, I heard evidence from women who had been bombarded with messages to the extent that there was no time in the day when they did not hear from people threatening them and passing comment. There is something very sinister about that, particularly when people do not know who is at the other end of the messages. That is a reason for us to redouble our efforts.

Another worrying point is the fact that people do not feel confident in reporting such behaviour. I do not know the reasons for that, but I would impress upon the Government the importance of its going away, doing some work and finding out why people feel unable to report stalking and why it is such a poorly recorded crime. If we do not have the right data and we do not understand the barriers to stalking being reported, it is very difficult for us to take action and to ensure that the education and awareness campaigns target those who need them most.

17:32

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): I, too, congratulate Rona Mackay on securing this members' business debate on stalking. She made a thought-provoking speech, which brought vividly to life the serious impact that stalking can have on people's lives, including their mental health. Indeed, a number of members, including Jenny Gilruth, Rhoda Grant and Willie Coffey, mentioned stalking's insidious and sinister nature.

A few days after the Scottish crime and justice survey revealed the extent of stalking behaviour that takes place, and ahead of next week's national stalking awareness week, it is right that the Parliament has the chance to debate this important issue. We know that stalking is experienced by many people across the country and that it can completely disrupt a victim's life, as we have heard this evening.

We should acknowledge that, in the past, the justice system might not always have taken the issue sufficiently seriously. The individual actions of a stalker, seen in isolation, might have seemed trivial to some and not the business of the police or the courts. Behaviour such as constantly making unwanted phone calls or sending text messages, following the victim between their home and work, or leaving unwanted gifts might not necessarily appear to pose an immediate danger to the victim, but when that behaviour continues for days, weeks, months or even years on end, it can seriously interfere with a victim's ability to go about their daily life. We know that such behaviour can be motivated by obsession or fixation and, in the most extreme cases, it can be

the precursor to serious assault, rape or even murder.

It is important to reflect on how far we have come in a relatively short time in recognising the seriousness of stalking. The work that has been done by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and Action Against Stalking has been crucial in raising awareness of the seriousness of stalking and changing public attitudes towards it. The Parliament led the way across the United Kingdom with the introduction in 2010 of a specific criminal offence of stalking. That has helped Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to deal more effectively with stalking and harassment; it has also helped to raise awareness that stalking is a criminal offence.

Members have highlighted the impact that stalking can have on the mental health of survivors. The focus of this year's national stalking awareness week is on stalking as a public health issue. In June 2018, the Deputy First Minister announced a three-year funding package of £1.35 million, which will be invested to create a national trauma training programme, to support more than 5,000 front-line workers across all sectors of the Scottish workforce who are responding to psychological trauma.

We are always open to considering what further improvements might be needed to improve the law. I am aware that Rona Mackay is considering a proposal for a member's bill on stalking protection orders. I am keen to see the detail of that bill, and we will give it careful consideration at that point.

Police Scotland delivers training in dealing with stalking and harassment within its investigators development programme. Further, a multiagency short-life working group is considering the implementation of a new model of risk assessment and management for stalking, which will examine the opportunity to improve police training on the dynamics of stalking and harassment and on the tactics that are used by stalkers. All the guidance and training recognise that reported incidents should be viewed within the context of a pattern of behaviours and not in isolation.

Members have highlighted during the debate the importance of ensuring that victims of stalking receive appropriate support. A number of organisations in Scotland are involved in supporting stalking victims and survivors. Victim Support Scotland supports people who are victims of crime, whether reported or unreported, and that includes helping victims of stalking. The Scottish women's rights centre provides free legal information, advice and representation to women survivors of stalking, with services being made available through a national helpline and at local legal surgeries. Scottish Women's Aid and local

women's aid services provide support to survivors of domestic abuse, which can also involve stalking. Further, Scotland's forced marriage and domestic abuse helpline operates 24 hours a day. All those organisations are involved in the Scottish national stalking group, together with the Crown Office, Police Scotland and Action Against Stalking. The group aims to improve responses to victims and survivors of stalking in Scotland.

I am aware that Action Against Stalking has called for funding for a specific support service for victims of stalking—I believe that Liam Kerr mentioned that this evening. The Scottish Government is in dialogue with Action Against Stalking to understand better what further support might be needed in that area. I can update members on that at a later date.

We know that, although stalking can affect men and women, the Scottish crime and justice survey, which was published on 26 March, shows that women are much more likely to report being persistently stalked by a single perpetrator. It also shows that women are twice as likely as men to report being stalked by a partner, and three times as likely to report having been stalked by someone they have gone on a date with. That shows that, often, the stalking of women can be seen as part of a broader pattern of gender-based violence.

Within the context of the equally safe strategy on violence against women and girls, the Scottish Government is working with schools, colleges and universities to ensure that they have the appropriate tools and resources to address the issue of sexual harassment and to support children and young people who might be experiencing gender-based violence. Last year, the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science launched the equally safe in higher education toolkit, which provides resources for institutions to tackle gender-based violence.

The Scottish Government is also supportive of the development and roll-out of a smartphone app called FollowIt, which was designed by the Scottish women's rights centre. The app was originally developed with funding from Foundation Scotland, the Nominet Trust and Comic Relief, with input from survivors, victims organisations, Police Scotland and the Crown Office. The app allows victims to accurately log stalking incidents so that they have a complete record of the offending behaviour. Funding from the Scottish Government has supported the development of awareness-raising materials about the app, a victims' feedback process and the delivery of training to statutory and voluntary organisations by the Scottish women's rights centre that will support and improve multiagency responses to stalking. In addition, a specialist sexual harassment solicitor,

funded by the Scottish Government and the Rosa fund, will operate the Scottish women's rights centre's new sexual harassment legal service. Further, in 2019, the Scottish Government will be supporting a national public campaign to raise awareness about sexual harassment.

This has been a good debate, with thought-provoking speeches from across the chamber. It is clear that, although Scotland has moved a long way in recent years with regard to recognising and addressing stalking behaviour, there is always more than can be done, and we will seek to do everything that we can to help to protect people from the horrific effects that stalking behaviour can have.

Meeting closed at 17:39.

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