



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

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## Scottish Parliament

*Tuesday 6 December 2016*

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

### Time for Reflection

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is the Rev Nigel Anderson, who is the minister of the Livingston free church.

**The Rev Nigel Anderson (Livingston Free Church):** Presiding Officer and members of the Scottish Parliament, I thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon.

The name Reinhard Strecker might not be familiar to many today. Earlier this summer, I had the extraordinary privilege of meeting that man, who is now 86 years of age, in Berlin. I was having coffee with a friend outside the building where a service was about to take place to commemorate the 22 July 1944 assassination plot on Hitler. An elderly gentleman, Reinhard Strecker, came over to sit beside us and we were spellbound by his story for the next hour. He told of his liberation by a Scottish regiment in 1944 and spoke of his post-war work exposing by documentation the crimes of Nazi judges who still held judicial positions in West Germany. He was a man of immense courage who, in the face of much opposition from his own countrymen, sought the justice and truth that many wished to be suppressed.

To what extent was Strecker's upbringing a factor in his courageous quest for justice? In an interview last year, he spoke of the influence of his Christian parents; his father was an anti-Hitler judge at a time when 90 per cent of the German judiciary were members of the Nazi party. In the interview, he said something quite telling:

"That had to do with the fact that for my parents, church and religion still meant something."

Whether in Germany in the midst of totalitarian rule or in the freedom of 21st century Scotland, the church and religion still mean something. The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was admired by Strecker, said this of the church:

"The Church is the Church only when it exists for others ... not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live for Christ, to exist for others."

As a Christian, I rejoice in the influence of my own denomination, the Free Church of Scotland, in telling what it means to live for Christ and exist for others through the preaching of the gospel of

Jesus that continues to transform lives, through involvement in such humanitarian work as drug and alcohol recovery programmes in Govan and through the work of supporting projects in rural Kenya for the improvement of educational facilities for the good of others and the glory of God.

The church and religion have much to offer in following the example of Jesus who came to serve in giving his life for others.

## Topical Question Time

14:03

### Police Control Rooms (Near Misses)

**1. Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what action is being taken to reduce the number of “near misses” that are being recorded by police control rooms. (S5T-00242)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** Police Scotland continues to take action to strengthen its approach to call handling. The decision to systematically record notable incidents is a direct response to one of the 30 recommendations that were contained in Her Majesty’s inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland’s November 2015 assurance review on police call handling. The inspectorate has identified that such a process is crucial to creating a learning environment that improves processes and mitigates risk. The Scottish Police Authority continues to oversee Police Scotland’s process in that regard and, more generally, to provide assurance on the service’s performance on call handling.

HMICS has confirmed that it will publish an update report on police call handling in January 2017 and we expect Police Scotland and the SPA to give careful consideration to any further findings or recommendations arising from that report.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable contribution that is made by police call handlers in responding to the more than 2.5 million 101 calls and around half a million emergency calls that are received by the service each year, and often in supporting members of the public at times of acute crisis for them. The information on notable incidents that was released last week highlighted that they occur in only around one in every 22,500 calls. I welcome the fact that action is being taken to understand and respond to instances where the service to the public has fallen short of what would be expected.

**Liam McArthur:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that detailed response, and he is right to set the figures in context and pay tribute to the call handlers and staff who are involved. However, looking at the detail of some of the cases that were registered between April and October, I think that the cabinet secretary would agree that a number involve fairly serious issues: the location of incidents being logged incorrectly; a two-week delay in checking on the welfare of a child, due to a misplaced report; and, in response to a threat-to-life matter that was reported four times, the caller being told that no officers were available.

One of the primary concerns that many had about the closure of local control rooms and calls being answered increasingly closer to the central belt was about the loss of local knowledge. Can the cabinet secretary tell me how the loss of staff with, in some cases, decades of experience and detailed knowledge of their patch has been mitigated?

**Michael Matheson:** The member needs to recognise that, when Police Scotland was established, there were 18 call centres across the country, many of which had information technology systems that did not link to one another, could not record vulnerability and could not share intelligence. We therefore had a system that was not fit for purpose to deliver the necessary services for the public.

In the cases that are logged, where a serious error has occurred and there is concern about the possible impact on a member of the public, the matter will be investigated by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner. That is what happened in a few of these instances. However, the purpose of recording notable incidents is to ensure that, if an error has occurred—for example, if the wrong details have been entered into the system by logging in the wrong code or there has been a failure to dispatch officers to an incident after it has been reported—that information is captured and lessons are learned so that such occurrences are minimised in the future. It is about ensuring that there is the right environment in our call centres to allow staff to be able to provide information when they think that an error has been made.

The member will also be aware—if he is not, he should be—of the 30 recommendations that were made by HMICS last year. Recommendation 12 specifically asked Police Scotland to review its present staffing model for its call centres in Scotland. That piece of work has been completed and Police Scotland is now implementing it for the staffing of the call centres. A significant body of work has been taken forward over the past year. I have no doubt that Police Scotland will continue with that and ensure that there is appropriate assurance and review of the process, as there is through the Scottish Police Authority and the independent assurance that I have directed through HMICS.

**Liam McArthur:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that further detailed response and the encouragement that he offered about how Police Scotland is taking forward the recommendations to which he referred. Of course, the statistics on notable incidents were released to the BBC only after the Scottish Information Commissioner ordered them to be released. Does the cabinet secretary believe that such figures should routinely

be published, as a matter of course, in order to aid public scrutiny and provide wider reassurance?

**Michael Matheson:** It is worth recording in the Parliament that the public body in Scotland that deals with more freedom of information requests than any other part of the public sector is Police Scotland. At the moment it is doing a piece of work to look at what information it can readily put into the public domain so that freedom of information requests are not necessary, and the information that we are discussing is part of that work. However, it is worth keeping in mind that Police Scotland is still developing the notable incidents process. It is a system that will be reviewed, and HMICS has already identified that it will review the system as part of its on-going assurance review. It is therefore a piece of work that is still being taken forward. I have no doubt that, once that process has been completed, Police Scotland will be looking to see what information it can put into the public domain to give continued assurance about how its call centres are operating.

**Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Earlier this year, Chief Superintendent Campbell Thomson, who is the divisional commander of A division, which includes Moray, said:

“There have been a number of challenges relating to the recruitment and retention of police staff controllers.”

Will the cabinet secretary tell Parliament what action was taken to address that issue? Does he acknowledge the local communities' concerns about continued centralisation of that vital Police Scotland function?

**Michael Matheson:** First, I am not sure whether the member is suggesting that we retain the old model, in which we had 18 call centres that did not have IT systems that could co-operate with one another and we were not able to share the right intelligence across them. That system was not fit for purpose. The model that is being taken forward by Police Scotland has been reviewed by HMICS, which has said that it is an appropriate model for the delivery of services.

I know that the member was not in the Parliament in the previous session, but he should be aware that recommendation 12 of HMICS's assurance review, which I directed last year, was for Police Scotland to review the staff model in the call centres. That work has been completed, and Police Scotland is implementing the recommendations to make sure that the staffing ratios in the call centres are suitable to meet the needs and the demands of the service.

**Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary provide an update on Police Scotland's progress in implementing the 30 recommendations in the HMICS independent assurance review on call

handling, as referred to in his answer to Liam McArthur?

**Michael Matheson:** As members may be aware, the assurance review took place as a result of the direction that I gave to HMICS. The 30 recommendations that were published last November are areas of work that Police Scotland has been taking forward. Some of the recommendations go beyond call handling and are about other aspects of how the police service operates with its contact, command and control centres.

HMICS has confirmed that it will provide an update in January 2017. That will be laid before Parliament, and members will be able to see what progress has been made against each of the recommendations and whether there are any further recommendations or pieces of work that HMICS recommends that Police Scotland takes forward.

I assure the member that the recommendations are under constant scrutiny by HMICS, as well as by the SPA governance and assurance review group, which is also responsible for this piece of work. External assurance is also being provided to Police Scotland to ensure that it is doing everything possible to implement the recommendations effectively.

**Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** Although I appreciate that the vast majority of cases were properly dealt with, as Liam McArthur stated a number of near misses had serious consequences. HMICS will be following up last year's report into call handling with a more detailed report into each notable incident, and that report is due next month. When the report is published, will the cabinet secretary commit to coming back to the Parliament to update us and assure us that all possible action is being taken to address any concerns that HMICS and the wider public may still have?

**Michael Matheson:** I am happy to do so, if members would find that useful, because publishing the report would allow members to get a full update on where Police Scotland is on taking forward the 30 recommendations. It is also worth bearing in mind that, as part of the assurance process, I directed HMICS to undertake unannounced inspections in the call handling contact, command and control centres to make sure that there is continued review of how Police Scotland handles calls and how its centres operate. That work continues to take place and HMICS continues to monitor these matters.

If members would find it useful to have an update once the HMICS update report has been provided, I am more than happy to facilitate that for Parliament and for members.

## **Ban on Smoking in Cars with Children Present (Impact)**

### **2. Maree Todd (Highlands and Islands)**

**(SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what the expected impact on health will be from the ban on smoking in cars with children present. (S5T-00246)

**The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell):** The overall health of children will be improved by reducing their exposure to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke in cars. Second-hand smoke can have serious negative health impacts on a child, including coughing, wheezing, asthma, middle-ear disease and respiratory tract infections, such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

**Maree Todd:** I thank the minister for that answer and the steps that the Government is taking to protect children from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. It sends a clear message that children in Scotland should be growing up in a healthy, smoke-free environment. How will the Government monitor the effectiveness of the legislation and, over the longer term, will it review whether the penalties available are providing a useful deterrent?

**Aileen Campbell:** Before I respond in detail to Maree Todd's supplementary question about monitoring, I note that our Liberal Democrat colleagues are in the chamber and I put on record our thanks to Jim Hume for his work in the previous parliamentary session to introduce the Smoking Prohibition (Children in Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Bill.

I also want to highlight the approach that we are taking more generally to reducing the harm that tobacco causes. The take it right outside campaign, which encourages adults to smoke outdoors, has helped us to reach our target of reducing children's exposure to second-hand smoke from 11 per cent in 2013 to 6 per cent in 2020—we have reached the target five years early. The Smoking Prohibition (Children in Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Act 2016, which came into force yesterday, demonstrates our commitment to going further on the issue.

We are increasing restrictions on the sale of tobacco and electronic cigarettes to under-18s, limiting the advertising of such products, and bringing in a mandatory ban on smoking near hospital buildings to protect people from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. We are also examining proposals to extend the current ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces to prisons.

We will work with partners in environmental health and the national health service and with others to continue to monitor the effectiveness of

our legislation and consider what further steps should or could be taken to ensure that we create a tobacco-free generation by 2034.

**Maree Todd:** Given that children who grow up with a parent or someone else smoking around them are much more likely to become smokers, and that two thirds of adult smokers say that they started smoking as children, we can make a real impact on health in future by protecting children from tobacco.

I was going to ask the minister what wider action the Scottish Government is taking to create a tobacco-free generation in Scotland by 2034, but I think that she might have answered the question and I am not sure whether there is anything more that she wants to say.

**Aileen Campbell:** I can let Maree Todd know that, in addition to the range of activity that I set out, smoking cessation advice and support are available to all pregnant women in Scotland to help to ensure that each child has the healthiest start in life. We are taking forward a range of activities to ensure that we have a tobacco-free generation by 2034.

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD):** I thank the minister for her recognition of the work by my good friend Jim Hume and the Liberal Democrats in stewarding the Smoking Prohibition (Children in Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Bill through the Parliament.

When he was Minister for Public Health in the previous session, Michael Matheson said:

"We have no current plans to consult on extending Scotland's smoke-free laws to private cars. Successful implementation of the smoking ban has undoubtedly already reduced exposure to second-hand smoke among children in Scotland."—[*Official Report*, 24 November 2011; c 3873.]

Today, however, the 2016 act gets well-deserved fanfare and a beautiful Scottish National Party infographic that claims credit for it. Does the minister agree that without my good friend Jim Hume's intervention we would not have passed the 2016 act and be celebrating today the protection of tens of thousands of Scottish young people?

**Aileen Campbell:** Despite a degree of friendliness—I suppose—at the start of the member's question, his comments descended into churlishness. We should remember that we voted unanimously for the bill in each and every party in the Parliament. I have put on record our thanks to Jim Hume; of course he introduced the member's bill, but we had already put in place pieces of legislation to take forward our ambitions for a smoke-free generation by 2034. Indeed, the previous Administration, under Labour, had started much of the work. All the parties have worked hard



to improve public health in Scotland, and I hope that we will continue to work in a spirit of consensus to make further gains in public health in Scotland.

## Education (Excellence and Equity)

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is a statement from John Swinney on excellence and equity in Scottish education. The Deputy First Minister will take questions at the end of his statement; there should therefore be no interventions or interruptions.

14:19

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** The programme for international student assessment, which the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development runs every three years, assesses the skills of 15-year-olds in 72 countries, in reading, mathematics and science. The results for the most recent assessments, which were undertaken two years ago in March 2015, were published this morning.

The figures for Scotland do not make comfortable reading and reinforce the need for the reforms to our school system that are under way. Although they show that Scotland's scores are similar to the OECD average in all three areas tested, they also show that, compared with 2012, our performance in science and reading has fallen.

In science and maths, we are now below the levels at which we performed in 2006 and more countries have outperformed Scotland in all three areas than at any time since the programme for international student assessment began. The results show that closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a complex challenge that is not unique to Scotland. The welcome improvements in the performance of young people from deprived backgrounds, which we saw in the previous results between 2009 and 2012, have been maintained. However, there is still a gap between pupils from the least and most disadvantaged backgrounds—around three years' worth of schooling, according to the OECD.

Pupils in Scotland are generally more positive about the value of learning science at school than is the case across the OECD. Classroom disruption is generally lower than average, and relationships with teachers more positive. Those relationships are crucial to improving outcomes.

The results are consistent with the 2014 Scottish survey of literacy and numeracy, published in April 2015, which told us that we needed to do more to make our education system among the best in the world. Since that survey was published, we have set out, and are pursuing, a range of actions to improve Scottish education. If anyone was in any doubt about the need for the

reforms that we have introduced and the improvements on which we are consulting, the results should dispel that doubt.

The reforms are based on the 2015 review of education in Scotland that was carried out by the OECD, the same body that runs the PISA assessments that were published today. The OECD's policy review was commissioned by the Scottish Government. Its purpose was to inform the on-going development of education policy, practice and leadership in Scotland, by providing an independent review of the direction of the curriculum for excellence. In its review report, published this time last year, the OECD said that curriculum for excellence was "an important reform" that was the right approach for Scotland. The OECD said that we had got the design right but that we needed to take further steps to secure the benefits of the new approach in all parts of the country. The report went on to make a number of recommendations on how we should do that. I want to focus on five of the key recommendations made by the OECD, and on how our response to those recommendations is driving the reform that is needed to improve education in Scotland.

The OECD report said:

"There needs to be a more robust evidence base available right across the system, especially about learning outcomes and progress."

That is precisely why we have developed the national improvement framework and standardised assessments for children in primary 1, P4, P7 and secondary 3 to support teachers' professional judgments. That will provide us with a complete picture of how our children are progressing with their learning, covering the full range of school years, so that we can see that progress is being made at national, local authority and school levels. It will allow us to plan targeted interventions to tackle the attainment gap between children from the most and least disadvantaged backgrounds.

Next week, we will launch the first ever national improvement plan for education, based on the widest range of performance information ever gathered on Scottish education as part of the national improvement framework. It is also why we have committed to providing teachers with benchmarks on assessing children's progress. Those benchmarks will set out with absolute clarity the standards that are envisaged within the curriculum, not to constrain teacher professionalism or to create a series of boxes to tick, but to provide a tool that will be of genuine use in classrooms, will help to ensure consistency in the judgments that teachers make and substantially reduce the bureaucratic burden carried by the teaching profession.

Secondly, the OECD said that CFE needs to be

"a dynamic, highly equitable curriculum being built constantly in schools, networks and communities with a key role for a strengthened 'middle'."

That is why we have launched a wide-ranging review of education governance to gather views from parents, pupils and professionals on how education, from early years to secondary school level, should be run. At the heart of the governance review is the presumption that decisions about children's learning and school life should be made at school level. The governance review also responds to a third OECD recommendation about the need to strengthen professional leadership. We have invested in leadership capacity in our schools by establishing and funding the Scottish College for Educational Leadership, which has delivered a new qualification for headship that is fully funded by the Scottish Government. The Government will take forward further measures to enhance leadership and professional development in education.

A fourth area covered by the OECD report was the need to be rigorous in our focus on closing the attainment gap for our poorest pupils. That is why we launched and subsequently expanded the £750 million Scottish attainment challenge, and it is why we have taken the lead in showcasing best practice in closing the attainment gap. We have also announced plans to double the entitlement to free early learning and childcare to 1,140 hours per year by 2020. That will help to narrow the vocabulary gap, which can be up to 13 months by the time a child starts primary school, and it will ensure that all children arrive at school ready to learn.

The OECD also advised that we take steps to simplify and clarify the curriculum. In response to that recommendation, in August this year we published a definitive statement on curriculum for excellence that sets out what every teacher needs to do in order to achieve the potential of CFE, as well as benchmarks for literacy and numeracy. Those definitive documents will provide clarity and replace thousands of pages of advice, guidance and case studies that had created a cluttered landscape. We have also announced changes to national qualifications that will address the burden of overassessment for young people and teachers as part of a relentless drive that I am leading to reduce red tape and ensure that teachers are freed up to teach.

As well as responding to the OECD's recommendations, the Government has taken a range of measures to drive improvement in reading, maths and science in the period between the PISA assessments being undertaken in 2015, and the publication of those results today. We launched the read, write, count campaign; we established the making maths count group, which recently published the report of its findings and

recommendations to boost mathematics achievement in Scotland; we are consulting on a strategy to raise levels of enthusiasm for and knowledge about science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and the First Minister launched her reading challenge, which is aimed at promoting and supporting reading for pleasure among P4 to P7 pupils.

One of my early actions on taking up office as the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills was to establish an international council of education advisers. Professor Andy Hargreaves, who is one of the international advisers and a member of the OECD review team that visited Scotland in 2015, has said that he is

“very impressed with the richness and boldness of the Scottish curriculum, the confidence of Scottish learners, the professionalism of the country’s teachers, and the collective will to do even better to provide equitable opportunities and outcomes for all young people.”

Others have commended our belief in continuous improvement, our foresight and our patience in relation to education—qualities that are much needed now. Those highly regarded experts from a range of countries across the world are credible independent voices, and they are not describing an education system in crisis; they are describing a system that is striving to meet significant challenges and that is well placed to do so.

Yesterday afternoon, I held a teleconference with several of our international advisers to discuss the latest set of PISA results. They recognised that the challenges that Scotland faces are not unique and that a great many other countries are having to reflect on deteriorations in their PISA results, particularly in relation to science. The unanimous advice that I received from our international advisers was to remain focused on taking forward the plans that we formulated carefully in response to the data from the Scottish survey of literacy and numeracy as part of our journey of reform. I consider that to be sound advice and I intend to follow it.

The Government’s plans for reform were set out in “Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland”, which was published in June following the national education summit. The programme is bold, ambitious and, in parts, controversial. A strength of Scotland’s education system has always been collaboration—a sense of national shared endeavour—but we must now be clear that reform is required. The data reinforces the case for the radical change that the Government is determined to pursue.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The Deputy First Minister will now take questions on the issues raised in his statement. I shall allow around 20 minutes for questions.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for prior sight of his statement—although I am sure that there will be great regret on the part of every teacher, parent and pupil in Scotland about the circumstances in which it has had to be made.

We are now below the OECD average on the three measurements on which we were above the average in 2000. Not only that, but the most recent trends since publication of the previous set of PISA results in 2012 tell us that Scotland is actually heading backwards on two measurements.

Does the cabinet secretary accept that the statistics that have been published today are a damning indictment of the Scottish National Party’s schools education policy? Does he also accept that they call into question whether there is effective delivery of curriculum for excellence?

The promotion of STEM subjects is supposed to be a top priority for the SNP, so why are there fundamental weaknesses in Scotland’s showing in science compared with the showing of competitor nations?

**John Swinney:** My first point to Liz Smith is that the Government has been perfectly prepared to have its approach to the delivery of curriculum for excellence tested by external advisers. Nobody could doubt that, given our commissioning of the report by the OECD in 2015. That review was an assessment of the policy direction that was started, before this Government came into office, with the design of curriculum for excellence, which we continued when we came into office.

We have now applied CFE in concert with our local authority partners, professional associations, education agencies and a broad cross-section of organisations that have been actively involved in its design and delivery. One look at the curriculum for excellence management board will demonstrate the point that I made in the concluding part of my statement, which is that the Scottish education system has been taken forward in an atmosphere of collaboration. Of course, the Government has been in the lead—I accept that unreservedly—but there has been collaboration with a range of bodies.

We asked the OECD to consider our approach to implementation of curriculum for excellence, and to consider the condition of Scottish education. I have put on record the OECD’s view, which was that CFE was the correct reform to undertake. It said that CFE is the right curriculum for Scotland and that it creates many strengths in our education system. It also set out for us a range of further measures to ensure that we would achieve the full potential of CFE, which is what the

Government's reform agenda is focused entirely on delivering.

On Liz Smith's point about science, I have been absolutely up front with Parliament about the deterioration in performance, which I make no attempt to deny, but Liz Smith must look at the data across the board. There has been a general deterioration in participation and performance in science across many jurisdictions, and the OECD average has fallen as a consequence. I make no attempt to deny the fact that our performance has fallen, but it is fair to put it in context. The PISA analysis highlights a wider issue in respect of participation and performance of young people in science.

We can only take the actions that we need to take to address those issues in Scotland. That is why, in my statement, I went through a range of the measures that the Government is taking to strengthen participation in STEM subjects and to encourage more teachers to come into STEM subjects. Liz Smith will know that, just last week, I announced new and swifter routes into the teaching profession for individuals who have a STEM background in order to enable them to be participants in Scottish education and to help us to work together to ensure that we improve the performance of Scottish education, including on STEM subjects.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for early sight of his statement and for his admission that the PISA results

"do not make comfortable reading".

That is quite an understatement. They are the legacy of 10 years of SNP Government and 10 years of cuts in education budgets, cuts in council funding and cuts in teacher numbers.

I bow to no one in terms of my respect for the professionalism, dedication and inspiration of our teachers. What our schools cry out for is enough of them, with enough time, enough support staff and enough resources to do their job. That is the key reform that the PISA results demand. The budget next week must protect education spending and begin to reinstate what has been cut in the past decade. Will the cabinet secretary promise that reform? However, will he first just say "Sorry" to the parents, children and teachers of this country?

**John Swinney:** I came to Parliament willingly to explain the PISA results and to acknowledge that their contents make uncomfortable reading for all of us. I have put all the comments that I made on the record in order to sum up the Government's response to statistics and performance that are unacceptable and on which we have to improve. I accept responsibility for ensuring that that

happens: it will dominate my term in office as Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.

Let me, Presiding Officer, answer the particular points that Iain Gray raised. He referred to local authority budget issues. I simply refer him to the report by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission that was published last week. It said:

"Taking into account 2016/17 funding, councils have experienced a real-terms reduction in funding of 8.4 per cent since 2010/11. This is approximately the same as the reduction in the Scottish Government's total budget over the same period."

That puts Mr Gray's point in its proper context.

My long service as a finance minister enables me to know and to understand that when the Labour Party comes along to Parliament to complain about lack of money for particular policy areas, it is not very good—it was not very good at this over the long period for which I was finance minister—at telling us where the money would come from to make good any of the problems that were raised in the statement. The answer to Mr Gray's point about local authority budgets is contained in the detail of the Audit Scotland report.

On teacher numbers, Mr Gray will, of course, be familiar with the fact that, surrounded by some controversy, I had to apply constraints on some local authorities in order to avoid their reducing teacher numbers even further. I put in place those constraints in the face of much opposition from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and—I have to say this bluntly—from many Labour councils that wanted to reduce teacher numbers. I stopped them doing so. I make no apology whatsoever for protecting teacher numbers when Labour councils wanted to reduce them.

Finally, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution will obviously set out the details of the budget in Parliament next week. The Government has committed to investing £750 million in tackling the attainment challenge that the country faces. That is exactly what the Government will bring forward in its proposals. The cabinet secretary will set out a strong settlement that will enable us to tackle the problems that exist in Scottish education and to deliver for the young people of Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I have my doubts that we will get through all the questions from members who have requested to ask one, so could we have shorter answers, please, cabinet secretary?

**James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary is right that the results

"do not make comfortable reading",

but they clearly underline the case for reform of our education system. Some people have

suggested that the Scottish Government should slow reform down. Does the cabinet secretary agree that we need to pick up the pace of reform? I will ensure that the Education and Skills Committee plays its role, particularly in monitoring, scrutinising and implementing the Government's review. Does the cabinet secretary also agree that there is now more reason for groups and members in Parliament to come together to support reform, just as they did when curriculum for excellence was introduced, in order to help it to succeed in its initial phase?

**John Swinney:** Mr Dornan makes the fair observation that curriculum for excellence has been widely supported across the chamber—and in the Scottish community, into the bargain. As I explained in my answer to Liz Smith, CFE has been implemented collaboratively across the country.

I set out in my statement the Government's response, which is to reinforce the lessons that we learned from the Scottish survey of literacy and numeracy in 2015 about the need for us to progress with reform. That is exactly the agenda that the Government is pursuing, and I assure Mr Dornan that it will pursue that agenda with pace and urgency in order to improve Scottish education.

**Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con):** I thank the cabinet secretary for prior sight of his statement. On page 4, under key recommendation 2, he refers to an education governance review involving education practitioners. However, teachers in my region, many of whom attended a recent consultation event at Aberdeen exhibition and conference centre, have said to me that the review consultation is too bureaucratic and is filled with too much jargon. Teachers have said specifically that they have no idea what some of the review questions are actually asking. With teachers already expressing so little confidence in the review process, how can the cabinet secretary possibly deliver the reforms that he has articulated, when he cannot take teachers with him?

**John Swinney:** All I can say to Ross Thomson is that the Government is engaging very actively, in detail, in many conversations and in many parts of the country, about the detail of the governance review. A number of ministers are involved in those conversations. I have taken part in them and found them to be rewarding and thoughtful conversations in which many views were expressed. The Government obviously takes those views into account when coming to its conclusions.

All I say to Mr Thomson is that we need to encourage participation in the discussions around the governance review. The Government will

ensure that that is done and that we take a set of focused decisions that are designed to strengthen Scottish education as a consequence of the information that we hear from everyone who participates in that process.

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** I add my thanks for prior sight of the statement. I am glad that the cabinet secretary acknowledges the gravity of the results, but is it not the case that, since the SNP formed the Government in Scotland, we have lost two STEM teachers every week, there are 20 per cent fewer technicians and the number of lab assistants has been reduced by half? What impact has that reduction in resources in our schools had on our PISA rankings?

**John Swinney:** What we have to address as a Government is the resources that are, and have been, available to us for dealing with the challenges across the public services. Over the past nine years, we have delivered strong and fair settlements for local authorities, as is evidenced by the quote from the Audit Scotland report that I shared with Mr Gray.

The Government does not choose how many technicians there are in schools and we do not choose who the teachers are in schools. Those decisions are taken by local authorities. I point out again to Mr Johnson that, had I not stepped in to stop local authorities—many of which are run by his party—reducing teacher numbers further, we would have fewer teachers in our schools than we have today. That is the uncomfortable truth for the Labour Party—that I had to step in to stop Labour local authorities reducing teacher numbers, and I am glad that I did so.

**Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP):** The OECD rightly highlighted the role of leadership in our schools. I welcome the role that the Scottish College for Educational Leadership is playing in that regard. Will the cabinet secretary explain how the college seeks to empower middle leaders, who will be key to driving improvement in classrooms across the country?

**John Swinney:** Leadership is a well-demonstrated point in the OECD review of Scottish education. It is also a visible illustration of where strength comes from in the education system.

Yesterday, I was in the John Paul academy in Summerston in Glasgow, which is a fantastically well-led school. It has clear direction and a tremendous learning environment. Leadership is demonstrated at all levels in that school.

I make the point to Jenny Gilruth that we have to recognise the importance of leadership throughout the school community—not just at headteacher level—so that there is a focus on how we strengthen and improve Scottish education at

every level at which teaching and learning are being delivered.

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** My colleagues and I thank the Deputy First Minister for the advance copy of his statement.

Today's report on the PISA figures coincides with a report from Enable Scotland that does not make for comfortable reading, either. That report found that far too many people with additional support needs feel, and are, excluded at school, which has an unavoidable impact on their attainment.

Given the links between the attainment gap and the prevalence of additional support needs, will the Government use the Parliament's powers to bring forward a budget that allows local government to reverse the recent cutting of hundreds of additional support needs teachers and support staff? In addition, will the Deputy First Minister outline what evidence the Government has of any educational benefit of moving control of education from the local level to a regional board?

**John Swinney:** On the first point, the finance minister will set out the provisions of the budget next Thursday and Mr Greer will not expect me to prejudge that. The points that Enable Scotland has raised are important for the inclusion of every young person in our education system and ensuring that they achieve fulfilment. I have made it clear to Parliament before that the Government has set the centrality of the agenda of getting it right for every child, which has to mean every single child—we have to meet their needs.

On Mr Greer's point about educational regions, I have well-published data from Audit Scotland that significantly questions the ability of individual local authorities to add value to education in the schools in their areas of responsibility. That data tells us that we must support the enhancement of learning and teaching. From the published data that I have, it is clear that some local authorities cannot add that value. We therefore have to confront the hard reality that we must make sure that such support is available to every school in the country. It is not good enough for me to turn a blind eye when it is not available in certain parts. Some local authorities can add that value, but others cannot.

I want to make sure that we have an educational development resource that is available in every part of the country and which can add value to young people's educational experience. That is the point of co-operation between local authorities to create educational regions.

When we are in difficult circumstances and are making choices about the resources that are available to us, we must be prepared to do what the OECD said and work collaboratively across boundaries to share good practice and ensure that

it has a profound impact on the educational experience of young people in Scotland. That is the justification for educational regions.

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** As has been highlighted, progress on closing the attainment gap has been maintained and the impact of deprivation is around the OECD average. Does the cabinet secretary agree that maintaining progress is not enough to make the changes that we all want and that we should strive for higher than the average?

**John Swinney:** I accept that point. That was the focus of the recommendations that we received from the OECD review and is the focus of what we are taking forward as part of the national improvement framework and the Government's work on attainment. It also features in the steps that we have taken during the past 18 months or so to advance our agenda of closing the attainment gap in Scottish education.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I, too, thank the cabinet secretary for a copy of his statement. Will the Deputy First Minister accept that he is the fourth SNP education secretary in nine years and that, under his Government's—and no one else's—watch, the results are shocking? Does he agree that he has to do much more to allow Scotland's teachers to actually teach? His Government's education quango has issued 20,000 pages of guidance on curriculum for excellence to every school and that has simply not worked. How many of those 20,000 pages will go? Does he accept that no parent, teacher or pupil will accept financial cuts for schools after today? Will he meet local authority leaders before the budget next week to agree how to maintain spending in Scotland's schools?

**John Swinney:** On Mr Scott's point about guidance, during the implementation of curriculum for excellence, various discussions were held on the collaborative structures for taking forward curriculum development through the curriculum for excellence management board, which I referred to in my response to Liz Smith. Those discussions resulted in the drafting of guidance to provide greater clarity to the teaching profession.

I accept that the cumulative burden of that guidance has become unnavigable for the teaching profession, which is why I have set about reducing it. That is why the definitive guidance that I issued to every schoolteacher in the country in late August was designed to give absolute clarity about what was expected of the teaching profession and it is why that was followed by a simplification agenda from the chief inspector of education.

There will be a huge reduction in the volume of paperwork and guidance that is available to the

teaching profession as we move to a much simpler and more crystallised approach to advice on the curriculum through the benchmarks that I talked about in the statement. I say to Mr Scott that I have had good feedback from the teaching profession on the literacy and numeracy benchmarks that were issued—teachers believe that the benchmarks are valuable. That is the spirit in which we will take forward our approach to benchmark information.

On Mr Scott's final point about local authorities, there are on-going discussions with local government about the whole issue of public finances. Mr Mackay, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution, is carrying out those discussions and I understand that further meetings on the issue are planned for today.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I can squeeze in two more questions—from Jeremy Balfour and Monica Lennon—if they are quick.

**Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con):** I thank the cabinet secretary for a copy of his statement. The clear message from the results today is that the Government has failed a generation on education and we in Scotland will pay a price for that in future years. Looking ahead, does he agree that we need to look at having specific science teachers in primary schools who are trained in science and who can bring that education to the children, so that another generation does not fall further behind?

**John Swinney:** I am happy to concede that the detail makes for uncomfortable reading, but I have to say that Mr Balfour's characterisation of the situation is absolutely over the top. The OECD analysis does not bear out his analysis, and the view of a number of international education advisers does not bear out his analysis.

I am happy to have an honest debate about where we are, but we have to have that debate in the spirit of using decent quality information, which the OECD and our international advisers have given us. I do not think that the debate is well served by the characterisation that Mr Balfour has given it.

I think that the Conservatives know—because I have made this point to them before—that the idea of specialist science teachers in the primary sector runs contrary to the approach to the delivery of primary education within curriculum for excellence. I accept the importance of young people being captivated by science, which has to happen at the earliest possible stage in their educational journey. On countless occasions around the country, I have seen fabulous examples of how that can be done—not by specialist science teachers but by teachers who are motivated to deliver the broad

curriculum that will enhance the educational opportunities of our young people.

**Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab):** There has been no acknowledgement of the cuts to local authorities and schools, and no apology from members on the Scottish Government benches to our young people and their teachers, some of whom are in the public gallery. It seems that the Government is in the business only of taking credit—never the blame.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Ms Lennon, I asked for quick questions.

**Monica Lennon:** Meanwhile, the cabinet secretary's governance review proposes the centralisation of funding for setting school budgets. What assurances can the cabinet secretary give to teachers, pupils and pupils' families that his plan will ensure that all schools get the funding that they need?

**John Swinney:** I do not know where Monica Lennon has been for the past half an hour, because I have given a pretty candid account to Parliament of the challenges that we face. I want to send funding directly into the schools of Scotland so that our leading teachers can take decisions about the needs of the children in their schools. I want to have a debate in Parliament about how we can do that and I hope that the Labour Party will engage constructively in that discussion.

## Renewables

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-02919, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, on support for Scotland's renewables. We have already eaten into the time for the debate, so speeches will have to be quite tight.

14:55

**The Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy (Paul Wheelhouse):** This afternoon, I want to pay tribute to Scotland's renewable energy industry and highlight some of our renewable energy achievements. I also want to set out the challenges that Scotland's sector now faces given the current direction of United Kingdom Government policy, and how we intend to go forward.

I hope that members will join me in acknowledging the significant contribution that the renewable energy sector makes to Scotland's economy and environment and to meeting its energy needs. The renewable energy industry in Scotland makes headlines and breaks records. In August, for the first time ever, wind turbines in Scotland generated more electricity than was used in the whole of the nation on a single day. In September, the First Minister unveiled the world's largest planned tidal stream project, MeyGen, the first two turbines of which are now generating electricity in the Pentland Firth. Onshore works on the world's largest consented floating offshore wind farm site have begun, and we can expect to see Statoil's Hywind Scotland project deployed next summer.

A Scottish Renewables report that was published last week found that Scottish renewable energy businesses are working in more than 40 countries around the world. Recent figures from the Office for National Statistics show that low-carbon industries and their supply chains in Scotland generated turnover of almost £11 billion in 2014 and supported 43,500 jobs. In the words of UK Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Greg Clark, last month,

"There are few nations that could claim to have embraced renewable energy with as much enthusiasm and success as Scotland. Last year, over half of Scotland's electricity came from renewable technologies—a clear example to the rest of the world."

Murdo Fraser, please note.

However, although UK Government ministers applaud our success, their policy decisions continue to create serious uncertainty across the sector and undermine Scotland's renewables potential. I was extremely disappointed—indeed, I

was angered—by the UK Government's handling of the contracts for difference announcement in some respects. The Scottish Government repeatedly sought assurances from UK Government ministers about their plans to support renewable energy projects through the contracts for difference auction. I regret to say that I believe that the UK Government misled Scottish ministers and investors in the renewables industry and has reneged on earlier commitments.

I will give some key examples of that, the first of which is on island wind. Developers and communities on the remote islands of Scotland have told us that they are bitterly disappointed by the CFD announcement. They cannot understand why the UK Government has launched a further consultation on the treatment of island wind, which curiously the Conservative amendment seeks to celebrate. In the consultation, the UK Government has set out its position that island wind should not be considered as a separate technology, but should instead be treated in the same way as onshore wind.

That new minded-to position of the UK Government defies belief. It contradicts its previous position and undermines the work of the Scottish island renewables delivery forum, which is an intergovernmental working group that was set up to address the barriers to the deployment of island wind and marine technologies. The delivery forum, which is co-chaired by UK and Scottish Government ministers, has funded over £100,000 of research that found that, although island wind could capture some of Europe's best wind resources, the projects face unique costs that obstruct deployment.

The research showed that unlocking the islands' potential would provide a significant economic stimulus to our island communities, boost employment and spur innovation in other energy sectors. The use of multiterminal HVDC—high-voltage direct current—cables would provide learning benefits to offshore wind, and the export capacity that the transmission links would provide to the islands would open the door for further development of marine energy.

Island wind would also bring UK-wide supply chain benefits and contribute to the decarbonisation of the UK energy system, which will be crucial if the UK's carbon emissions targets are to be met. However, the research highlighted that island projects face a number of technical and financial barriers that make them more akin to offshore than to onshore wind. Expensive HVDC cables are required to connect the islands to the mainland transmission grid—an individual cable to Shetland or the Western Isles would cost an estimated £600 million to £700 million. The remote and challenging conditions in which the projects



would operate would increase their network and operations and maintenance costs. For instance, it is projected that a wind project on Shetland would face a transmission charge of £134 per kilowatt per annum compared with £18 for a mainland project. Similarly, a project on the Western Isles could pay up to £114 per kilowatt per annum.

The case for treating island wind as a distinct technology from onshore wind is the product of a close working relationship between our two Governments. From that evidence base, the UK Government twice proposed a strike price for island wind and concluded from its 2013 consultation that it warranted separate treatment. There was almost no industry dissent on that stance. Therefore, it was with great frustration that we learned with no prior warning that the UK Government had chosen to run a second consultation on the treatment of island wind—in effect, barring island wind from bidding for CFD allocation.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** The Low Carbon Contracts Company has published a booklet for 2016-17 that says that its intention is

“to provide long-term revenue stability to low-carbon Generators.”

Has that not been departed from in the decisions that the UK Government has made?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Mr Stevenson is absolutely right. I bow to his experience in his previous role as Minister for Environment and Climate Change. I know that he has experienced the constant chopping and changing of UK policy, which undermines long-term investment. Island wind projects are, obviously, long-term investments with huge capital costs up front.

The only justification given for the change of heart is the 2015 Conservative manifesto commitment to end support for onshore wind. Apparently, Andrea Leadsom's September 2015 commitment to seek a state aid case with the European Commission is now history. However, the Scottish Government is clear that the case for treating island wind as a separate technology from onshore wind has already been made. The UK Government promised Scotland that we would be better together but—I do not make this as a constitutional point—even after years of unprecedented co-operation on the subject and what we genuinely thought was a productive partnership between our two Governments, it seems that Scotland is unable to count on the UK Government to deliver on its word.

The lack of communication and the delay and indecision on the part of the UK Government have undermined the delivery forum's work. Since the forum's last meeting more than a year ago,

Scottish ministers and island councils have written repeatedly to the UK Government but have received no positive response. The timing of the consultation is particularly disappointing, given the UK Government's knowledge of the tight timetable for delivering the projects. Even if we persuade the UK Government of the validity of its own evidence, it is now highly unlikely that the island projects will be able to compete in the April 2017 auction.

The Scottish Government remains committed to the shared ambition that we developed in partnership with the UK Government to deliver island wind and capture its benefits. We take some encouragement from the assurance given by Baroness Neville-Rolfe, the Minister of State for Energy and Intellectual Property, that the consultation is genuine. I genuinely hope that it is, but we call on the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Greg Clark, to re-engage with the delivery forum and to stand by the strong case that it has helped to develop for island wind. Although I fully acknowledge the Scottish Government's important role in the matter, it is the UK Government's responsibility to deliver on the political promises that it has made to the island councils and developers who have continued to invest in the projects in good faith.

The wave and tidal sectors feel similarly let down following the UK Government's announcement on CFD. I am immensely proud—as I am sure many, if not all, members are—of the marine energy industry in Scotland. The sector has progressed more in 2016 than in any previous year, and Scottish firms are in a dominant position, as was discussed at last week's Scottish green energy awards ceremony. Edinburgh firm Nova Innovation has deployed the first two turbines of the Shetland tidal array at Bluemull Sound; Atlantis Resources has almost completed construction of the first phase of the MeyGen project; and Orkney-based Scotrenewables has begun testing the world's most powerful 2MW tidal turbine device at our flagship European Marine Energy Centre. In that triumphant moment for the marine energy sector, it is extremely disappointing that the UK Government is threatening the growth of that innovative sector by refusing to provide ring-fenced support for wave and tidal stream technologies.

I and my officials will have discussions with the UK Government so that we can agree a way forward for the marine energy industry. I will also convene a round table of representatives from the marine energy sector later this month to hear their priorities and their suggestions for initiatives that we might take to support them.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** Will the minister give way?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I am sorry, I am really pressed for time.

It is regrettable that the UK Government does not appear to have learned the lessons from wind power, when it missed the opportunity to establish the UK as the world-leading centre for renewable energy technology and allowed our competitors to dominate. That was a huge own goal for the UK. The Scottish Government is absolutely committed to helping us to maintain our global lead in marine energy. The sector needs support so that it can build on the success of the first projects to drive down the cost of energy. We are determined to do all that we can to ensure that the tidal energy sector, which has potential to generate sustainable jobs, is taken forward in Scotland. We again call for a new approach to the UK's relationship with Scotland on energy matters, with decisions on energy policy being made following a process of consultation and agreement with the Scottish Government, as set out in the Scotland Act 2016. I genuinely want to work with my counterparts to secure even more success for the sector if we can do so.

Onshore wind is a sector that has been thoroughly overlooked in the auction process. It is an absolute priority of ours to find a route to market for onshore wind. It is our cheapest renewable technology at scale and it makes a substantial contribution to our renewable energy targets and to reducing carbon emissions. At this time, the UK Government is not being clear on its stance on a price stabilisation mechanism, and the industry is in effect immobilised, with only legacy projects from the era of renewable obligations certificates and feed-in tariffs being constructed at this time. We need clarity soon, or the industry will go elsewhere. That could have a serious impact on our emissions reduction targets, on jobs and on communities. The First Minister and I have asked the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to consider Scotland's onshore wind sector as part of its forthcoming industrial strategy.

Pumped-storage hydro has the potential to play a significant role in Scotland's energy future, and in the future of these islands as a whole. The provision of greater energy system flexibility is widely regarded as a key issue for energy policy, and a range of technologies and approaches will play a role in the smart energy system. That is recognised by the newly formed pumped-storage hydro working group.

In order to ensure that pumped-storage hydro—a proven, highly flexible and large-scale option—is considered fully as policies and support frameworks are developed, the group commissioned an independent report on the technology. That report has now been published

and provides a clear summary of the many benefits that pumped-storage hydro provides today and could offer in the future. It sets out the significant investment and market challenges that are associated with delivering new projects, and emphasises the need to explore how those barriers can be removed.

I wrote to the UK Government to commend the report, and to ask it to engage with the industry and the Scottish Government to explore how we can work together to realise the full potential of pumped-storage hydro. I will continue to pursue that matter with the UK Government.

Scotland's renewables sector has come a long way. The more mature technologies, such as onshore wind and solar, are fast becoming some of the cheapest forms of power generation and are attractive for deployment in relation to power purchase agreements, for example. It makes no sense for the UK Government to exclude those readily available forms of clean energy from having a viable route to selling their electricity to the market when they could make such an important contribution to meeting future climate change targets. If the UK Government wants to keep bills down for consumers—an aim that we share—why overlook the lowest-cost methods of generating green energy?

Earlier, I mentioned the MeyGen tidal energy project in the Pentland Firth. The eyes of the world are on that innovative scheme, which is a flagship project for the whole tidal industry. The UK Government invested alongside the Scottish Government in the first phase of that groundbreaking project. It is a superb example of what can be done when the UK and Scottish Governments work together to provide a lasting benefit for the people of Scotland and to tackle climate change. However, now that the developer is on the cusp of reaching financial close on the next phase of the project, BEIS has decided that offering a ring-fenced budget for such projects,

“does not represent good value for money for consumers”.

I am sure that members will agree that that is not only irrational but short-sighted. If the UK Government wants the marine energy sector to achieve cost reductions, placing obstacles in its path is hardly the way to do it.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the UK Government's announcement on the second renewable energy Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation round; acknowledges the latest round as a potential opportunity for Scottish offshore wind farms to compete for contracts; notes its strong concern that the UK Government has effectively excluded island wind projects from this CfD allocation, despite repeated assurances to the contrary following a 2013 consultation; further notes with concern the UK Government's decision not to provide a minimum allocation

for Scotland's world-leading marine energy technologies, therefore overlooking their potential to supply a substantial contribution to future energy needs and to develop a domestic engineering base; considers that the UK Government has, to date, failed to respond positively to calls from the Scottish Government and industry for a "route to market" to unlock investment in consented pumped hydro storage projects; notes the Scottish Government's efforts to coordinate development of the offshore wind supply chain, and supports the Scottish Government in its efforts to work with the renewable energy industry to identify the most appropriate means by which it can use those powers at its disposal to support the development of the renewable energy sector, across a range of technologies, and to ensure that the sector has the financial and political support that it requires.

15:08

**Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con):** I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests, in particular to my involvement in renewable energy.

The Scottish Conservatives welcome the debate on renewables and support the Government's acknowledgement of the opportunities that the latest round of contracts for difference brings to the Scottish economy. We also strongly support the Scottish Government using powers within its means to further develop the renewable energy sector. As for the Labour amendment, I think that we can safely say that we will support anything that uses transferable skills and creates jobs. Even in the Green amendment, there are elements such as sectoral targets, repowering and energy bonds to which we might be sympathetic. I hope that today's debate will develop those areas.

However, as always, it is important to note the absolute hypocrisy that is displayed by the Scottish National Party. The SNP continues to moan about the lack of funding for Scotland—but only in this chamber. I am not sure whether the minister is aware, but his colleagues at Westminster, who were, on the Thursday, full of indignation at the CFD announcement, had by Monday calmed themselves so much that they did not even bother to raise an emergency question. So, apparently, the issue is problematic for Scotland, but it is not problematic enough for them to change their weekend plans. Alternatively, perhaps they—unlike their colleagues here—appreciate that, although Scotland contributes less than 10 per cent of the levy that raises funds for CFD, we received more than 43 per cent of the allocation of CFD.

The UK Government remains committed to helping the offshore wind sector in Scotland, with a record level of investment. I will put that in context for members. Before 2010, under the previous UK Labour Government, the average level of investment in renewables was £3 billion. In the six years since then, that figure has more than

doubled to £7 billion a year. The minister may not like it, but he must acknowledge that it is the UK Government that is currently steering us towards meeting our COP21 targets. It should therefore come as no surprise that the UK has now moved up to second place in the latest climate change performance index.

We have now committed the UK to stop using coal—the dirtiest of fuels—from 2025. That bold commitment shows the great progress that we are making in decarbonising our energy sector, but it is not only our Westminster colleagues who are taking the initiative. We on the Conservative side of the chamber have always supported the attempt by Scottish Renewables to create a new sustainable energy innovation centre in Scotland, as it would be a great opportunity for Scotland to harness its research and development abilities and to export those skills all over the world. Unfortunately, so far, that is going down on the list as just another missed SNP opportunity.

It is no wonder that the polls are tightening. It appears that, as well as powering our grid, the winds of Scotland are changing. As we move to decarbonise Scotland, it is clear that the Scottish Government has to deal with the elephant in the room—heat. Heat accounts for 54 per cent of our energy usage, and 49 per cent of our home energy usage is space heating, which is effectively wasted. We are charging consumers for heat that they are, in effect, pumping into the sky. That is ever more worrying when one considers the rising levels of fuel poverty in Scotland, as it means that more than 40 per cent of Scotland's households are spending more than 10 per cent of their income on fuel. That is simply not good enough, and the Scottish Government must take action on the matter immediately. It is another problem, and another SNP fail.

**Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP):** Will the member admit that the carbon emissions levels from the UK as a whole are not helped by the Tory Government's obsession with fracking?

**Alexander Burnett:** The only issue that we in Scotland have with fracking is that it is completely hypocritical to take a stance on it while importing fracked gas from America, which has a higher carbon emissions count when one considers the shipping costs for bringing it over. The hypocrisy in saying that fracking should not happen and yet still being happy to import fracked gas turns the argument on its head.

I will continue on the subject of heat. The most recent figures, which were published this morning, show that 8 per cent of lofts still have less than the minimum 100mm of insulation or no insulation at all. That figure has remained nearly unchanged for three years. That means that 144,000 homes have inadequate insulation this winter, wasting hard-

working families' income on inefficient heating while the Scottish Government twiddles its thumbs and sits on its hands—no doubt to keep them warm.

The problem is not limited to lofts. Investment in district heating must be a priority for the Scottish Government, and nowhere would it work better than in the Scottish Government's buildings at Victoria docks. Even from a quick glance at the Scottish Government's heat map, it is evident that the building is a prime candidate for district heating, yet the Scottish Government has not even looked into the matter. How are companies supposed to take the initiative when the Scottish Government cannot—literally—put its own house in order?

In conclusion, I quote from the recent University of Strathclyde report, which states:

“Doing nothing is simply not an option”.

How many times do we have to tell them?

I move amendment S5M-02919.1, to leave out from “acknowledges” to “hydro storage projects” and insert:

“welcomes the £290 million of annual funding that this will provide for less-established technologies such as offshore wind, wave and tidal; acknowledges the latest round as a potential opportunity for Scottish offshore wind farms to compete for contracts; notes that the UK Government has launched a full consultation on whether island onshore wind projects should be treated differently from those on the mainland; welcomes the UK Government's support in the Autumn Statement for low-emissions vehicles; recognises the need for a focal point for developing renewable technologies and calls for the creation of a sustainable energy innovation centre; urges the Scottish Government's forthcoming energy strategy to set out a balanced energy mix, recognising the need to protect bill-payers, reduce emissions and provide security of supply; understands that support mechanisms for energy storage could help lead to a more efficient grid; recognises the potential for growth in the renewable heat sector and calls for the expansion of district heating”.

15:13

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to debate renewables. We will consider the draft energy strategy in the new year, and there will be a longer period for discussion and debate, which will undoubtedly cover renewables along with a range of other energy sources. I am clear that we need a mix of sources in our energy supply for the future.

In the interests of time and brevity, I will focus in this debate predominantly on two aspects. The first is the support—or lack of it—from the UK Government, and the second is the economic impact of renewables investment.

Let me take those things in reverse order. We have seen a substantial increase in renewables,

particularly with onshore wind projects in the past few years, and that is welcome. For many people, their support in part depends on where the turbines are sited and how well they work with the background environment. That said, Scotland punches above its weight in attracting the lion's share of UK Government subsidies. I am not convinced, however, that we have got the biggest bang for our buck.

I am told by those who work in the industry that there is considerable supply chain potential that we are simply not catching. Typically, the vast majority of wind turbines are manufactured abroad. That is where a considerable amount of our resource goes and that is where the biggest jobs impact is. I will give two examples to illustrate that. I am told that the offshore wind turbine project in the Pentland Firth sends its turbine work to Austria, and the new Scottish Power project in the North Sea is sending its turbine orders to the Gulf. That is potentially 200 jobs, the benefit of which is not in Scotland. Frankly, that is not good enough. At a time when our economy is struggling, every penny should be a prisoner and we should seek to make more of the economic opportunities, especially those that enjoy public subsidy.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Will Jackie Baillie congratulate the firm BiFab, which is on the Isle of Lewis, and its workers, who are successfully starting work on 28 jackets and eight piles for the Beatrice field?

**Jackie Baillie:** I absolutely welcome that. I just want to see more of that, and I am sure that Stewart Stevenson does, too.

The Scottish Government economic strategy in 2011 suggested that the low-carbon sector could support 130,000 jobs by 2020. I think that that was probably a little overambitious, and I suspect that the Scottish Government thought so too, because by the time that we came to the 2015 strategy, the figure had disappeared. In its briefing, Scottish Renewables suggests that there are 21,000 jobs in renewables.

I can find no reference in Government documents to a target for jobs and little prior work on securing more of the supply chain for Scotland.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Jackie Baillie:** I really should make progress.

Although that is disappointing, I am ever hopeful for change from the minister. As a general principle—I think that he would agree—we should always consider the economic and jobs impact of any public sector investment. That is not protectionist; it is sensible. It is about maximising economic opportunity and getting the best value

for our investment. Quite simply, I want the lion's share of renewables jobs to be in Scotland.

Scotland is uniquely placed to take advantage of the renewables revolution. We have lots of wind, and not just in this chamber. Indeed, if there was a renewables technology that captured energy from rain we would be quids in. Joking aside, we have considerable expertise in the oil and gas sector. Oil & Gas UK estimates that there will have been 120,000 job losses in the industry by the end of this year. Many of those who lose their jobs will be engineers with transferable skills, so let us ensure that we connect opportunities in renewables with the skilled workforce in the oil and gas sector.

I hope that the Parliament will accept Labour's amendment, maximise the supply chain and consult on setting a target for jobs to be delivered by renewables.

Given the potential that we have, I am genuinely disappointed by the Tories' attitude at the UK level. The announcement of the second pot of funding for contract for difference was delayed by a year. The £290 million for delivery from 2021 to 2023 is indeed welcome, but the devil, as ever, is in the detail.

We see support for offshore wind technologies. Clearly, Donald Trump did not manage to have a word with the UK Government before it decided on its course of action. He is of course the gift that keeps on giving. If anyone cares to look at his tweets, they will see one that I found:

"@David\_Cameron should be run out of office for spending so much of England's money to subsidize windfarms in Scotland."

Dearie me. It is almost tempting to call for a comeback from David Cameron.

The UK Tory Government has not made any commitments on helping onshore wind and solar technologies find a route to market. Neither is there any minima for wave and tidal technologies, so they will have to compete with cheaper technologies, which will be difficult. There is no promise to the Scottish islands, which is a departure from the UK Government's previous commitment to remote islands.

We know the very real challenges of delivery and investment in interconnection, as well as the clear social and industrial benefits for small island communities. I hope that, when the consultation ends, the UK Government will have listened to those remote communities and decided that they should be treated as a separate category to onshore wind projects.

Labour members support renewables, but we believe that there is even greater economic gain to be had from current and future investment.

Therefore, I commend my amendment to the chamber.

I move amendment S5M-02919.3, to insert at end:

“; notes that the Scottish Government has not set a specific target for the number of jobs that the renewables sector should create; therefore urges it to do more for jobs that will support Scotland's economy, and recognises that this should include the full use of transferable skills of the oil and gas sector so that they can be utilised in the renewables sector across a range of alternative energy projects.”

15:20

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** I declare an interest as a councillor in Stirling.

I thank the Scottish Government for lodging the motion for this afternoon's debate. It is right that, as a Parliament, we repeatedly celebrate the green energy achievements of the past 17 years. In fact, 2016 has been a record-breaking year for wind power, which, on several days and for the first time ever, has generated more electricity than Scotland's entire demand.

The fact that renewables meet the equivalent of well over half our electricity needs in Scotland is a story of success, but it also begs the question about our longer-term goals. There is no room for complacency: electricity generation represents only a quarter of our energy needs, as transport and heat are largely still fuelled by fossil energy sources.

It is clear that fully decarbonising the energy sector—for example, by shifting to electric transport and district heating—inevitably means an increase in demand for electricity, which will require efforts to create local energy systems that can balance supply and demand. Much of the support for and development of those approaches is possible here in Scotland under devolved powers, and good work on innovation has already been piloted under programmes such as the local energy challenge fund with support from the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets.

However, I note that the minister will not support our call for an all-energy target today. I hope that, with the publication of the draft energy strategy in January, he will take the opportunity to renew our collective ambition in the Parliament and look to countries such as Norway and the Netherlands that are now pinning dates on the phasing out of fossil fuel-powered cars.

In a debate about potential and ambition, it is also right that we challenge the assumption that the current pipeline of electricity projects will still be there in years to come in the face of what can only be described as ideological attacks from the

Westminster Government. I accept that we have a regulated market for electricity in the UK and that the reforms that were put in place by the Westminster coalition Government were designed to deliver the lowest cost to consumers with an effective route to market for the energy infrastructure that we will be relying on for the generation to come at least.

The pathway of progress for onshore wind in particular has delivered more energy generation for less and less cost to consumers year on year. Costs are down in the supply chain, as are operation and maintenance costs. In addition, more powerful and efficient turbines are able to harness more of the infinitely renewable wind resource that Scotland is blessed with. The expectation in the industry is that onshore wind and, in time, other technologies will become subsidy free and will be able to generate on the wholesale price of electricity alone.

However, instead of Westminster giving the industry a stable financial bridge to cross the narrowing cost gap to a subsidy-free future, it has simply pushed the whole onshore wind and solar sector into the abyss. Confidence is down, jobs have been lost and long-term investment strategies are being questioned. With the renewable obligation cut, public sector projects such as Stirling Council's 5 megawatt solar farm have fallen short agonisingly close to grid connection, losing millions of pounds that could have closed attainment gaps, reabled the elderly and fixed potholes locally.

What was the point in the huge subsidy cuts? The Don Quixotes of the Tory Government had already successfully railed against turbines in the home counties by introducing draconian planning policies, despite the fact that their own research showed growth in public support for wind across the UK. There was no need for them to kick against their own market ideology by fixing a scheme to exclude the lowest-cost technology of onshore wind from the mix, because they had already loaded the planning system.

**Gillian Martin:** With regard to the target that Mark Ruskell is asking for in his amendment, does he agree that, if we were to set a target of 50 per cent, we would need to do an impact assessment? Some of the measures that he has been talking about would make achieving that target quite difficult.

**Mark Ruskell:** That is, rightly, for the energy strategy to set out. Today, we are putting forward a number of policies and ideas that should be taken seriously by the Government. I hope that the minister will reflect on them when he closes the debate.

To return to the issue of subsidy and CFD, what was needed was a balanced approach to investment that recognised the advantages of onshore wind as a mature technology and put the market technologies of wave and tidal on a clear pathway to commercialisation. Instead, we have a second CFD round that is dominated by offshore wind, which has a big role to play but not to the exclusion of the technologies that are already ahead of it and those that are coming up behind.

There is a strong future for onshore wind, and the trend towards higher turbine heights means fewer turbines in the landscape. With many projects entering their second decade, there is a golden opportunity for Scotland to repower, replant and, where appropriate, extend wind farms. Taking a landscape-scale approach to degraded uplands could deliver a triple win of massively increased power output, opportunities to invest in habitat restoration and renegotiated community benefit agreements, with more profit sharing and partnership built in.

We see island communities reaching out for the onshore wind developments that could release nearly three quarters of a billion pounds-worth of investment; grid constraints that have had a stranglehold on their economic potential for years being finally released; and land reform delivering the foundation for a renewables legacy that will ensure that wealth and wellbeing are shared across the islands for generations to come. Allowing island wind a place in the CFD process that recognises both the challenge and the enormous social and economic potential, alongside a renewed target for all energy, has to be a priority of every member of the Parliament.

I move amendment S5M-02919.4, to insert at end:

“; agrees that the forthcoming energy strategy should set a target to ensure that 50% of all Scotland's energy needs across the heat, electricity and transport sectors are met by renewables by 2030; recognises that sustained growth in renewable energy generation, as well as new policies to guide the re-powering of existing sites and promote domestic industry and innovation, will be required to meet these targets; believes that growth in renewables must benefit the common good, and therefore supports the creation of a Scottish renewable energy bond and government-owned energy company to help people in communities develop, build and own more low-carbon energy capacity.”

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to open speeches of up to six minutes, please. Ivan McKee will be followed by Liam Kerr.

15:26

**Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP):** Scotland has made tremendous progress in green energy infrastructure and capacity over recent years, and we now generate more than half our

electricity requirements from renewables. In addition, Scotland's contribution to the UK's renewable energy supply targets is substantial, at 26 per cent of the UK total. However, Scotland has ambitious targets for the future: to meet 100 per cent of our electricity needs from renewables by 2020 and to focus on making significant inroads into converting heat and transport energy supply to renewables over the coming years.

It is worth taking a step back and remembering why we are focused on the shift towards renewables. The impact of climate change on our planet is clear, but our response is not about saving the planet—it will do just fine, as it has for the past 4 billion years. It is about keeping the planet habitable for *Homo sapiens*—it is pure self-interest. Scotland's work to build our renewables capacity means that we not only meet but exceed our climate change targets, and Scotland's progress in that area is internationally recognised.

Renewables provide clean energy, mitigate the effects of climate change and provide the opportunity to leverage new technologies to build the industries of the future. However, as with all energy technologies, renewables require market stability in order to support new investment in capacity and development. That is the context in which we must view the UK Government's contracts for difference pricing mechanism and its commitment—or lack of it—to Scotland's renewables technologies.

The UK Government's recent announcement of the CFD structure, which had been delayed since the summer because of Brexit, was very disappointing in the way that it limits the growth of Scotland's renewables potential and stifles Scotland's renewables ambitions. There is no ring-fenced funding for marine or onshore wind in the CFD structure, which makes it unlikely that projects for those technologies will win funding. However, nuclear power will receive funding: the Hinkley Point C deal will provide support pricing set at £92.50 per MWh, which is almost double the current wholesale price of electricity. In contrast, onshore wind costs have continued to fall, with the last round of support at around £80 per MWh and the industry working towards much lower prices as technologies mature.

Island wind offers a route to establishing high-efficiency wind generation as a significant contribution to our energy mix and an economic contribution to our island communities. Despite repeated assurances following the 2013 consultation that it would do the contrary, the UK Government has, in effect, excluded island wind projects such as the Viking project in Shetland from the CFD allocation. Instead, the UK Government has kicked the can down the road by

initiating a further consultation, which will delay implementation and create even more uncertainty.

Many parts of the renewables sector, such as tidal and wave, are in their infancy. Those technologies will become mainstream in the future, and the countries that invest in them now will reap the economic reward for decades to come. The UK Government has failed to recognise the potential of those technologies and to invest in them. At the same time, it is making a £35 billion bet on unproven European pressurised reactor nuclear technology at Hinkley C. That is not good for consumers, for industry in this country or for Scotland.

The recent CFD announcement was disappointing news for wave and tidal as no minima was set aside for those technologies. Without minima, wave and tidal projects will be included in a cost-competitive auction process alongside offshore wind projects, which are significantly cheaper due to the technology's maturity and scale. Given the comparably high cost of wave and tidal projects, it is unlikely that they will secure a contract in a competitive auction. That is especially problematic for Scottish firms, which are in a dominant position in the marine sector.

It is a truism that the wind does not blow all the time, although sometimes in Scotland it feels like it does. The need to balance intermittency can be—and is being—tackled in a number of ways, such as through smart demand management, battery storage technologies and the use of local solutions to feed into the grid. The use of pumped hydro has a large role to play in balancing energy supply, allowing excess generation from wind to be stored as hydro energy for future use.

Major hydro projects at Cruachan and Coire Glas, with total additional capacity of 1GW, are costed, funded and ready to proceed, prevented only by the lack of CFD support from the UK Government. Despite UK Government ministers applauding Scotland's renewable energy success, their decisions continue to create serious uncertainty across the sector and undermine Scotland's renewables potential.

Renewables is an industry Scotland was made for. Blessed with the fabulous resource of our oil and gas sector in earlier decades, Scotland has hit the jackpot not once, but twice, with our renewables potential. We need to support and to develop the sector not just to meet our own energy needs and provide for export or build manufacturing industries on the back of the sector, but to build up levels of expertise in the sector, similar to what has been achieved in the oil and gas sector, providing us with a revenue stream and high-value employment far into the future.

Low-carbon industries in Scotland generated £10.7 billion in turnover and support 43,000 jobs, and they have the potential to do far more to support our economy of the future. However, we need the UK Government, which holds the economic levers in the sector—as it does in many others—not to stand in the way of Scotland's interests.

15:32

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** I live in Aberdeen. I have worked there—predominantly in advising the energy sector—for more than 13 years. I am now privileged to represent it as part of the North East Scotland region, and have spent a great deal of time since being elected seeking to understand in ever-greater depth its energy needs and energy delivery.

The city has grown rich thanks to North Sea oil and gas. Until recently, it had the highest concentration of millionaires in the UK outside London and it boasted an unemployment rate below 2 per cent. In 2009, as the rest of the country suffered under Labour's great depression, it proudly declared, "No recession here."

Times have been tough of late, however. Oil & Gas UK estimates that 40,000 jobs have gone from the industry. Hotel takings are down 50 per cent and visitors through Aberdeen airport are 20 per cent lower year on year. Mortgage arrears have spiralled to double the national level and could rise further as unemployment increases, as the EY report stated yesterday. All that has happened despite the UK Government's considerable support. In welcoming the autumn statement, Oil & Gas UK said:

"We are pleased to hear the Chancellor re-commit to HM Treasury's Driving Investment plan today."

**Stewart Stevenson:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Liam Kerr:** Will I get time at the end if I do so, Presiding Officer?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** No.

**Liam Kerr:** Then, no. I am afraid not, Mr Stevenson.

I welcome the news that

"Vattenfall has agreed to move into Aberdeen harbour to support the construction of Scotland's largest offshore wind test and demonstration facility."

It has signed a 25-year lease with Aberdeen Harbour Board, so it is the first offshore wind operator to invest long term in the port's facilities. I cannot wait to visit the company at Commercial Quay when the facility becomes operational in the second quarter of next year. It is a shining example of the future of the energy industry—an

energy sector that includes a mix of renewable and traditional energy. Nowhere is more readily equipped or has the expertise, the infrastructure and the experience for building and maintaining an offshore energy sector than the city and shire of Aberdeen. I am confident that that investment is a sign of things to come as the city diversifies to adapt to a modern energy future. That energy mix is key to the future, and our amendment

"urges the Scottish Government's forthcoming energy strategy to set out a balanced energy mix".

We have to stop talking about wind and tidal power as the be-all and end-all.

However, the debate is on renewable energy, so let us talk about how the UK Government has invested record amounts in the development of the offshore wind sector in Scotland and across the rest of the UK. Pre-2010, the average level of investment in renewables at UK level was £3 billion; the figure is now £7 billion.

**Gillian Martin:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Liam Kerr:** No—I am afraid not.

Let us talk about how the UK is now in second place, behind Denmark, in the most recent climate change performance index. Let us talk about how the UK Government has pledged to end the use of coal in our energy mix by 2025, and let us not forget that £290 million has been announced for the next round of contracts for difference funding in order to support less-established technologies including offshore wind, biomass, wave, tidal stream and geothermal projects.

I represent a party that is committed not only to ambitious emissions targets, as Alexander Burnett said—that was demonstrated by the UK's continued leading stance at the 21st session of the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP21—but to our energy security and to creating a genuine energy mix. I represent a party that is committed to an energy mix that includes shale gas, unlike the party that imposed a moratorium on even exploration—I repeat, exploration—for shale gas in Scotland, and which claims to be environmentally aware but supports the shipping to Grangemouth of shale gas from halfway around the world in massive supertankers.

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the member take an intervention on that point?

**Liam Kerr:** I really cannot, because I do not have time—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** It is up to you, Mr Kerr, not me.

**Liam Kerr:** I will take an intervention on that point.



**Jackie Baillie:** That is so kind. Would Liam Kerr care to reflect on the fact that licensing for bringing the product of fracking into the port of Grangemouth is done by the UK Government?

**Liam Kerr:** I will reflect on that, but the point remains the same. One cannot bring shale gas from halfway around the world, try not to turn up to a photo opportunity and then hope that no one notices. Well, the people of Scotland noticed.

The people of Scotland also notice the Scottish National Party paying lip service to local community concerns when wind farm applications are rammed through against residents' wishes.

**Maree Todd (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Liam Kerr:** No. I simply do not have time.

Two thirds of wind farm applications that local authorities rejected have been overturned in 2016 so far, including the 22-turbine development in Altnaharra, which is the first wind farm to be approved in a designated wild land area since the Scottish Government revised its planning framework. Mr Wheelhouse justified his decision by saying that the project has "popular support": that will be a petition that was organised by an SNP supporter and which was enthusiastically supported by locals in Fraserburgh, Dunfermline and Doncaster.

I note with interest that the WWF said in its briefing paper that transport accounts for a quarter of Scotland's energy consumption. I note it, and I note that only the Conservative amendment has picked up the issue for today's debate and that the UK Government has announced in the autumn statement that it will invest a further £390 million by 2020-21 to support ultra-low emissions vehicles, renewable fuels and connected and autonomous vehicles.

Unlike the SNP, the Conservatives are genuine about creating an energy mix, genuine about investing in renewables, genuine about trying to combat the chronic lack of insulation in Scottish homes, and genuine about standing up for local communities. That is what our amendment seeks to do, so I urge members to support it.

15:38

**Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP):** Renewable energy is one of the keys to an economically successful and sustainable Scotland. In his speech, the minister gave a full picture of the Scottish Government's considerable efforts to ensure that Scotland is a leader in the success of renewable energy globally.

I come from the north-east of Scotland, so I have a particular interest in our energy sector. For

one thing, the oil and gas industry directly facilitated my being brought up in the area—in Newburgh, in my constituency—because my father is an engineer, and his engineering skills brought him to Aberdeenshire. He was brought up in Clydebank; like many folk from the town he worked at John Brown & Company engineering.

Cut to the late 1970s: I do not need to remind any member what happened to manufacturing and heavy industry on the Clyde as a result of Tory policy. The shipyards were decimated. Many engineers like my dad upped sticks and went to Aberdeenshire to help to develop the oil and gas industry, accompanied largely by their shipbuilding colleagues from the north of England, whose heavy industry suffered the same fate under Margaret Thatcher.

Yesterday, I read an excellent article by Dick Winchester, who is an engineer of a similar vintage to my dad and who writes in *The Press and Journal* every week. Mr Winchester pointed to the huge number of manufacturing and engineering projects that our renewables industry requires, and the huge number of jobs that renewables innovations and manufacturing could create. He said that there is massive potential for engineering talent to be redeployed in new industries that will develop our future greener world. That would be a third wave of Scottish engineering—ships, then oil and gas, and now renewables.

We have the natural resources that can generate the energy, but more needs to be done to ensure that Scottish manufacturing and innovation are once again redeployed. Scotland is an engineering nation and we have amazing companies doing vital work, but our northern European neighbours are making the most of the opportunity that Scotland's natural resources offer. Dick Winchester's article mentions Vestas, the Danish engineering company that manufactures wind turbines and employs more than 20,000 people. He mentioned Vattenfall, a Swedish company that is working as we speak in Blackdog in my constituency to get the substation for the Aberdeen offshore wind farm under way. Those innovative companies are investing in Scotland and working in partnership with us, which is most welcome, but the environment for Scottish-owned businesses also has to flourish and to be the kind of forward-looking environment that those other small countries were able to foster.

**Mark Ruskell:** Gillian Martin will recognise the importance of targets having been set in driving progress such as we have seen in renewable electricity. Does she also acknowledge that the same would be true for transport and for heat, and that we need to drive strong progress in order to develop new industries?

**Gillian Martin:** I am not going to deal with that in my speech, but I broadly agree with Mark Ruskell.

It is disappointing that the UK Government has not provided a minimum allocation for Scotland's marine energy technologies—an area in which we have probably the biggest potential for innovation and some of the world's most innovative companies. The lack of action on contracts for difference, which the Scottish Government asked for assurances on, makes life even harder for our renewables industry. That comes on top of early closure of the renewables obligation scheme, for which the industry has roundly and rightly criticised the Government.

Then there is the cancellation of the wind farm subsidy programme. The message that that gives to investors is the big problem. It says that the rug of Government incentive and support can be pulled from under their feet at any time, just as it was with the carbon capture project that Peterhead was leading on and which could have been a giant step in managing our carbon emissions—not to mention that it would have provided jobs for the north-east and that the technology would be exported to other countries, as in the cases of the northern European firms that Mr Winchester mentioned in his article and the Austrian-built turbines that Jackie Baillie mentioned in her speech. It takes time to recoup investment from new technologies, so removal of incentives is unhelpful at best, and at worst leaves a destructive lasting legacy in the minds of investors.

Today I asked Dr Lena Wilson of Scottish Enterprise what her key asks of both Governments were in facilitating diversification of skills from oil and gas into the renewables sector. She welcomed the Scottish Government's actions in that area. She heads up the transition training fund and is proud of its achievements so far, but she said that the UK Government is making the environment for renewables innovation challenging. Her appeals to the former UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Amber Rudd, did not bear fruit in that area, so she urged her successors to look again at what they could do to create a more attractive environment for potential investors and innovators.

We are already way ahead of the rest of the UK in supplying renewable energy. As Ivan McKee mentioned, renewable electricity generation in Scotland made up approximately 26 per cent of total UK renewables generation in 2015. Of course we can do more, but it often seems to be the case that the priorities of the two Governments are at odds with one another on energy policy.

Scotland has built ships, we have built offshore platforms, and we have the engineering expertise

to deliver decommissioning projects: we cannot be left behind as European neighbours surge forward. Their Governments have facilitated innovation through investment and tax incentives. We need the same commitment from the UK Government, which needs to appreciate the resources that Scotland has, both natural and in our people, and to take a more constructive and forward-thinking approach that offers renewables the same support that it gives to the more costly and precarious nuclear and fracking projects with which it is obsessed.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** I remind members that, when you take an intervention, you should take your seat so that we do not have two members standing at the same time. I know that Mr Macdonald, whom I now call, does not need to be told that.

15:45

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** When it comes to building a renewable energy powerhouse, Scotland has three critical advantages: we have the natural resources; we have the political will across parties, as we have heard; and, in the supply chains that have been built up to support offshore oil and gas over the past 40 years, we have the formidable concentration of energy and engineering expertise from all over the world that makes Aberdeen the energy capital of Europe.

The Aberdeen supply chain has been innovative from the outset, enabling the recovery of more natural resources from further below the sea bed in more hostile environments over a longer period of time than would once have been thought possible. The same pioneering spirit and technological innovation are needed to realise the potential of renewable energy and to turn aspiration in that field into reality, and it is largely the same people and businesses who can help to make that happen again.

There are, however, some challenges to be met. Renewables UK has yet to recognise that much of what its members want to do in the marine environment is already being done, particularly regarding safe working practices offshore. It is deeply frustrating for workers who have been made redundant as a result of the current downturn in oil and gas to be told that their hard-earned offshore safety certificates are not recognised by marine energy employers, even for aspects of the job that are virtually identical in both sectors. Safety standards set by OPITO in the North Sea are recognised worldwide as the best in offshore oil and gas. Unemployed oil workers who want to make their own transition to renewable energy should not have to spend precious redundancy payments on repeating training that

they have already done simply in order to tick a bureaucratic box. I hope, therefore, that the Scottish Government will add its voice to the calls that have already been made by oil workers unions and training organisations for Renewables UK to look at all that again. Even where practices differ—and they do, in some respects—short and affordable conversion courses would surely be to mutual advantage.

As the minister knows, last week I was delighted to welcome ABB, which was holding its first reception at the Scottish Parliament. ABB is a specialist service company that supports oil and gas and other sectors, and its UK operational headquarters are in Aberdeen. Now it wants to drive the new technologies that will shape the industries of the future, from digital manufacturing to electric vehicles. Vattenfall, which has been mentioned, is another big inward investor in the north-east. It has just agreed terms with the Aberdeen Harbour Board for an onshore base for the European offshore wind deployment centre, which is to be built in Aberdeen bay. Just as Orkney hosts the European Marine Energy Centre, so Aberdeen will host Europe's prime site for proving new offshore wind technologies—despite the opposition of a well-known local hotelier who was recently elected as the President of the United States.

International companies such as ABB and Vattenfall enjoy working in Aberdeen, as we have heard, because of the strength and depth of the engineering sector there. They like the fact that the whole city embraces energy and engineering as great ways to make a living. They also like the fact that Aberdeen is a city that plans for the future. Rebranding the oil capital of Europe as the energy capital of Europe some time ago was a symbol of that forward thinking, and the Aberdeen city region deal that was recently agreed with the UK and Scottish Governments also looks to the future beyond the production of oil from the North Sea.

Aberdeen City Council set up the Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group to act as a catalyst for change, working with public and private sectors and with local communities, and there are many examples of the progress that has been made in recent years. The Donside hydro project in Aberdeen was recognised as the best community project in Scotland at the Scottish green energy awards last week. An urban village of social and affordable homes will generate its own power—and profits—funded by a large number of small investors based in and around the community itself. The city also has the biggest and best district heating network anywhere in Britain thanks to the efforts of Aberdeen Heat and Power. Connecting thousands of homes and many public buildings to heat and power grids has reduced

carbon emissions and cut energy bills for people who were formerly in fuel poverty.

Aberdeen is also blazing a trail on transport. Last week, Paris, Madrid, Athens and Mexico City committed to ban diesel within their city limits by 2025, so the race is on to commercialise hydrogen fuel cell technology and the work that is being done in Aberdeen has put Scotland in pole position in that race.

Aberdeen has Europe's largest fleet of fuel-cell buses and the UK's largest and most efficient hydrogen production and refuelling station. The scheme has had valuable support from the Scottish Government and from the European Union. It is attracting huge interest in Japan, which sees hydrogen as the next big thing in energy, but if Scotland is to keep its lead in the area, Aberdeen needs the Government support to continue. I therefore ask the minister to agree that the work to turn aspiration into reality must not now be put at risk, and to confirm that the Aberdeen hydrogen bus project will receive the funding that it needs if it is to proceed to the next stage.

Scotland's devolved Governments since 1999 have all set demanding targets for renewable energy production, and they have all been delivered. A target for jobs would be a good step to take at this stage, and there needs to be an increasing focus on transport and heat as well as power, as Mark Ruskell said. With the right support from government at every level, Aberdeen—as a centre of engineering, technology, skills and innovation, and as the energy capital of Europe long after North Sea oil—can play a big part in that process. That way, all our aspirations can be turned into reality.

15:51

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** Jackie Baillie referred to the fact that David Cameron has not been very supportive of offshore wind. He is 100 per cent supportive of it—mind you, he is an SNP councillor in Aberdeen. That is perhaps not the David Cameron that Jackie Baillie had in mind.

Liam Kerr's memory seems to be slightly shorter than mine. It was remembrance day when he and I were sitting round the table listening to Shell UK; I think that Lewis Macdonald was also there, and he might nod when I say that Shell indicated that it was considerably disappointed by the inadequate support that it was getting from the UK Government for many of the initiatives that it wished to pursue.

Another point that I would like to make to Liam Kerr is that Aberdeenshire has a higher concentration of onshore wind farms primarily

because for many years the Conservative-led council there had a looser planning authority, which did not impose the same restrictions as the rest of Scotland on distance between wind turbines and communities, and I urged it to harmonise with others. Liam Kerr, who is new to us, is perhaps not as familiar with some of the history as others might be.

Some interesting things are said on the subject of renewable energy from time to time. Victoria Ayling was a Conservative Party candidate in the 2010 general election, when she nearly beat Austin Mitchell; she got within 714 votes of him. In 2015, when she was standing in the same constituency—Great Grimsby—for the UK Independence Party, she showed that startling insight that those on the right of politics sometimes do when she posed the question, “What happens when renewable energy runs out?” When it was drawn to her attention that that was perhaps not the most sensible thing to have said, there was a good deal of desperate back pedalling. On Thursday, she will make her third attempt to get to the UK Parliament when she stands in the Sleaford and North Hykeham by-election, once again for UKIP. Appropriately enough, her name will appear on the ballot paper immediately following the Monster Raving Loony Party and immediately before Bus Pass Elvis, whose candidate appears to be a gentleman called David Bishop.

A lot of nonsense is talked on this general subject. Some of it is merely amusing, but some of it is really serious indeed. Some unexpected sources point us to the seriousness of climate change and why renewable energy has such an important part to play. I will quote no less a person than John Brennan, who is the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. On 16 November 2015, he said that climate change was one of the “deeper causes” of instability. He identified it as one of a handful of key challenges that were creating the unstable world that his agency would have to engage with. That is why we should take this debate on renewables and the debate on the broader subject of climate change extremely seriously.

We have made progress in Scotland—that is for sure. Beating our climate change targets six years ahead of the date that we set in 2009 is absolutely terrific, but our emissions are but one seven-hundredth of the world’s emissions. We can set an example, but we are not the source of the entire problem.

The UK Government’s contribution to climate problems is much bigger, so it is bitterly disappointing to see that it fails to understand the best economic way of tackling the issues that are before us. Contracting a price that is twice the

market rate for nuclear power from Hinkley Point is not only foolish in relying on a technology that is unproven—and from the early attempts to implement the technology that Hinkley Point C would depend on, looking to be unsuccessful—it is economically benighted and unhelpful. The money could much more usefully be installed in proven technologies for renewable energy. The low-carbon contracts company that I referred to in my earlier intervention is part of the quite complex infrastructure that surrounds contracts for difference—there are six significant parties to those contracts, which makes things far from easy. That company certainly did not give us in its contracts for difference booklet for 2016-17 any prior insight into the UK Government’s volte-face.

I hope that the UK Government will listen to this debate and, more to the point, that it will think of not just the investments that are being made in renewable energy and the value that is derived from those, but the key opportunity to re-exploit the huge skills that have been built up in Scotland, the north of England, East Anglia and throughout the UK in offshore gas and offshore oil, which Lewis Macdonald and other members referred to. Both industries have been around for decades, and we can make much of them in the future.

15:57

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I should start by making members aware that I own a microturbine and a ground-source heat pump. However, that is only one of the reasons why I am grateful to Paul Wheelhouse for allowing members this debate on Scotland’s renewable energy sector. The issue is vital for this country, but it is particularly significant to the constituency that I represent, which I will talk more about shortly.

I welcome the minister’s constructive approach, which reflects the strong cross-party support that Lewis Macdonald referred to. That has characterised the approach to such issues since the Parliament was established. As Scottish Renewables highlighted in its briefing, the political consensus has helped to reduce risk and enabled the sector to deliver advances in a relatively short time, such as renewables supplying 57 per cent of Scotland’s gross electricity consumption in 2014; generating £10.7 billion of turnover and supporting 43,500 jobs across the low-carbon industries in Scotland; and the displacement of more than 13 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2015.

Despite that progress, challenges remain, as others have acknowledged. Sadly, since 2015, the UK Tory Government has seemed intent on undermining that progress while putting at risk our ability to achieve future emissions reduction targets and jobs growth.

It is disappointing to see Alexander Burnett seeking to legitimise that approach in his amendment. I accept that contracts for difference offer good opportunities for offshore wind, and I welcome that, but it is beyond me how he believes that wave and tidal projects stand the remotest chance at this stage of bidding competitively for any of the available funds. Removing any minima for wave and tidal generation in effect locks those technologies out of any funding until 2021 and probably later. It also sends entirely the wrong message to developers, supply-chain companies and investors.

Instead of repeating the nonsense that wave and tidal energy can compete on price with offshore wind energy, Mr Burnett and his colleagues should join in making the case for capped support along the lines that were previously envisaged. The number of projects that are involved and the hurdles that they still need to overcome mean that any UK Government outlay would be low and slow. That is in marked contrast to the boost that such a cap would give to confidence in the wave and tidal sectors.

The decision to consult on an island strike price beggars belief. We have been around the houses on that twice already. Moreover, the framing of the consultation makes it clear that it is just a mechanism for allowing the UK Government to dump commitments that were made under the previous coalition.

That is not the way to make energy policy, build confidence or secure future investment in renewables. We need our islands to play a full part in delivering the renewables revolution. That will require new infrastructure and meeting up-front cost that must be reflected in the funding that is made available to support island-based projects.

In Orkney, the approach of UK Tory ministers to those two issues alone is having a noticeable effect. As confidence and activity leak away, so do jobs and income. The waste that that represents is shameful, and it brings the potential loss of innovation, skills and expertise, as picked up on by Jackie Baillie.

We need a much stronger focus on supporting innovation, on which the UK and Scottish Governments' language is in much alignment. I urge the minister to take the lead, challenge his UK counterparts to follow suit and, by all means, use Orkney as a test bed. Our islands have an impressive track record as a living laboratory, but we have the potential to do more. On energy management and storage, the take-up of micro and community-owned renewables, the roll-out of electric vehicles and hydrogen-fuelled ferries, innovation in tackling fuel poverty and delivering more energy-efficient homes and public buildings, Orkney's living laboratory is genuinely pioneering.

I hope that the energy strategy that is due out next year will capture and reflect the fact that Orkney is much more than EMEC and, indeed, the wider area of marine renewables.

As for innovation, let us not forget that it has a happy knack of securing wider benefits. For example, work that Sustainable Marine Energy did recently in Orkney in relation to rock bolts is now helping in the aquaculture sector, at precisely the moment when SME is being forced to scale back its renewables operations in Orkney. To allow more such innovation to happen, the minister will have to dip into his pocket, as will his UK colleagues, perhaps through finally delivering actual benefit from having designated the Pentland Firth and Orkney waters as a marine energy park.

Meanwhile, power purchase agreements and renewable energy bonds seem to offer opportunities and scope for supporting innovation while growing the supply chain and providing routes to market for renewables technologies. All those are welcome.

Before I close, I will touch briefly on some of the issues that are less well covered in the Government's motion, which I am happy to support. I have reservations about a Government-owned renewables company, but Mark Ruskell's amendment very fairly captures the task that is ahead on heat and transport, where the forthcoming energy strategy really needs to show the Government upping its game and being more ambitious.

Having 50 per cent of our energy come from renewables by 2030 is the scale of what needs to be done. As WWF highlights on heat, which accounts for up to half of our energy usage at the moment, figures stand at about 5 per cent. Key to meeting our ambitions in that area will be a warm homes act, which Scottish Liberal Democrats and other parties have proposed. As well as helping to deliver clean, affordable heat for homes and businesses, such legislation could pave the way for progress, finally, on district heating in Scotland.

On transport, more ambition is again required, which makes the Government's position on air passenger duty and Heathrow expansion all the more inexplicable. However, it is helpful that WWF and Scottish Renewables have laid out proposals for the electrification and decarbonisation of our transport system. Greater incentives to take up electric vehicles and other sustainable vehicles can include bus lanes, priority parking, low-emission zones and a major expansion and improved maintenance of charging and refuelling points.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you.

**Liam McArthur:** Presiding Officer, I have no problem in joining the minister—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must close now—I am sorry, Mr McArthur.

16:03

**Maree Todd (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** I was eager to participate in today's debate on renewables because I am a passionate supporter of the industry. The need for clean energy is indisputable, and the potential for green energy around the Highlands and Islands is unrivalled.

We have suffered centuries of depopulation in the Highlands and Islands but, if we could harness that energy potential, it could transform the region from a low-wage economy to one that not only enables our young folk to stay but attracts people in.

We have been generating electricity from hydro schemes for more than 100 years. More than half of Scotland's hydro schemes are in the Highlands and Islands area, and today hydro power contributes about 12 per cent of Scotland's electricity, with considerable potential remaining to introduce new schemes and expand or improve the efficiency of existing facilities.

The sea off the north coast of Scotland and around the Orkney Islands contains half of the UK's, and a quarter of Europe's, tidal resource. The Shetland Islands and the waters around Argyll also have great potential.

Orkney is the home of the European Marine Energy Centre, which was established in 2004 and is still the world's only grid-connected wave and tidal test site. In August, the world's largest tidal turbine began trials in Orkney, while power was exported to the grid for the first time from a pair of tidal devices in Shetland. The Pentland Firth is the location for MeyGen, which is the world's largest tidal stream array project and which is under construction.

I move on to wind. Scotland is one of the windiest countries in Europe, and it is no surprise that the Highlands and Islands have the UK's most sustained wind regimes for turbines. The Burradale wind farm in Shetland has the world record for the highest capacity of a wind farm. Almost 500 onshore wind turbines are operating in the Highlands and Islands. On the point about the Altnaharra wind farm that Liam Kerr raised, I say that we should not believe everything that we read in the newspapers. There might well be some support from outside the area, but that does not detract from the considerable amount of local support and the unanimous support of Highland Council that the project received.

Many a fragile community in the Highlands and Islands is coming back to life because of wind farm money. More than £10 million of community benefit has been paid this year to communities that host renewable energy projects, and it is paying for a range of activities, from local transport schemes to trips for the brownies.

Scotland is home to around a quarter of the whole European offshore wind resource. Offshore wind had led to investment of more than £190 million in the Scottish economy by April this year. Exciting projects are planned for the waters around Scotland, including the Beatrice offshore wind farm in the Moray Firth. My region is well placed to assist in the delivery of a dynamic offshore wind sector.

Scotland is in the midst of a global energy transition towards a renewable energy future and we are already enjoying the economic benefits. The Office for National Statistics has shown that low-carbon industries in Scotland generated £10.7 billion in turnover and supported 43,500 jobs directly and in the supply chain. Independent analysis has found that, if it plays to its strengths, Scotland could have almost entirely renewable electricity generation in 2030 without the need for coal, nuclear or new gas generation capacity.

We might think that low-carbon technologies that are in early development and which have the potential to unlock energy sources in remote and fragile communities would warrant whole-hearted support from Governments until they became fully commercially viable. However, as is often the case, we have a tale of two Governments. While the Scottish Government sets ambitious targets and drives innovation, the UK Government has made U-turns on promises and failed to deliver a route to market.

In the latest announcement of contracts for difference, the UK Government has put off a decision about how to provide connection capacity for projects that are sited on Scotland's islands; failed to ring fence funding for the wave and tidal sectors; and left onshore wind and solar in limbo, without any contractual framework to support long-term investment, although they are the cheapest of any form of electricity.

As for the Conservative amendment, it is wholly wrong for the Tories to pass off what is happening as an honest consultation on island wind. They are consulting on a negative proposition, and the people on the islands recognise that it is a complete betrayal of island communities. Those decisions are totally at odds with the ones that have been made about nuclear capacity at Hinkley Point, where a 60-year-old technology has been provided with cast-iron certainty and subsidy, although we have not yet solved the fundamental question of what to do with the waste.

The lack of support and the grid constraints are causing huge frustration in Lewis and Shetland, but nowhere more so than in Orkney, which is generating more electricity than it can use. With UK Government support, it could export its excess but, as that support cannot be relied on, Orkney is researching its own solutions and innovating. The people of Orkney are aiming for the area to become established as a global centre for energy storage, and I agree with Liam McArthur that Orkney is perfectly placed to be a living laboratory.

A series of initiatives has been put in motion, including a hydrogen project that is using tidal and wind power to produce fuel—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is where you must conclude. Thank you very much. Time is tight—keep looking at the clock. I call Donald Cameron.

16:09

**Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. As someone whose name has been confused with both David Cameron and Donald Trump, I am grateful that you got my name right.

I refer to my entry in the register of members' interests and the reference to renewable energy therein, as well as my shareholding in Green Highland Renewables (Achnacarry) Limited. It is to hydro power that I would like to turn in my remarks today, not least because it is the technology that I know best, due to my personal experience of it in running a family business—as Mr Wheelhouse will know from a visit to Lochaber in August—but also because of the benefit that it has brought to communities across the West Highlands in particular.

There remains huge potential for Scotland to lead the world in hydro energy, and my own Highlands and Islands region in particular can continue to be the hub for that development.

Once all forms of energy sources are included, hydro power accounts for only 12 per cent of our total electricity supply. That may be small but it is not insignificant. Scotland is the UK leader in hydro power and has been for some time. We are lucky to have the natural resources to produce hydro power energy in this manner. It is perhaps obvious, to say the least, that much of Scotland is rich in rainwater and my answer to Jackie Baillie is that we make use of our rain already.

What is so interesting about hydro power is that it is such an old technology—perhaps the oldest renewable energy of all. The radical history of the hydro revolution in the Highlands since the days of Tom Johnston is well known and I pay tribute to that record.

**Mark Ruskell:** Will the member give way?

**Donald Cameron:** Sorry—I do not have time.

In a different manner, the aluminium smelter in Fort William—much in the news recently—is of course also a massive hydro power station. As a child, I recall looking at the two massive pipes running down the side of Ben Nevis towards the smelter and asking an adult what was in them. “Whisky”, they replied. I now know better—of course it was water.

However, there has been a second revolution in the last decade, which again has seen power to the glens and which we must all recognise has been driven by the renewable energy policies of successive UK Governments of different political hues. One of the big reasons for that is the feed-in tariff scheme, which helps more people to produce energy on a smaller, micro level—even from home. The feed-in tariffs mean that the cost of installation can be offset over time and deliver a cost benefit in some cases.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** Will the member give way?

**Donald Cameron:** Can I please make some progress first, given the time?

The feed-in tariff in hydro—and indeed the ROC that it succeeded—has enabled communities in the west Highlands to directly benefit from that revolution, not to mention the economic stimulus that it has provided to the Highland economy, in particular to the building trade and associated contractors. There are remote communities in Morvern, on Mull and in Wester Ross, to name but a few, that have benefited. Exciting community projects with innovative funding arrangements have allowed communities to own hydro power schemes outright—or at least to benefit from them via their own rental income—or to be given a community benefit by the developer.

To those who say that the UK Government has ended the feed-in tariff, I reply that that is not the case. It has lowered the subsidy and focused it on certain power outputs in specific technologies, but the feed-in tariff remains and will remain until 2019.

**Claudia Beamish:** Does the member agree that the removal of the certainty that business needs was what was most catastrophic about the Tory Government's decision to cut the solar FIT input early and that that sort of business strategy by the Tory Government must not be allowed to happen? I hope that the member will take that back to his Tory colleagues at Westminster.

**Donald Cameron:** I do not agree, but I will certainly take that point back to them.

As I said, the feed-in tariff is still in place and it will remain until 2019. That is just one example of continuing UK Government support for renewable energy.

With hydro power, the critical issue that often defines whether a project will go ahead is not funding, or indeed planning, but grid connection. That is the real determining factor.

There is of course a question of capacity—there are only so many streams, rivers and burns to tap. However, it is wrong to say—as the minister did—that only legacy schemes will be built. The easier schemes have perhaps already been built, but I am sure that future hydro projects will go ahead in the Highlands, not least because the pre-accreditation system, which allows an often crucial two-year timeframe between planning consent and commissioning, has been reinstated.

A decrease in subsidy is not new—since April 2014, a system of degression has operated whereby the subsidy slowly decreases over time. There are many purposes of renewable energy subsidy, including to kick start new technologies and to assist construction of well-established technologies for which the build costs are often prohibitive. Let us remember that renewable energy subsidies cost the general public, because they go directly on to our electricity bills. Therefore, subsidy simply cannot be unlimited and never-ending. I think that Mark Ruskell accepted that the ideal is a subsidy-free future.

Since 2000, there has been a huge increase in the amount of electricity generated from hydro. We need to do more to promote smaller renewable energy schemes in general.

Despite the Scottish Government's relentless criticisms of the UK Government on renewable investment, since 2010 Conservative-led Governments have committed to £7 billion-worth of investment in UK-based renewable energy. We have said that we will invest a further £390 million by 2021 to support ultra-low emission vehicles. I remind members that it was a Conservative-led Government that set up the UK's first Green Investment Bank here in Edinburgh. There is no question about the UK Government's pragmatic and realistic commitment to the renewables sector. In a debate on renewable energy—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that the member must close—I am sorry.

**Donald Cameron:** Okay—thank you.

16:16

**Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP):** It is evident that we all believe in the strength of the renewables industry in Scotland, that it is a real success story and that we as MSPs

need to do all that we can to support this vital industry. As has been touched on, the natural resource in Scotland is abundant and significant. We have 60 per cent of UK onshore wind capacity, 25 per cent of Europe's offshore wind capacity, 25 per cent of Europe's tidal capacity and 10 per cent of Europe's wave capacity. Because of that, we have developed expertise in the sector and we have inspiring engineers, consultants, planners and lawyers.

Throughout my career before I came into politics, I had the great privilege of working in the marine sector with some extraordinarily inspiring and innovative pioneers, who literally were changing the world in their daily work. As a lawyer, I worked on onshore wind and other renewable projects and saw the depth of the expertise that we have in professional services. I will come back to why protecting them is so important.

Members have highlighted the MeyGen project of Atlantis Resources, which is such a success story, and the world-leading tidal company Nova Innovation, which is based in my constituency—I look forward to visiting it soon. There are also small companies such as Quoceant, which is also based in my constituency. We need to take the opportunity not only to recognise those companies, but to commit to supporting them.

As we reflect on that expertise and capacity in the Scottish economy, we should also reflect, as other speakers have done, on the huge contribution that we have made so far. In 2014, 57 per cent of Scotland's gross electricity consumption was from renewables, and we are well on the way to 100 per cent by 2020. That is the environmental contribution. Economically, the Office for National Statistics has shown that low-carbon industries in Scotland generated £10.7 billion in turnover and supported 43,500 jobs directly and in the supply chain. Socially, it must be acknowledged that £10 million of community benefit funds have been contributed to communities that host renewable energy projects. Environmentally, socially and economically, the renewables sector makes a huge contribution.

Moving on to policy, given all of that advantage, expertise and progress made, we need to think about how to move forward. That is why the recent CFD announcement is so disappointing. Scottish Renewables has said that, like all generators, renewable energy developments need some certainty to support investment and that the recent CFD allocation has left many parts of the renewable sector without a clear route to market. WWF has stated that there has been a real missed opportunity to provide long-term confidence.

Many of the points about the problems with the CFD allocation and UK Government policy have



already been made, but I want to emphasise some of them. Mark Ruskell spoke powerfully and clearly about the fact that a lack of a CFD allocation to onshore wind makes no economic or logical sense. The advantages of investing in such a mature technology to build on the strengths and to bring down costs, and then to move to a position where we do not need subsidy, are absolutely clear and true.

When it comes to the marine development, as I know from my previous experience of working in the industry, the fact that no minimum amount of the CFD budget has been allocated makes no sense in terms not only of that section of the renewables industry trying to compete but of building on the comparative advantage that we already have in expertise, providing future jobs and, as Jackie Baillie rightly stated, making a viable supply chain.

That uncertainty in the CFD allocation is, of course, supplemented by Brexit. I mentioned earlier Nova Innovation, which is based in Edinburgh Northern and Leith, doing great work with its tidal project in Shetland. Last week, at the green energy awards, the company won an award. The minister was there, as were Alexander Burnett and Lewis Macdonald. At that award ceremony, not only was there a recognition in the room of the strength of the Scottish renewables industry but there was a palpable sense of uncertainty and worry. Those of us who were there must all have felt it.

The message that needs to go out clearly from the debate is that the Scottish Government is doing all that it can to support the industry and we need our Scottish Conservative colleagues, instead of making tribal remarks in speeches that were written by researchers, to get on the phone to ministers and the secretary of state in their Government and ask them to get behind one of Scotland's most important industries: the Scottish renewables industry. They have the chance to make a real difference to a vital element of Scotland's economy and to make progress on the environment. They should do the right thing, get on the phone, use any back channels that they have and support Scotland's vital renewables industry.

16:21

**Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab):** Public investment in renewable energy is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is true that, across the world, energy is bought and sold like any other commodity, but it is not any other commodity. Renewable energy especially is a natural asset, but it is also a national asset and it needs to be supported with a national policy for energy that is coherent, credible and underpinned by an

industrial strategy that generates jobs in our manufacturing base.

That is why we say that no Government—not because it is a UK Government but because it is a Tory Government—should be allowed to abandon that natural endowment for the sake of short-term political fixes. No Government should be allowed to leave that public service to the lottery of the market or leave the switchover to renewable energy simply to the economics of short-term profit and loss. That is why we are critical of the Tory Government's decision in the second round of the contracts for difference to exclude island onshore wind projects and to downgrade marine renewables.

Labour's goal is that we should meet 50 per cent of our heat and transport demand in Scotland from renewables by 2030. Just yesterday, I met a fledgling firm, BMM Energy Solutions, which is still working out of a farm at Caldercruix in North Lanarkshire. It installs electric vehicle charging points. What struck me about my meeting was that here was a company based in central Scotland supplying the rest of the UK market, with contracts with York NHS, contracts with the London Fire Brigade for two electric vehicle charging points at each of the 75 fire stations in London and contracts across England with the Environment Agency, but only a limited number of contracts in Scotland.

It strikes me that we need, first of all, more support for small and medium-sized enterprises, which are expected to compete against transnational corporations in all aspects of public procurement, including renewable energy. Secondly, we need more leadership from all public bodies in Scotland, especially the Scottish Government, to support the shift and lead the move from the carbon economy to the sustainable society. Leadership by example is critical. Leadership at home is essential. Thirdly, we need to seize the opportunity that electric transport provides to help solve the problem of overproduction from renewables at certain times of the day and night and underproduction at other times. Electric vehicles can help to match demand to supply.

Next year marks the 40th anniversary of the death of the influential international writer and thinker—and National Coal Board chief economist—Fritz Schumacher. He said a number of interesting things in his life, but I will quote just one. In 1967, he said:

"An active relationship to the future is called 'planning'. A passive relationship is called 'forecasting'."

I want us to start planning again. I want us to have a plan of action, and I want us to have a vision in

our politics that includes renewable energy at its core.

We need an energy policy that is about ending fuel poverty, not least among our pensioners, about providing adequate heat and light and about tackling climate change, not about building lots of power stations and generating Monopoly-style company profits. We must learn the lessons of history and look towards human-scale, decentralised intermediate technology, with human values no longer coming second to economic imperatives but, instead, working together with them. There must be community ownership, including municipal ownership, of our energy systems instead of absentee ownership.

The energy that is saved through conservation is not controlled by big corporations or foreign Governments. Efficiency and conservation are more productive than drilling for energy, and conservation does not run aground on a beach in the Outer Hebrides on its way to Turkey.

We need a vision—a vision of an indigenous supply chain with steel rolled in Lanarkshire, made from recycled scrap, for wind turbine jackets that are fabricated in Fife and at Arnish point; pumps that are built in Glasgow; wind turbine towers that are assembled in Machrihanish in Kintyre; and wave technology that is pioneered in the Orkney Isles. That must bring with it the promise of jobs to rural and urban Scotland, the Highlands, the islands and lowland Scotland. We need a hub of research and development that brings together our colleges and universities with our industrial pioneers, with workers playing an active part. Upstream and downstream, jobs must be created in the supply chain—real jobs, green jobs, union jobs. That is our vision, and it is one that I hope that the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament can share.

16:27

**Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP):** As we rapidly approach the Christmas recess, at the end of what has been another record-breaking year for Scottish renewables, I am delighted that we have the opportunity to discuss and debate how we can build on that success with continued support for Scotland's renewables. After almost a decade of investment and support under the SNP Government, it has been confirmed that Scotland now generates the equivalent of 57 per cent of its total electricity use from renewables, which significantly surpasses the interim target of 50 per cent. As was noted by my colleague Ivan McKee, that is a 14 per cent increase from 2014, and represents 26 per cent of the total UK renewable energy that was generated in 2015, with an estimated 13 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> displaced, as was highlighted by Liam McArthur.

We already know that further progress has been made, with days in August and since on which—for the first time in Scotland—wind turbines generated more electricity than was needed. Further, in 2016, we have also seen the commencement in Orkney of the world's largest tidal turbine trials.

Not only are renewables contributing to Scotland achieving our ambitious climate change targets—they are also making a significant economic contribution, as Jackie Baillie and Ben Macpherson noted. Recently released figures from the Office for National Statistics show that in 2014 low-carbon industries in Scotland generated £10.7 billion turnover and supported 43,500 jobs. That means that Scotland accounted for 12.9 per cent of total UK turnover and 9.7 per cent of total employment in the sector. Both those numbers are higher than Scotland's population share, which demonstrates the importance of low-carbon industries to the Scottish economy.

I also note the positive impact of community renewables, with more than £10 million being paid in the past year to communities that host renewables, and an estimated 508MW of capacity now being operational, which exceeds the 2020 target of 500MW. In my constituency of Renfrewshire South, Neilston Community Wind Farm LLP produced in the past year enough carbon-free electricity to power twice the number of homes in Neilston.

The substantial progress and development that we have witnessed in the Scottish renewables sector has been undergirded by the Scottish Government's steadfast commitment and support. Since 2007, Scotland's renewable electricity output has more than doubled and is now equivalent to half the electricity that is consumed in Scotland. However, that progress is at risk of being undermined by a backward-looking UK Government.

Although many countries have begun the process of phasing out nuclear power, the UK Government has approved and given the go-ahead for the £18 billion Hinkley Point C project while rolling back support for renewables. It is worth noting that the project will be two thirds funded by EDF—which *The Guardian* reported last Friday has 13 of its 58 French atomic plants offline. *The Guardian* went on to report that, although some of the plants are offline for planned maintenance, most are offline as a result of

"safety checks ordered by the regulator over anomalies discovered in reactor parts."

I highlight that because it was further reported that "the problems" that have been identified

"stem from a fault identified last year by the"

French Nuclear Safety Authority in a reactor that is currently in construction in France and which uses the same design that was approved for Hinkley Point C. We can only hope that the “significant new safeguards” that the UK Government mentioned in relation to the UK deal are more robust than EDF’s reactor design for Hinkley.

What is definitely not robust in the UK Government’s plans for Hinkley Point C is the thinking behind a guaranteed payment of £92.50 per megawatt, which is almost double the current wholesale price of electricity. That will mean that ordinary consumers and taxpayers will be forced to subsidise a mature and wealthy industry at the expense of promising renewables.

Approving Hinkley Point C is just one of a number of factors that the EY renewable energy country attractiveness index identified as undermining confidence in renewables across the UK. The index also highlighted as factors the closure of the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the uncertainty that has been caused by Brexit. Against that backdrop it is important that when the UK Government publishes its industrial strategy and emissions reduction plan, it includes details about long-term support for renewable energy.

More immediately, the UK Government must realise that reneging on its commitment to reserve a portion of the contracts for difference budget for marine energy projects is—to be frank—a slap in the face to that emerging industry, which has progressed more in the past year than in any other year. The UK Government should work with the Scottish Government and the sector to provide bespoke agreements so that we can safeguard our global lead in that dynamic and creative sector.

Whitehall has been fond of saying that Scotland has two Governments, but it is clear from the approach of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy that Scotland has too often been an afterthought. As the minister noted in his opening remarks, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Greg Clark, has stated that

“There are few nations that could claim to have embraced renewable energy with as much enthusiasm and success as Scotland”,

so it is now time for the UK Government to start matching that enthusiasm and to support the Scottish Government’s ambition for Scottish renewables.

16:33

**Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green):** I thank all the members who have contributed to the debate. I am particularly pleased to speak in my first

debate on renewable energy, given that I started my working life undertaking research on renewable energy for the energy technology support unit in the 1980s, when renewable energy was in its infancy. It was regarded as an emerging technology that had security implications, so the programme was administrated from the UK Atomic Energy Authority’s base at Harwell near Didcot, which made for some interesting meetings.

We have heard much today about the need for greater financial and political support for renewables projects, so I am glad that there is some consensus in Parliament on the need for Scotland to continue its drive towards a clean energy future. That consensus is reflected among the Scottish public, 70 per cent of whom said in response to a survey earlier this year that they would like more renewable energy generation in Scotland.

I commend Richard Leonard for his infectious enthusiasm, and I commend many members in the chamber for their dedication in speaking up for their constituents in North East Scotland.

Scotland has some of the best renewable energy potential in Europe—we have heard examples today. The Green amendment highlights the need to develop the sector in the interests of Scotland. People like renewables, but to sustain the benefits, they need to be shared more widely.

In a debate in 2012, Patrick Harvie pushed the Government into supporting local authorities that, for example, want to create publicly owned renewables. We argued that publicly owned renewables could help to lower carbon emissions and generate revenue for public services. Other European cities, including Berlin and Munich, generate millions of euros in income from their energy service companies.

Local authorities in Scotland are in many ways ahead of the Government on publicly owned renewables. In my region, the City of Edinburgh Council appointed directors to an arm’s-length company in September. Green councillors are impatient to see the project, which they first proposed in 2010, happen. Glasgow City Council is making similar moves and Aberdeen Heat and Power Company Ltd has been operating for over a decade. Some heroic efforts made that company a reality.

**Liam McArthur:** I well recall Patrick Harvie making those points and I have a great deal of sympathy for local engagement and public ownership. I am concerned about the proposition of a Government-owned renewables company. Will Andy Wightman allay those concerns and explain precisely what he envisages?

**Andy Wightman:** I do not know what Liam McArthur’s concerns are. Gillian Martin mentioned

a company that she visited in the north-east—Vattenfall. It is wholly owned by the Swedish Government, so the idea that the state cannot provide a complementary role in generation of electricity is strange. I would be happy to talk to Liam McArthur about it.

There are other models, of course. For example, Our Power Energy Supply Ltd is a non-profit energy company that was set up by a group of social housing providers last year. Its residents are provided with lower-cost energy and the profits are reinvested in the local communities rather than dividends being paid to shareholders.

Mark Ruskell spoke to the first half of the Green amendment, which is about industry and civic society calls for a 50 per cent renewables target across all our energy use. I was intrigued by Gillian Martin's support for Mark Ruskell's intervention suggesting the setting of clear targets for heat and transport. However, the fact was that she was sceptical about such targets when it came to the Green amendment. Perhaps her reluctance is due to her enthusiasm—which is shared by many in Parliament—for extracting every drop of hydrocarbon from the North Sea when, in order to keep global temperature increases below 2°C, we need to keep two thirds of existing reserves in the ground.

**Gillian Martin:** Maybe my point was misconstrued. In effect, I was saying that before setting targets it is important to research what targets might mean for consumers and companies. In addition, the UK Government's failure to support renewables will make reaching targets even harder.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I will give you another minute because you have taken two interventions.

**Andy Wightman:** Research is all very well, but we need clear targets. Other countries are setting them: we heard from Lewis Macdonald about targets being set in Japan. Targets are vital to making absolutely clear the commitment of Government and local authorities to move to a low-carbon future.

The Green amendment refers specifically to the role of community-owned energy. We have heard a lot about community benefits, which are one thing, but community ownership, with the power, autonomy and revenue that comes with it, introduces far greater benefit to communities.

The Green amendment supports a Government-owned energy company and the creation of a Scottish renewable energy bond. Both those calls were made in the Scottish Greens' election manifesto, so I welcome their inclusion in the programme for government. We have been promised consultations on both in 2017, so I hope

that the minister can confirm that consultations will go ahead on that timescale.

Scottish Renewables and Snell Bridge Ltd consultants have published a paper outlining just how we could go about creating a Scottish renewable energy bond. If we were to transfer current community renewables assets that are held in the Government's renewable energy investment fund into a Scottish community energy fund, the public could invest directly in the new fund in order to facilitate new projects. Thanks to cuts from the UK Government, communities can no longer rely on the certainty of feed-in tariffs or the renewables obligation to sustain energy projects. A bond would provide people in Scotland with the ability to invest directly in energy projects with relatively low risk. I have invested in community shares—for example in BroomPower in Maree Todd's constituency and in Apple Juice at Applecross in Wester Ross. Risks would be managed through checks such as an independent board and a clear investment policy in which funds are spread across multiple projects.

The renewable energy revolution must provide and deliver much more for communities and local authorities, and that must involve new ways of governing public land—in particular, the national forest estate. The Greens will be bringing forward proposals to democratise the management of the land that is currently managed by Forestry Commission Scotland and will use the opportunity of a new forestry bill to increase local democracy and community benefit from that public estate.

I commend to Parliament the amendment in the name of Mark Ruskell.

16:40

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** As we have heard throughout this afternoon's debate, Scotland must maximise the opportunity for jobs in renewables. The Paris climate change agreement has finally been ratified by the UK Tory Government, and Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England and chair of the G20's financial stability board, has set out a vision for green global growth. He stated that investment can avert economic climate change catastrophe and described the

"historic chance to mainstream climate finance and turn risk into opportunity."

Further, a G20 industry task force chaired by Michael Bloomberg is due to deliver a set of recommendations on how companies should voluntarily disclose climate-related financial risks.

In that context, it is disappointing that the Tory Government at Westminster cannot grasp the importance of the need for certainty for investment. We have heard—the Tories aside—

from many members around the chamber on that issue. Many members have also referred to the early and sudden cut to solar power support and to the onshore wind issue.

Scottish Labour hopes that the Scottish Tory party can use its influence to encourage the appropriate development of contracts for difference for island communities. Maree Todd and others stressed their concerns for Orkney and other island communities as that issue is replicated across the islands, which have particular demands.

On pumped-storage options, the minister highlighted a recent report that is welcome, especially in relation to removal of barriers, because there are great opportunities in such developments if they are done properly, in environmental terms.

My question today is this: how inclusive will the opportunity be for workers now and in the future, and how inclusive will it be for communities? The Scottish Labour amendment squarely addresses the jobs issue, so I hope that the Scottish Government will consider setting a jobs target for renewables because that will send a clear message to the markets.

In yesterday's Roscoe lecture in Liverpool, Mark Carney made an observation about supporting

"inclusive growth where everyone has a stake in globalisation",

although that is perhaps something of a challenge. He continued:

"Because technology and trade are constantly evolving and can lead to rapid shifts in production, the commitment to reskilling all workers must be continual ... Lifelong learning, ever-greening skills and cooperative training will become more important than ever."

The need for a skills strategy in terms of both initial and transferable skills for the new energy sector, from the early years right through life, is an imperative on which the Scottish Government must act. As Lewis Macdonald highlighted, short and affordable conversion courses, rather than barriers to people transferring, should be the standard.

This morning, I returned from Brussels where I attended the "Just Transition" conference that was organised by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and Transform! Europe. It brought together representatives of all levels from trade unions and non-governmental organisations from across Europe. As Richard Leonard said, renewable energy is a national asset. A vision is needed and an industrial strategy must follow that vision.

For larger developments, we must ensure that there are well-paid union jobs—as there have been in the oil industry—with good conditions and

employee participation in decision making, which I would say has not always existed in the North Sea industries. For smaller scale and more dispersed operations in the supply chain and in manufacturing—for example, in my region, where Sunamp manufactures heat storage batteries—there should also be union possibilities. Transport unions are testimony to the possibilities of the relevance of unions to a dispersed workforce.

What of ownership itself? We heard about opportunities for local authorities with regard to district heating, which could improve the poor record on emissions from that sector while providing local high-skilled jobs. Co-operative models are, of course, owned by their members. Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative, for example, has solar panels on primary schools and is raising awareness, providing clean energy and producing profits for distribution as a public good to those who live in fuel poverty—all as a benefit from an energy efficiency programme. Communities can also become owners and are increasingly being helped in that regard, as Mark Ruskell stressed, by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016.

I will introduce a bill to ban fracking because I am clear that we must not lock into a new fossil fuel. We need clean-energy jobs and must avoid the impacts on our communities that onshore fracking would have. It is also clear that developing a fracking industry would probably divert investment from the cleaner, greener future of renewables.

That leads me to innovation. Last week's green energy awards highlighted the great contribution that has already been made in Scotland by the renewables industry. Scottish Renewables has called for a sustainable energy innovation centre. I take the minister's point, from a previous debate on renewables, that there are already many good centres in Scotland, but it is important to have the synergies from a strong and robust hub where transport, storage and renewables can share their experiences, and innovations can lead to commercialisation.

Gillian Martin stressed our engineering experience and history, and looked forward to the future, and my colleague Lewis Macdonald reminded us that Aberdeen is already the energy capital of Europe.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is where you must stop.

**Claudia Beamish:** Okay.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you. I call Maurice Golden to close for the Conservatives—six minutes, please.

16:46

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con):** It is important to recognise the contribution of renewables technologies to the fight against global climate change. There are tough targets at every level—Scottish, British and international—to reduce carbon emissions, combat climate change and increase the amount of renewable energy that is generated.

Reflecting on the debate, I think that reserved matters should be the focus of debate at Westminster rather than Holyrood. However, I also recognise that, in areas that are within the Scottish Parliament's competence, there is consensus about the path forward.

Ben Macpherson recognised the strength of the renewables industry in a passionate and thoughtful speech. Tom Arthur was full of figures and he, too, recognised the importance of the renewables sector. Gillian Martin gave us a history lesson, speaking about a UK Prime Minister who was elected before I was born. That was followed by Ivan McKee, who talked about measures to tackle climate change as merely mechanisms of self-interest: keeping the planet habitable for *Homo sapiens*. I must disagree with him on that point, because ensuring that we protect against the ravages of climate change is critically important not only for *Homo sapiens* but for biodiversity—for land and marine flora and fauna.

Scotland is of course blessed by not only her geography and natural resources, which Lewis Macdonald highlighted, but our access to a larger UK energy market. Those all ensure that renewables technologies will continue to thrive in Scotland. They have been heavily supported by the British Government, which has fuelled a renewables revolution in Scotland. In 2014, 38 per cent of the electricity generated in Scotland was produced by renewable energy—the highest proportion in the union—and Scotland accounted for almost a third of the renewable electricity that was generated across the whole UK. Further, in terms of UK-wide capacity, we have 60 per cent of the onshore wind capacity, 85 per cent of the offshore wind and tidal capacity, and 85 per cent of the hydro capacity. Paul Wheelhouse recognised the potential in that regard.

It is important to note that the costs of subsidising renewables technologies through the renewable obligation certificate, feed-in tariffs and contracts for difference have been met, ultimately, by British consumers through their electricity bills. It is right that Scotland, because of its geography and natural resources, has received a disproportionate level of investment for its size of population. Our renewables industry has grown and benefits have been felt across this nation.

Much of that is down to Scotland's place at the heart of the union.

Jackie Baillie eloquently made the point that Scotland is missing out on jobs, particularly manufacturing jobs. She indulged in jocularly around bringing back David Cameron—she just stopped short of saying that—as well as recognising that there is lots of wind in Scotland, particularly in the chamber. I noticed that she did not look over at these benches when she said that.

**Jackie Baillie:** Yes I did.

**Maurice Golden:** Ultimately, we should applaud job creation; 21,000 new jobs are not to be sniffed at, although I fully accept that more could be done. We should also applaud the investment that has been made, but recognise that the majority of the benefits have been received by large companies. Those companies—not the consumer—have been the real winners in relation to wind farm subsidies. Some companies have received supernormal profits from wind farms. Large companies, as well as landowners, gained the profits at the expense of energy bill payers, including those who suffer from fuel poverty not only in my constituency, but across the UK. Liam McArthur and Donald Cameron added that the benefit of public subsidies must be spread across communities, and I share that view.

The Scottish Government recognises that subsidises have been changing. When scrapping the renewable energy generation relief scheme, it said that

“the sector has reached financial maturity”.

One of the biggest challenges that we face relates to the amount of energy that is generated, resulting in constraint payments being paid throughout the UK. That burden is being carried by UK consumers—on a single day in August, energy companies were paid £5.5 million, and in the first three months of this year, they were paid £70 million.

**Mark Ruskell:** Will the member give way?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is in his last minute.

**Maurice Golden:** Part of the solution is a smart power revolution. One such opportunity would be to develop an electric arc furnace—which is far more flexible and environmentally friendly than a blast furnace—for steel recycling. The furnace could harness excess energy and could use the 5.5 million tonnes of steel from the 571 platforms in the North Sea.

As Alexander Burnett said, we are calling on the Scottish Government to establish a sustainable energy innovation centre. We also want to

champion the decarbonisation of the heat and transport sectors, a point made by Liam Kerr. In addition, we want to—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** No, there cannot be any “In addition”. I am afraid that you have run out of time. Please sit down. Thank you very much.

16:52

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I have had a hint that my time will be cut off, too, so I will be careful with the clock, Presiding Officer.

I have been glad that there have been so many valuable contributions to this important debate from members across the chamber. Andy Wightman is right: there is consensus across the chamber in some areas. We need to work together to find out how we can share the agenda and find the areas of common ground.

I welcome Liam McArthur's implied support for the Government's position and, indeed, his opposition to the Conservative amendment. We intend to support Labour's amendment. We have reservations about it, which I will touch on, but it is important to show consensus where we can. I will also deal briefly with Mark Ruskell's amendment, which I have a lot of sympathy with, but I will explain in detail why we are not able to support it, although I hope that I will offer him hope for the future.

Scotland's renewable energy industry is a UK success story. What was once a niche industry is now mainstream. Electricity capacity has grown significantly over the past few years, with average annual capacity increasing by more than 635MW since the end of 2007. The sector enjoys unprecedented public support, evidenced by increasing community ownership of projects. Indeed, Mr Wightman referred to recent polling evidence, which shows strong support for renewables.

When it comes to the Green Party's amendment in the name of Mark Ruskell, I want to set out a little bit of the background on why we cannot support it, although we share a lot of the ambition that it shows.

Our ambition for renewables remains high. Our draft energy strategy will be published for consultation in January next year, and we will reconfirm our commitment to renewables as a vital component in Scotland's progress towards a low-carbon energy system. We want to make the most cost-effective transition towards our climate change goals, and it is clear that in doing that we will need a range of technologies and measures—some will be renewable, some will be low carbon and some will focus on energy efficiency.

I acknowledge that a number of members asked for a whole-system approach and for a fully integrated approach to heat, transport and electricity. I think that Labour and the Greens probably support that ambition—indeed, Mr McArthur made a similar point. We are determined to try to deliver in that regard, and in light of that challenge we want to hear from our stakeholders and the Scottish public about the best approach for Scotland.

For that reason, I do not want to be drawn into setting targets today. As Gillian Martin very capably said, we need to do the research that will underpin targets. We must do the due diligence on the figures and come out with proposals and targets that are deliverable. Credibility is key if industry is to invest, as I know that members want it to do. We are looking closely at the work of WWF, Friends of the Earth and the RSPB, whose aspirations Mr Ruskell shares.

We will take that work forward in our draft energy strategy, which as I said will be published in January for consultation. I invite members to consider our proposals in due course. I hope that we will be able to pick up the issues that Mr Wightman raised about a Government-owned energy company. I am looking to take forward our manifesto commitment in that regard. Renewable energy bonds are also an interesting idea.

On the subsidy that Scotland has received for renewable energy, I think that Maurice Golden made a reasonable stab at explaining the situation. Scotland has worked hard to provide a clear policy context and to foster investor confidence, and that is why so many projects came forward under the RO. The CFD process is a competitive one, and, as Mr Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said,

“in the last CfD auction 40% of awarded contracts”

were located in Scotland, but that is because Scotland has some of the UK's best renewable resources. We need to remember that. The location of projects is due not to some geographical benevolence on the part of the UK Government but to the need for resources to go where the best projects can happen—Scotland has excellent sites for development.

Alexander Burnett did not comment on the renegeing on promises and commitments made by Andrea Leadsom and previous ministers about remote island wind.

Jackie Baillie covered a number of issues in her comprehensive speech, and I will respond to one or two of them. On MeyGen, she was absolutely right to highlight that Andritz Hydro is manufacturing the turbines for the project's initial phase. That is why we want there to be further

phases, because only then are we likely to secure the manufacturing facilities and contracts in Scotland. I am optimistic that we can do that, if the UK Government can provide the long-term commitment that the technology needs if it is to develop in the UK.

Jackie Baillie was right to say, in relation to the East Anglia project, that the company is based in the Gulf. However, I understand that the contracts are going to Belfast, so there are UK contracts in that regard.

As Jackie Baillie said, there have been significant job losses in the oil and gas industry, which we all regret. We are working closely with the industry to ensure that it makes the transition to renewables and other sectors as good as it can be. I agree with Jackie Baillie's comment about the lack of minima for the industry.

Mark Ruskell gave the good example of the Stirling solar farm that was cancelled as a result of the loss of certainty about funding. He was right to say that onshore wind is the lowest-cost technology. We will consider wind farm repowering, replanting and extension projects in the energy strategy, in our onshore wind statement.

Liam McArthur made an excellent speech and talked—as did Maree Todd—about the importance to the Orkney economy of tidal and wave power. He was right to say that consensus reduces risk. That is why today's debate is so important: if we can show consensus, we will give the industry a signal. He was right about the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that have been offset by the industry. We are very much aware of that.

Under the coalition arrangements in the previous UK Administration, the Scottish Government had a good working relationship with Ed Davey, which I offer as an example of how the Scottish Government can work with UK ministers if there is an appetite for such work in both directions.

Liam McArthur was right to say that capped support would not be drawn down at an accelerated rate. We think that the UK Government has been overly pessimistic in that regard and that there would be a relatively slow draw-down of CFD funding.

Other members made excellent speeches, too. I commend Donald Cameron for his support for the hydro industry. Ivan McKee talked about the impact of climate change.

I see that my time is coming to an end, Presiding Officer. Today's debate is welcome, in that there has been a great consensus in many areas. This Parliament can make a strong call to the UK Government to do more to support

Scotland's renewables industry, and I hope that members will support that call at decision time.

We have great examples of innovation in practice in this country, and I believe that, as a Parliament, we are showing a clear desire to see that continue and to support further jobs in our economy.



## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of three Parliamentary Bureau motions. I invite Joe FitzPatrick to move motions S5M-02834, S5M-02835 and S5M-02836, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Air Weapons Licensing (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Home Detention Curfew Licence (Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Crofting Commission (Elections) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016 [draft] be approved.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

## Decision Time

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** There are seven questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S5M-02919.1, in the name of Alexander Burnett, which seeks to amend motion S5M-02919, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, on support for Scotland's renewables, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

### For

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)

Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Evans, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)

Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 30, Against 91, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-02919.3, in the name of Jackie Baillie, which seeks to amend motion S5M-02919, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, be agreed to.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-02919.4, in the name of Mark Ruskell, which seeks to amend motion S5M-02919, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**Against**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Evans, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and  
 Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse)  
 (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine)  
 (SNP)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

#### Abstentions

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)

Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the  
 division is: For 6, Against 97, Abstentions 18.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is,  
 that motion S5M-02919, in the name of Paul  
 Wheelhouse, on support for Scotland's  
 renewables, as amended, be agreed to. Are we  
 agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

#### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-  
 shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Evans, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)  
 (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and  
 Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)

Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

#### Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)

Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 92, Against 29, Abstentions 0.

#### *Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament notes the UK Government's announcement on the second renewable energy Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation round; acknowledges the latest round as a potential opportunity for Scottish offshore wind farms to compete for contracts; notes its strong concern that the UK Government has effectively excluded island wind projects from this CfD allocation, despite repeated assurances to the contrary following a 2013 consultation; further notes with concern the UK Government's decision not to provide a minimum allocation for Scotland's world-leading marine energy technologies, therefore overlooking their potential to supply a substantial contribution to future energy needs and to develop a domestic engineering base; considers that the UK Government has, to date, failed to respond positively to calls from the Scottish Government and industry for a "route to market" to unlock investment in consented pumped hydro storage projects; notes the Scottish Government's efforts to coordinate development of the offshore wind supply chain; supports the Scottish Government in its efforts to work with the renewable energy industry to identify the most appropriate means by which it can use those powers at its disposal to support the development of the renewable energy sector, across a range of technologies, and to ensure that the sector has the financial and political support that it requires; notes that the Scottish Government has not set a specific target for the number of jobs that the renewables sector should create; therefore urges it to do more for jobs that will support Scotland's economy, and recognises that this should include the full use of transferable skills of the oil and gas sector so that they can be utilised in the renewables sector across a range of alternative energy projects.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-02834, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the draft Air Weapons Licensing (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2016, be agreed to.

#### *Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Air Weapons Licensing (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations 2016 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-02835, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the draft Home Detention Curfew

Licence (Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2016, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Evans, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)

Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yusuf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**Against**

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 91, Against 30, Abstentions 0.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Home Detention Curfew Licence (Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S5M-02386, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the draft Crofting Commission (Elections) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Crofting Commission (Elections) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016 [draft] be approved.

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

## Social Care Charging

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-02130, in the name of Johann Lamont, on the care tax in Scotland. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. I call Johann Lamont to open the debate.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament considers that disabled people and people with long-term conditions such as dementia and motor neurone disease in Glasgow and throughout Scotland are increasingly paying more for social care services; understands that campaign groups, including Scotland Against the Care Tax, and Frank's Law, are concerned about the effects of this charging; considers that social care is essential to enabling them to enjoy their human rights; further considers that the current local authority charging regimes may be discriminatory in applying different rules to people of different ages without sufficient objective justification, and notes the calls to explore ways of making social care charging fairer with a view to ending the practice altogether.

17:06

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** I thank everyone who signed the motion and who is here for the debate. I particularly note that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport will respond to the debate herself, acknowledging the significance of the issue for many people. I also acknowledge the work of the Scotland against the care tax and Frank's law campaigns, the Coalition of Carers in Scotland and all the other tireless campaigners who have focused their attention on the significant issues that are faced by disabled people and those who need social care. I acknowledge the particular role of my former MSP colleague Siobhan McMahon, who, while she was here, pursued these issues with great passion and commitment. She insisted that I, for one, should ensure that they continue to be raised now that she is no longer in this place.

I do not pretend to be an expert on these important issues, so I am grateful to all the organisations that provided briefings for the debate. They highlight a wide range of concerns, including the lack of consistency across Scotland, the unmet needs of those with neurological conditions who are under 65, the danger of cost deterring the uptake of low-level preventative care measures and many more—too many for me to cover in the debate. At the heart of it, we must recognise that, behind every story that is told and every issue that is raised, there are human beings who are experiencing difficulties that have been caused not by them but by a system that does not properly acknowledge their needs.

I am pleased to say that many of those who understand and live with these issues are with us in the public gallery tonight and will be involved in a meeting following the debate in which we will continue the conversation. I hope that the cabinet secretary and other members will be able to attend that meeting with us.

In too many debates, there is a danger that we settle for identifying others to blame and sit back on what we are doing ourselves. In building a consensus, I think that there is a central role for the Scottish Government in refreshing its approach and in understanding and addressing the unintended consequences of some of its political choices. Local government must do that, too, in its actions in the area. What we cannot do is put the issue in a political “too hard” box and settle for telling people how much we care, without taking the action that matches that concern.

The motion highlights the fundamental injustice in the facts that disabled people and those with long-term conditions such as dementia and motor neurone disease are paying more for social care services; that, astoundingly, over the period 2009 to 2013, the amount of money that was collected from older and disabled people rose at approximately four times the rate of inflation; that the charges are, in effect, a tax that the rest of us do not have to pay; that disabled people contribute to mainstream services that they cannot access unless the social care that allows them to do so is funded; and that the cost of care—its availability and affordability—is seeing people priced out of using services, with a consequent cost to their wellbeing and with an impact on their unpaid carers, who pick up the slack.

We know that disabled people are more likely to be living in poverty and to be on the front line when it comes to facing the consequences of the austerity approach of the Tory Government, but we should not compound their problems by the choices that we make. We know that it makes no economic sense to ignore disability-related expenditure—the extra cost of heating, of transport and of simply living—and to deny disabled people who want to work the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to contribute through taxation. The fact that it costs them to work means that their loved ones have to live with greater stress and ill health. That approach increases costs, causes more crises and results in more emergency admissions to hospital. Instead of being in a position in which proper funding is provided for preventative spending, we are in one in which people can be supported only once they are in crisis.

As we look at our national health service, we know that the solution, in large part, is to invest in local government rather than targeting it

disproportionately for cuts. That is a rational means of improving the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. Therefore, it is rational and a matter of logic and of justice to address the issue; critically, it is also a matter of human rights. The issue is not about our being able to display how much we care, how much we empathise or how we can be a little kinder to disabled people and those with long-term conditions; no, it is about how we live up to our oft-repeated commitment to human rights and equality. It is not a “maybe”; it should be a “must”.

To the people who say, “I get that—there is an issue here, but it’s just too expensive; we can’t afford to eradicate care charges,” I say this: educating our young people is expensive, but we do not suggest that we should educate only our boys because we cannot afford to educate all our young people, so why can it be acceptable to deny disabled people the right to live independently and the right to access work and economic opportunities? Why can it be acceptable for the needs of two people with the same degenerative condition to be supported differently on the grounds of age or because of where they live?

We have a fundamental choice to make. We can increase the size of the resource cake to meet needs fairly, through taxation, or we can redistribute the existing resource cake fairly, but we cannot, in all conscience, shrug our shoulders at what is a manifest injustice and a denial of the human rights of all too many in our communities. I seek from the minister an acknowledgement of the problem and a commitment to act. It cannot be left till some distant point in the future when we will have solved the problem of spending more while taxing less. This is work that Parliament can do right now. We can support the Government in developing a proper strategy that focuses on the injustice of the problem of the imposition of a care tax on those who need support services in order to live their lives independently. We need a commitment to justice, and we must work with those who understand best what it is like to live with a disability without the means to achieve their potential.

This is an urgent matter. It is a matter of equality and of human rights, and I believe that it requires us all to show a little bit of courage. We must be willing to be bold and to say that the issue is a problem, that it is one on which we can act, that we will open up the debate about why taxation should benefit all in our communities and that a fair distribution of resources would mean that we could all achieve our potential. It is an area in which we can come together as a Parliament to confront issues that matter directly to far too many people across our communities.

I look forward to the debate, and I hope that it is just the start of a wider debate that will result in our making a difference and responding to the long-held campaigning convictions of those who deserve the right to equality and justice.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Speeches should be of around four minutes, please.

17:14

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** I thank Johann Lamont for bringing the debate to the chamber and for the tone that she struck in opening it.

It is important to address the issue. We need to consider it accordingly, set politicking to one side and acknowledge that there may be a difference between what we might all ideally wish to be delivered now, and what might be deliverable in the short, medium and longer terms. A realistic and informed debate is required about how it might be possible to meet the aspirations that people who are affected by the issue rightly have, set against the financial pressures that the Scottish Government and local authorities face. It is a fact that there are tough choices to make about what we can and cannot fund.

From the case that has been advanced by the family of my late constituent Frank Kopel, who died of early-onset vascular dementia and did not qualify for the support that he would have had if he had been over 65, through the arguments that make a similarly strong case for those who have been diagnosed with all types of terminal illnesses or disabilities, to calls for blanket, outright abolition of the charges now: even the most heartless of individuals would surely struggle to disagree with the merits of those calls.

Ideally, we would all aspire to the abolition of charges for the under-65s, given the difficulties that the charges create for those people and their families. How do we say to any group or individual that, whatever the strength of their case, in the short to medium term it cannot be addressed? However, if we accept that, given the increasing demands that are being made on the health budget, funding outright abolition is unachievable in one giant leap, we can still, as Enable Scotland has suggested,

“explore some of the pragmatic steps that can make a significant difference on the journey to ending this practice”.

More than that, we should ensure that the Scottish Government delivers on its commitment to make progress on delivering a fairer system.

For that informed debate to be kicked off, we need accurate figures for the cost of abolishing social care charging for all under-65s. That is the elephant in the room. In responding, will the

cabinet secretary offer some hard details on that, if only to bring some context to the financial challenge concerned?

Whatever the costs involved, we cannot ignore the case that is being made to pursue possibilities for progress. We should not put the issue in the too-difficult-to-do box, as Johann Lamont mentioned.

The briefings that have been provided for the debate from a variety of sources contain a number of criticisms of the Scottish Government's provision of £6 million to local authorities to take 800 under-65s out of paying any charges and reduce the charges that have been borne by 13,000 others. I understand entirely that people and their families in such a situation would prefer that no one was paying anything, but that was a genuine first step along the road that the motion calls on us to travel.

It was concerning indeed to learn that some councils may have failed to ensure that the full benefit of the £6 million was felt by those whom it was intended to help. Shame on any councils of whatever political hue that did that. However, I caution about rushing to judgment on such allegations without substantiating them. I was horrified to read an assertion that Angus Council, which is my council, had failed to deploy the money for the purpose for which it was received, but that turned out not to be the case.

If we accept that we will have to move forward at a pace and in a way that will not necessarily meet the aspirations of all, what could we do? The programme for government revealed an intention to conduct a feasibility study into extending free personal and nursing care to those under the age of 65 with a diagnosis of dementia. Can we move forward on that sooner rather than later? What of the Marie Curie charity's call to consider ensuring that anyone under 65 who has been given a terminal diagnosis is exempted? What about taking account of any disability-related expenditure before arriving at the point at which care charges kick in? What about the suggestion from Learning Disability Alliance Scotland that the threshold at which disabled people should have to start paying charges should be set at £11,000 rather than the current £6,500? It strikes me that, in the spirit of exploring a fairer way forward, those ideas are worthy of costing and consideration.

In conclusion, I repeat my welcome for this opportunity to debate the issue. I recognise entirely the challenges, but encourage the Scottish Government to make whatever progress that it realistically can towards arriving at a more equitable situation.



17:18

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con):** I congratulate Johann Lamont on securing this members' business debate.

The Scottish Parliament agreed the free personal care for the elderly policy in 2002, with all-party support. However, since the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 was passed, it has become clear that, for many people in Scotland who live with a life-limiting condition, unfair age discrimination surrounding access to vital personal care has been an unintended consequence.

At present, anyone under the age of 65 who requires personal care because they have dementia, motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or Huntington's disease has to fund the cost of that personal care themselves. Since the election, I have met a number of constituents and organisations that have legitimate and genuine concerns about the current social care charging system for people with those conditions. I recognise the strong feelings that exist and believe that we need to address the issue and respond to the unfairness that is often very clear to see.

There are real concerns about the disparities and inconsistencies in social care charging across Scotland, as well as about the collection cost, which make it one of the most inefficient charges or taxes collected.

The motion refers to Frank's law. Along with Ruth Davidson, I recently met Amanda Kopel to discuss her campaign. I welcome Amanda and other campaigners to the public gallery this evening and congratulate them on the incredible campaigns that they have been running across Scotland to try to get the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government to act to address this unfairness. I pay warm tribute to Amanda for the outstanding and high-profile campaigning work that she has undertaken to support a change in the law to allow under-65s with conditions such as dementia and MND to receive vital support for their social care. Amanda's selfless efforts are to be commended, and I know that her determined campaigning will not cease until we see a better system in place in Scotland.

Official figures show that the number of people who are under 65 and being treated for dementia is increasing, and that trend is likely to continue. Dementia can devastate an individual and their family, but early-onset dementia can be even more devastating for family members. We need to look at how we can better support them to care for their loved ones.

As Graham Dey outlined, earlier this year the Scottish Government announced an extra £6

million for local authorities to raise the threshold at which people begin paying for care at home. That is a small improvement that will help only a limited number of people. It is vital that the Scottish Government sets out, in as much detail as possible, the accurate costings and projections that it has for extending free personal care to all those who need it, broken down by condition, so that we can have an informed debate about what extra resources are needed and how we can take forward a change in policy.

The Scottish Government's feasibility study of expanding free personal and nursing care to people with dementia who are under 65 is welcome, but it is also important that we look at other long-term conditions, such as MND, MS and Huntington's disease.

I am pleased that we are having this debate, which is very timely. I know that charities and individuals will continue to campaign hard on this issue to press the Scottish Government to act. I welcome their continued input and efforts. I hope that, as Johann Lamont said, we can reach a consensus in this Parliament to provide a better and fairer system of social care support for people under 65 who are in need of personal care at what is clearly the most difficult time in anyone's life.

It is vital that we make progress on the issue beyond a member's debate and that this Parliament and this Government move it forward. I suggest to the cabinet secretary that we establish the first-ever Scottish Parliament all-party working group on this specific issue, to look at it and work to bring forward costed solutions. I hope that, in responding, the cabinet secretary will agree to that suggestion and that we can look to establish the group at the earliest opportunity.

No illness, long-term condition or disease waits for a person to reach the age of 65. For those who need support with social care, regardless of age, we must see that that need is recognised and support provided, when they need it and where they need it.

17:23

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** I declare an interest, as I am a local councillor. Also, until just after my election to the Scottish Parliament in May, I was employed by Parkinson's UK.

I thank my colleague Johann Lamont for the opportunity to debate the important subject of care charges and to start, I hope, a wider discussion on the issue of how we provide and fund social care in Scotland.

It is now 14 years since the last Labour-led Government introduced free personal and nursing care to everyone over the age of 65. Today in

Scotland, around 77,000 older people benefit from that policy. However, to use the words on the Frank's law campaign website,

"no disability, illness, condition or disease waits until a person reaches the age of 65, then strikes."

Across Scotland, 90,000 people are living with dementia. Not all of them are over 65; in fact, more than 3,000 are under the age of 65. If any of those 3,000 people require personal care, they are financially assessed by their local authority to determine whether they should make a financial contribution towards that care. Where they live often determines how much they pay. It is the same for many other long-term conditions, including motor neurone disease, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, cancer and many others.

In our election manifesto, Scottish Labour made a commitment to work towards the abolition of such care charges for those under 65. I reiterate that commitment today.

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):**

Given Labour's commitment, can the member explain why Labour-controlled Dumfries and Galloway Council has lowered the threshold at which disabled people start paying care charges, and why it has introduced a disparity between over-65s and under-65s?

**Colin Smyth:** I will come to that point but, as Joan McAlpine knows, the policy was supported by the SNP councillors.

When she responds to the debate, I hope that the cabinet secretary will say whether the Government supports the commitment to the abolition of charges or, at the very least, set out a timetable for extending free personal and nursing care to those who have a diagnosis of dementia. Labour will support that work.

This issue goes beyond party politics in the same way as it did when Labour introduced free personal and nursing care. It is disappointing therefore that Joan McAlpine seeks to make it a party-political issue by attacking Dumfries and Galloway Council, which, as a direct result of funding cuts, brought charges in line with those in most of the rest of Scotland. Historically, the charging policy in the region was more generous than it was elsewhere and that was not without consequences. Overspends in social work under previous administrations were common and, in order to balance the books, a more generous charging policy meant cuts to other services. Faced with this year's unprecedented 4.5 per cent cash cut in the Government grant, the council instigated a review of the policy as the options for making savings elsewhere became increasingly limited.

That review began before the Government announced the social care fund, but we also know that the Government's financial assumptions in relation to that fund were flawed. For example, the Government initially indicated that the application of the living wage to care staff from 1 October would cost around £37 million across Scotland—approximately £1.1 million in Dumfries and Galloway. However, the actual cost to Dumfries and Galloway Council of the living wage was more than £3.4 million. The Government cannot therefore claim that funding is available to ease charges when the package of measures required under the social care fund was in excess of that funding.

Faced with £21 million of cuts, councillors reluctantly agreed to bring its social care charging policy more in line with those in the rest of Scotland. As I said, the policy was backed by all councillors and all parties, including the SNP. In fact, the SNP group's budget in which it proposed the change showed that the additional income raised avoided the necessity of making a further £500,000 of cuts. That is the equivalent of up to 15 social worker posts or more than 30 carers. If politicians in Parliament want to attack local councillors for making decisions that they do not like, at very least they should have the guts to say where they would make the cuts. I will not hold my breath.

In the time that we have to debate this issue, it is possible only to scratch the surface of the challenges that we face in delivering and properly funding social care. Addressing individual issues such as social care charges in isolation will not solve the problem. I hope that today's debate is the start of a wider discussion of the future of social care in Scotland.

17:27

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** I thank Johann Lamont for bringing the debate to Parliament. The issue is important and I am pleased to be able to use the time to raise the interests of my constituents in the south of Scotland.

However, I will start by addressing the point that Colin Smyth just made about choices and the cuts that are—let us not forget—being imposed on us by Westminster. I have suggestions about an area in which his council could save money. His council is raising about £450,000 this financial year on the back of charges to disabled people, and it is spending a similar figure on a new group of officers whose job is to shadow councillors. They are called ward managers and they are on between £42,000 and £46,000 a year. They are not front-line social workers, teachers or learning support assistants; they are bureaucrats whose

annual wage bill costs about the same as what is being raised by charging disabled people. Colin Smyth asked me to make a suggestion, and that is my suggestion.

**Colin Smyth:** The member will be aware that the option that she has talked about was a saving, because it meant a cut in the overall number of staff, and all the posts were filled by existing members of staff. I presume that that is why SNP councillors agreed to the proposal—it did not need any additional funding, so there would not be a saving.

**Joan McAlpine:** Those are weasel words. The posts are new and are not front-line posts. The difference between me and Colin Smyth is that I am willing to stand up and say that I oppose the charges. I do not care who has supported them—I know that Colin Smyth supported them—but I am willing to stand up and say that I oppose them.

What Dumfries and Galloway Council has done has had a really detrimental effect on some of the most profoundly disabled people in the country. One constituent who wrote to me cares for his profoundly disabled son. The son's care charges have risen from zero to £31.30 a week in the past two years. That is more than £1,600 annually, which comes out of the son's employment and support allowance and disability payments. The charge has risen by more than 500 per cent.

A lady who wrote to me is a pensioner with three disabled adult children. She is now paying an extra £60-odd a week to cover two of them.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has defended its decision to hike up charges by claiming that the £177 per week threshold that it used until this year was overgenerous. That is deeply insulting and insensitive. It is easy to dehumanise people by calling them service users—some councillors have said in the press that the council was overgenerous to service users. However, if someone said that they were overgenerous to severely disabled people, that would bring home exactly what the consequences were of what they were doing.

The guidelines that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities published earlier this year were intended to protect people on the lowest incomes from charges by using the £6 million from the Government that has been mentioned. However, critically, the amount was not reduced for councils that were, as Colin Smyth might put it, overgenerous in their payments. Those councils still got the same allocation. Dumfries and Galloway Council got £182,000 extra as its share of the £6 million but, instead of using that to reduce the charges, it pocketed the money and raised charges for the people involved.

**Johann Lamont:** Will the member give way?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is just about out of time, Ms Lamont.

**Joan McAlpine:** I realise that the decision is not easy but, as I have said, councillors have choices as well. This is an example. We are constantly being told that we should not centralise and that we should not dictate from the centre; this is a local decision by a local council and it is very damaging for disabled people in Dumfries and Galloway. [*Applause.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I ask people in the public gallery to please hold fire on any clapping of hands. If you wish to show your appreciation for any member once the debate is over, you are welcome to do so, but not during it. Thank you.

17:32

**Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con):** I declare an interest as a serving councillor on Argyll and Bute Council. I join colleagues in congratulating Johann Lamont on securing today's members' business debate on this important issue. I also commend her for the passion that she brings to the subject; she gave an excellent speech.

As a former chair of Argyll and Bute health and social care integration joint board, I understand the difficulties in deciding whether someone should be charged for services and how much they should be charged. It is important to keep the debate on a level that does not get down into petty politics; I was slightly ashamed of what happened in the previous speaker's comments.

It is never easy to make such decisions and, for obvious reasons, they create strong and understandable feelings. A lot of people see many aspects of the current system as being unfair, such as people receiving different levels of support because of when their birthday is or where they live.

That is why the Scottish Government announcement earlier this year that an extra £6 million would be given to local authorities to raise the threshold at which people pay for care at home was a welcome step. However, it is a small one that will help only a limited number of people. I hope that the Scottish Government will go further in offering that vital help in the future.

I can give examples of people with whom I have been involved—particularly a young gentleman aged about 63 years old who lives in Edinburgh. I was his guardian after he had a severe stroke. He received the most brilliant rehabilitative care to get him back home from the Astley Ainslie hospital here in Edinburgh. However, because he was of the young age of 62 or 63, there were when he got

home severe financial problems with providing the full care package that he required, which the NHS put in place. Consequently, some corners had to be cut, which did him no benefit. I understand from practical experience how the problem manifests itself when somebody is under 65.

I know of a gentleman in Argyll who, as a baby at the age of 10 months, had a brain operation because he suffered from severe epilepsy. He is now 19 and lives in Oban under care from his parents, who give him total overnight care and care during the weekend. They share the care with council services and the NHS. That is stretching the family beyond belief, because he falls into the under-65 category. There is an awful long way to go to rectify that.

All too often, I hear about cases of people who are under 60. I know of a 53-year-old and a 54-year-old who have severe dementia and who are struggling to finance their care because of their age.

I am a member of the Public Petitions Committee alongside Johann Lamont, and we are considering the long-standing petition by Mrs Kopel on this subject. It is a sign of Mrs Kopel's dedication and work that the petition has the support of well over 1,000 individuals. I know that Ruth Davidson has met Amanda Kopel on several occasions in relation to Frank's law. As our manifesto in May stated, the Scottish Conservatives have supported and continue to support most strongly the Frank's law campaign.

I have given examples of people with dementia and Alzheimer's who are under 65. As the number of such people goes up, the question of how we provide support for them is becoming an even more pressing matter than it currently is. Our manifesto also stated that we will continue to put pressure on the Scottish Government to increase support for dementia sufferers who are under 65. We will continue to do that until we see some movement in the right direction.

That is why I am glad that the Scottish Government has a feasibility study to look into the expansion of free personal and nursing care to people with dementia who are under 65. I support that but, as Miles Briggs pointed out, it is also a good opportunity to discover the cost of covering other conditions, such as motor neurone disease and Parkinson's. Finding out how much it would cost to provide free personal care to all those who need care, whatever their condition and individual circumstances are, is vital to ensuring that the ongoing debate on this important subject is well informed and based on fact, so that we politicians can make the correct decisions for our constituents.

The debate is important and I am sure that it will continue after today. It will inspire passions and I know that charities and individuals will continue to work hard to ensure that everyone can access the social care that they need. I hope that, in the coming months, we in the Parliament can work together to create a system that is better able to provide for people who are under 65 and in need of care.

17:38

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** I join colleagues from across the chamber in congratulating Johann Lamont on securing this important debate. The motion makes a lot of good points.

The Scottish Government has a proven track record on free personal care. The Scottish National Party campaigned on a promise to protect free personal care for the elderly and it will keep that promise. Of course, as others have pointed out, much more can be done. In that vein, I welcome ministers' plans to investigate ways of extending free personal care to other groups that would benefit from that great service, such as those with dementia who are aged under 65, as has been mentioned. That was outlined in the SNP manifesto and the programme for government. The cabinet secretary's commitment to work closely with COSLA to get the best outcome for those who are in need is to be welcomed, and I hope that leaders of councils throughout Scotland will engage fully in that process.

It is fair to say that the Scottish Government is doing what it can to protect those in society in the face of eye-watering cuts. I do not think that many members would disagree with that. We often talk—rightly—about the vicious cuts that the Conservative Party is making and which are affecting our constituents throughout Scotland, and we talk about how that is a choice rather than a necessity. I know that I am not alone in dealing with large numbers of constituents who have been hit by those cuts. That is why I was absolutely heartened to hear the contributions and tone of Conservative members on the issue tonight.

I was also glad to hear Johann Lamont note that this is about not just the Scottish Government or the Westminster Government but the local authority taking responsibility. Two of my colleagues have already had a bit of a debate on that.

In my area, North Lanarkshire Council imposed a £5 per week charge on community alarms earlier this year. That is a massive £260 a year for some of the most vulnerable people in my constituency. The majority of people who have community

alarms installed have them not for the sake of having one but as a means to remain in their own home, because they know that, if something happens, help will not be far away. A couple of weeks ago, a constituent approached me in Coatbridge Main Street and told me that she had decided to get rid of the alarm and was worried about the consequences.

**Johann Lamont:** I hear what Fulton MacGregor says. People are making such choices and not getting the preventative care that they might have got earlier, but does he accept that the Scottish Government has also made a choice? The cuts to local government are larger than those to the Government's budget. That is a choice that the Government has made and it has a consequence—as local government cannot raise the money itself and its budgets have been cut, it has to make impossible choices. Does Fulton MacGregor agree that we should increase the size of the cake by using our powers to increase taxation on everybody in order to fund our services properly?

**Fulton MacGregor:** The point has been made by all members who have spoken that we all need to work together on the issue. I accept what Johann Lamont says in that regard, but my focus was on the responsibility of local authorities. I do not do my job for my constituents if I come to the Parliament and do not say what is getting to them and what they are coming to my surgeries—

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** Will Fulton MacGregor take an intervention?

**Fulton MacGregor:** I will not be able to take another one.

North Lanarkshire Council also reviewed the garden assistance scheme earlier in the year. On the council's behalf, the scheme charges through-the-roof prices for many elderly and disabled citizens to have their gardens done. I mention those charges because, when a charge is placed on a product or service that is absolutely required, it is a tax. Some of the people who are affected by such charges are the ones we have been speaking about. They are the most affected.

I agree with the overall tone of the debate. We all have a role to play in working together as parties and at different layers of government—Westminster, the Scottish Government and local authorities—to get the right deal. I do not think that anybody will disagree with that.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I still have two members who wish to contribute to the debate. I will not be able to call them unless the debate is extended, so I am happy to accept a motion without notice that the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes. Ms Lamont is sitting with great

anticipation. Would someone care to move the motion?

**Johann Lamont:** There is a first time for everything.

I move,

That, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I cannot believe that that is the first time that you have ever had to do that, Ms Lamont. My goodness.

17:43

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** I, too, congratulate Johann Lamont on bringing the debate to the Parliament and all the campaigners who have diligently pursued the campaign. My colleague Jenny Marra and I visited Amanda and Frank Kopel's house a few years back. I remain, and will continue to be, profoundly moved by that experience. However, I wonder how many other Franks there are who do not have an articulate voice and an articulate family campaigning for them. How many other Franks are there who do not have access to pressure groups, do not know the system and do not get their voices heard? They are foremost in my mind.

The social care system in Scotland is in a perilous situation. We see social care providers with severe staff shortages, care staff being underpaid and feeling demoralised and undervalued, council budgets being slashed, integration joint boards starting life making cuts, and health boards such as NHS Lothian in a desperate financial situation. Although Government ministers and civil servants claim that there are no cuts, only efficiency savings, every front-line staff representative who I meet in the social care field is astonished at that claim. In these desperate circumstances, it is inevitable that councils will use all their powers to try and recoup money from anywhere in an attempt to keep services afloat.

Let me be clear from the outset that I am not here to attack councils. I am not going to play Joan McAlpine's game of voting to cut council budgets, shackling councils over council tax then turning around and pointing the finger at the same councils for making cuts and imposing charges.

**Joan McAlpine:** Last week, Audit Scotland noted that the cuts to council budgets were the same as the cuts to the Scottish budget overall. I ask Neil Findlay to reflect on the fact that the point that I made about Dumfries and Galloway Council was relevant because all the councils that were in the same position as Dumfries and Galloway Council—those that had higher thresholds—kept

their higher thresholds but only Dumfries and Galloway Council chose to immediately impose a cut on disabled people across the board. That is the difference. I totally appreciate that local authorities face challenges.

**Neil Findlay:** That is good. I look forward to Ms McAlpine voting the right way when the budget comes before this Parliament.

Two years ago, I published a report by the Labour Party commission on social care in Scotland. The commission recommended that we sweep away much but not all of the charging system. It recommended that support with personal hygiene, continence management, meal preparation, mobility, counselling, the administration of medication, and alarms and telecare should be provided without charge, but that local authorities should be able to charge for other support arrangements such as housework, shopping, lunch clubs and meals on wheels.

The commission also recommended that all adults, irrespective of age, who were assessed as needing social care should receive it for free. I think that that is a sensible, fair and compassionate approach. I do not understand why someone who is aged 45 with MND or MS and who is immobile and reliant on care staff for dressing, feeding and washing is denied free personal care, yet someone with the same needs who is over 65 gets it. That is not an argument for denying the over-65s the help that they need; it is an argument that says that others need it, too, and that we should care for our people according to their needs, not according to an arbitrary date on a calendar.

However, in sweeping away the charging system, this Parliament has to face up to some harsh realities. We cannot have a system that is financed by fresh air or is left to the vagaries of the latest punishment that the Government doles out to Scotland's councils. I would like social care to be paid for in the same way as the NHS is, with all of us paying when we can and taking out when we are in need.

We could do that using a number of different options, which were identified in the commission's report. We could take a different approach to policy decisions in relation to Government spend. We could increase national insurance contributions across the UK. We could use the Scottish rate of income tax. We could implement wealth or property taxes. My preferred option would be to have a UK-wide tax on estates that would be paid on death by everyone, whether they had used the social care system or not.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Could you come to a close, please?

**Neil Findlay:** Under that arrangement, services throughout a person's life would be free at the point of access and paid for after the end of life. Whatever we choose, doing nothing is not an option.

This about the fundamentals of how we see ourselves as a society.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Findlay, you must close.

**Neil Findlay:** Are we a civilised society that cares collectively for people throughout their lives or are we not?

17:49

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green):** I congratulate Johann Lamont on bringing the issue to the Parliament's attention. In the previous session of Parliament, as Johann Lamont noted, Siobhan McMahon raised the issue of unfairness in the current care charging system by proposing a member's bill, and I welcome the opportunity to return to that issue in the current session.

I welcome the motion's call to

"explore ways of making social care charging fairer with a view to ending the practice altogether."

I believe, as other members do, that it is essential that we do that. As the ALLIANCE—Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland—points out in its briefing:

"Independent living is a human right that does not rely on an individual being able to pay to achieve it."

It is also right to point out that:

"Charges for non-residential care amount to an additional tax on disabled people for accessing vital support in order to live independently"

and that

"Free personal care ... should be extended to cover all people who require"

it

"in order to lead independent lives."

Enable Scotland tells us that its members are concerned about the sustained affordability of social care charging; that they cannot afford to do the things that they would like to do; and that they are often going without. Jim Elder-Woodward of the Scottish independent living coalition is right to say that we now understand that childcare should be viewed as a social infrastructure investment and that that approach should be extended to social care support.

I thank all those who have provided us with such excellent briefings today—the number of briefings that we have received is testament to the number of lives the issue touches. The briefings are very

well researched and come from those who have direct experience of the impact of the charge. I cannot mention them all, as I would use my whole four minutes, but they are very powerful and make us aware of the many inconsistencies in the current regime for care charges.

While the cost of procuring care differs in different areas—for example, care in rural areas is more expensive to provide—the current differences in care charges between local authorities cannot be explained only by the differing costs of care. According to Inclusion Scotland, home care services vary from being free in Fife to costing £23.70 an hour in Angus. The taper that local authorities apply to determine care charges also varies hugely, from 15 to 100 per cent of disposable income.

The rules that govern the calculation of charges can vary hugely. Charging for care by councils is self-regulated; COSLA develops guidance for the calculation of charges and local authorities are supposed to take that into account when they set charging policies. However, although COSLA recommends a list of sources of income to disregard for the purposes of calculating care charges, those are only recommendations. That could mean that, in some areas of Scotland, the very welcome increase in carers allowance that the Scottish Government is pledging to introduce could immediately be swallowed up by care charges, whereas in other areas it may be disregarded.

It is difficult to see any justification for that level of inconsistency. The benefits system operates on criteria that apply to everyone regardless of where they live. As free or reduced-cost care is a benefit in kind, the determination of eligibility for it should not be subject to such different approaches in different parts of the country. It is clear that we need urgently to bring some consistency to care charging as a first step towards phasing out charges for care. That can be done under existing legislation, as the Scottish Government has the power to regulate care charges under the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002. A decision was made at that time that those powers would be held in reserve until the implementation of the guidance that COSLA issued in 2002 could be evaluated. That evaluation has never been carried out, and—14 years later—it can reasonably be described as overdue. I would welcome the cabinet secretary's comments on that.

The abolition of disability living allowance and the reduction in the number of claimants who are able to access the new personal independence payments will have an impact, too. Reductions in the income of people who use services may well take more individuals below charging thresholds

and place additional demands on stretched resources. The 2014-15 COSLA charging guidance states:

“consideration is currently being given by the Scottish Government to mitigating the impact the changes will have”.

I would appreciate an update from the cabinet secretary on progress in that regard.

I am very pleased that we are debating the abolition of care charges but, as other members have suggested, that needs to come in the broader context of the new powers that are being devolved to this Parliament. There are opportunities for progressive taxation that could cover those costs. If we believe in healthcare that is free at the point of delivery, we must consider that seriously now. If we want to live in a truly inclusive Scotland, this unfair tax must be abolished—let us start now.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I do not think that I have ever heard four-minute speeches stretch quite so far as in this members' business debate. I call Shona Robison to wind up the debate—you have around seven minutes, cabinet secretary.

17:54

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison):** The debate has highlighted a number of issues around social care—in particular, around fairness of charges for social care, but also around wider issues. I thank Johann Lamont for bringing the debate to Parliament and for the very constructive tone that she struck. I add my welcome for the role of campaigners—particularly Amanda Kopel, whom I have met a number of times—in focusing our minds on fairer charging.

Johann Lamont's motion calls for the Parliament to

“explore ways of making charging fairer”

I will outline progress that we have made on the journey towards making charging fairer. The additional £250 million that we provided this year for social care has achieved a number of things. It is worth noting that it helps to deliver the living wage for 40,000 care workers, which is important in making sure that there are staff there to deliver the services that people receive. Included in that £250 million is the £6 million that a number of members referred to, and which was provided to allow local authorities to raise charging thresholds in order to take about 900 people out of charging altogether and—which is important—to reduce charges for 13,000 more. That £6 million, as I said when I announced it, was the first step towards fairer charging. It was deliberately aimed at

prioritising people on the lowest incomes to reduce their charges or to take them out of charging completely. I hope that members agree that that priority is important.

We have listened to campaigns, including Gordon Aikman's campaign, for an end to charges for people who are in the last stage of terminal illnesses, so since 1 April 2015 we have ensured that no one who is in the last 6 months of a terminal progressive illness is charged for the care that they receive at home.

Looking forward, we have committed to ensuring that from next April guaranteed income payments and war pensions for armed forces veterans are excluded from consideration as income for the purposes of social care assessments. Some progress has been made, but there is further progress to be made.

In response to the concerns that have been raised by campaigns, including the Frank's law campaign, today I confirm again that we have committed to conducting a feasibility study over the course of the next year into the possibility of extending free personal care to people under the age of 65 who are diagnosed with dementia. It is a complex matter: members have pointed to the fact that other conditions in people under the age of 65 must also be considered. I will be very happy to keep members informed of progress in that work as we take it forward. I think that Miles Briggs called for cross-party discussions: I am happy to use the feasibility study as the focal point for those discussions.

**Joan McAlpine:** I am sure that many people will welcome a feasibility study for dementia sufferers who are under 65 and will welcome the point that the cabinet secretary made about veterans.

My interest is particularly in learning disabilities—I am vice-convenor of the cross-party group on learning disability. Some groups are more effective, have more lobbyists and have a higher profile than others. I would be concerned if we were to pick out particular areas. Lots of people have experience of dementia, for example, and veterans organisations have a big profile, but perhaps people with learning disabilities do not have as many people to speak for them. There should be more equity.

**Shona Robison:** I have general sympathy with Joan McAlpine's point. It would be difficult to select one group of people with a particular diagnosis, because that would create other unfairness. The feasibility study, although it will be focused on people under 65 with dementia, will have to take a wider look at the general issue of charging for personal care for people under 65. I will be happy to keep members informed as we take that forward.

**Miles Briggs:** Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

**Shona Robison:** I will make a little bit of progress.

One of the biggest concerns that has been highlighted repeatedly in tonight's debate is the variation in local authorities' charges for social care, which makes it difficult for people with disabilities to move between local authority areas, and can cause frustration when people see that there is a lower charge for the same service in a neighbouring authority. As a result, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has implemented a new standard financial assessment that should bring closer alignment in how local authorities assess charges for care. We are determined to make further progress in improving fairness. We have made it clear that, if the situation does not improve, we can use legislative powers to ensure that it happens, as was outlined by Alison Johnstone.

**Miles Briggs:** The feasibility study that the cabinet secretary has spoken about will focus only on dementia. Is there an opportunity to widen it to include life-limiting conditions? If so, we could get the information that we are all looking for, and take the debate forward.

**Shona Robison:** As I said earlier, it would be hard to look just at dementia, because there would be a danger of creating other unfairness. We would have to take a wider look at the issue of charging under-65s for personal care. The focus and the catalyst was the unfairness around dementia, but we would have to look at the wider issue as part of the feasibility study.

We are putting additional money into social care. Health and social care partnerships now manage more than £8 billion of resources that NHS boards and councils previously managed separately. The bringing together of those budgets is important. Over the course of this parliamentary session, £1.3 billion of resources will go into social care, which is an important investment.

Local authorities provide more than 676,000 hours of care each week to people in their own homes, and the average number of hours of home care that are received has more than doubled since 2000. That reflects the fact that people who have more complex needs are now remaining in their homes, which is important.

With the implementation of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013, the number of people choosing a direct payment to purchase the services that they require continues to increase. More than 7,500 clients chose to do that and an estimated £94.5 million was spent on it during the past financial year. Both those figures were up about 10 per cent on the previous year.



People are able to remain in their own homes because of that increased independence.

Added to that is the support to carers that we have provided, as well as funds such as the independent living fund, which is helping people with disabilities to live independent lives. That fund has not been continued in England, but it is being continued here in Scotland and it will be opened for new applications. I appreciate what members have said about the need for work to be done in that area. I accept that, but I also hope that members will accept that we have made progress, especially in relation to the fairer charging elements that have already been introduced. In no way do we think that the job is done, which is why we will make further progress over the next financial year and why we are doing the feasibility study to look at what more we can do. We are determined to do what we can to help people on the lowest incomes, in particular.

**Johann Lamont:** I want to go back to the point about having the courage to think about more than just simply managing the resources that we have. If the feasibility study leads to the identification of gross injustice and unfairness, are there circumstances under which the Scottish Government would look at how it could increase resources through its tax powers, or at how it could redistribute resources that it already has, in order to meet that need? I want to know what the boundaries are for the conclusions that the Scottish Government might draw from the feasibility study.

**Shona Robison:** It is worth putting on the record that we are looking at raising income. For example, we are not passing on the tax cut for better-off people that the UK Government is making and we are making changes with higher council tax bands in order to raise income. It would not be fair to say that there are no adjustments being made to raise income for public services. We need to look at what the options are in the context of the feasibility study.

I took the decision because I thought it important to focus the initial raising of the threshold on people who have the lowest incomes. People on very low incomes were paying social care charges, so raising the threshold was a step in the right direction. Further steps could be taken around the threshold, or we could make other policy decisions. However, I want the feasibility study to examine the options, which will involve costings and looking at the choices that we can make with the resources that we have.

I hope that members appreciate the tone of how I have responded to the issues that have been raised. It is work in progress and I am happy to continue the dialogue with interested members from across the chamber.

*Meeting closed at 18:05.*



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