



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 18 January 2017

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Wednesday 18 January 2017

CONTENTS

	Col.
PORTFOLIO QUESTION TIME	1
EDUCATION AND SKILLS	1
Music Education	1
Bullying	3
Education Reform	4
Attainment Scotland Fund (Falkirk Council)	7
Physical Education	8
City of Glasgow College	9
Skills Gap	10
University Tuition Fees (European Union Students)	12
Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children's Services	13
Teacher Workload	14
St Margaret's Primary School	16
Education Governance Review	16
TRAUMA NETWORK	19
<i>Statement—[Shona Robison].</i>	
The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison)	19
HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE	31
<i>Motion moved—[Donald Cameron].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Keith Brown].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Rhoda Grant].</i>	
Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con)	31
The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work (Keith Brown)	34
Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)	37
Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con)	40
Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)	41
David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)	43
Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)	44
Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green)	46
Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD)	47
Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)	49
John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)	50
Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab)	52
Keith Brown	53
Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con)	56
HEALTH	60
<i>Motion moved—[Brian Whittle].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Shona Robison].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Colin Smyth].</i>	
Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con)	60
The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell)	64
Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab)	67
Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con)	69
Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP)	71
Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab)	73
Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP)	74
Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green)	76
Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD)	78
Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con)	79
Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)	81
Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab)	83
Aileen Campbell	84
Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)	87

BUSINESS MOTION	90
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick].</i>	
PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTION	92
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick].</i>	
DECISION TIME	93
POINT OF ORDER	103
CATERPILLAR PLANT OCCUPATION (30TH ANNIVERSARY)	104
<i>Motion debated—[Richard Leonard].</i>	
Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab)	104
Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)	106
James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab)	108
Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con).....	109
Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab).....	110
Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green)	112
Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con).....	114
Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab)	116
Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP).....	117
Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab)	119
The Minister for Employability and Training (Jamie Hepburn)	120

Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 18 January 2017

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

Portfolio Question Time

Education and Skills

Music Education

1. Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): I refer members to my entry in the register of interests as a member of the Musicians Union, a former piano teacher and a former director of a function band.

To ask the Scottish Government what contribution music education can make towards closing the attainment gap. (S5O-00549)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Curriculum for excellence recognises the value of music education in providing children and young people with opportunities to be creative and imaginative, to experience inspiration and enjoyment, and to develop skills for learning, life and work. Through research, we know that there are many wider benefits of music education and musical experiences, which include the promotion of healthy lives and cognitive benefits such as increasing attainment, improving levels of literacy and numeracy, and the emotional, social and physical wellbeing of our young people.

Tom Arthur: Given that a growing body of evidence suggests that education in music, through enhancing development of a student's sound-processing abilities, can aid language development, does the cabinet secretary agree that music education for children from the lowest socioeconomic backgrounds could play a crucial and cost-effective role in reducing the word gap?

John Swinney: There is very clear evidence to support the proposition that Mr Arthur puts forward. I have seen a number of ventures in schools around the country that face challenges in engagement with young people in which the medium of music has been used successfully to engage young people in deeper involvement in literacy and numeracy activity. That is an important strand of thinking in our education policy, and that is why it forms an increasing part of the Scottish attainment challenge.

Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con): What action will the Scottish Government take to address the fall in the number of dedicated

primary school music teachers between 2008 and the most recent schools census?

John Swinney: It is important that we focus on the engagement and the involvement of young people in musical education. That will be driven not just by the number of dedicated music teachers we have in primary schools but by the degree to which curriculum for excellence is delivered in a comprehensive and fulfilling way in all educational settings in Scotland. It is a requirement that a broad range of the educational elements of curriculum for excellence are delivered for young people. That is the Government's expectation, and we look to schools and local authorities to deliver that.

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): I thank Tom Arthur for lodging his important question. Like him, I note that recent research in the *Journal of Neuroscience* provided direct evidence that music training has a biological effect on children's developing nervous systems. Furthermore, it demonstrated that children who had received music training showed larger improvements in how their brains processed speech and in their reading scores than their peers who had not received such training.

A number of local authorities now charge fees for musical tuition, and I have long been of the view that that is putting many children off taking up a musical instrument. Would the cabinet secretary consider engaging in a dialogue on the issue with local authorities and interested parties? I would be extremely upset if a generation of children were not to get access to music at an important time in their lives because of austerity or budget cuts.

John Swinney: I acknowledge Pauline McNeill's long-term interest in such matters, and I accept fundamentally the point that she makes about the educational value and benefit of music tuition.

However, I make it clear to Parliament that it is the duty of every education authority to provide adequate and efficient school education without the payment of fees. As I said in my answer to Ross Thomson's question, that covers music lessons, including when any instrument is taught on a whole-class basis, regardless of who is teaching the class. I think that there is adequate provision in the education system to enable that to be the case, but if members are concerned about the detail of the issue, I would be happy to engage in discussion on that, because engagement in music education has long-term benefits for the attainment of young people in Scotland.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Does the cabinet secretary agree that music education is not solely the domain of in-house tuition and that external organisations, such

as the Boys Brigade, the scouts and local organised bands, can play their part? Does he agree that consideration of how the many such organisations can assist should not be ruled out, bearing in mind some of the points that have been highlighted on, for example, challenges and engagement?

John Swinney: Mr McMillan makes a fair point. A whole range of voluntary organisations provide an enormous amount of opportunity for young people in every locality of the country to participate in music. One of the great joys that many members have is attending musical competitions in communities around our constituencies, which are invariably led by voluntary sector representatives.

There is a broad range of activity. We have to make sure that in every respect it is encouraged and nurtured, and that the regulatory regime that surrounds it effectively provides the correct safeguards and support for young people, which will enable more to participate in music education, whether formally in the education system or informally in our communities.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I call Mr Lyle. He will be pleased to see that we have not overlooked question 2.

Bullying

2. Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): I thought that you had, Presiding Officer—my apologies.

To ask the Scottish Government when it plans to publish updated guidance on tackling bullying. (S5O-00550)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Along with a wide range of stakeholders, we have been working for some time on a refreshed national anti-bullying strategy for children and young people. Our intention is that it will take a holistic approach to addressing the issue. I recently agreed to a request from the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee for further engagement by the committee on the issue. I will carefully consider the issues that it raises and look to publish the guidance in spring 2017.

Richard Lyle: I welcome the news on the forthcoming guidance on bullying. We must all do what we can to tackle this important issue. What work is being undertaken beyond the guidance to tackle bullying in schools?

John Swinney: As I said in my original answer, work is under way to refresh the guidance and I am keen to hear the committee's perspectives on how it can be strengthened. In addition to that

activity, the Government is funding respectme, Scotland's anti-bullying service, which provides support to all adults working with children and young people to give them the practical skills and the confidence to deal with all bullying behaviour.

We are committed to updating our internet safety action plan by March 2017 to provide adequate protection against online bullying. We fund Childline to provide confidential advice and information to children. We have provided funding to LGBT Youth Scotland to work collaboratively with respectme to produce a resource and to deliver practice seminars to teachers and other professionals to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. The Government continues to engage with a range of other organisations, including Stonewall Scotland and the time for inclusive education campaign on all those different issues.

I assure Mr Lyle that a comprehensive approach is being taken to tackling bullying, which includes refreshing the strategy that is in place, which we hope to strengthen through wider dialogue and engagement.

Education Reform

3. Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con): First of all, I declare an interest as a serving councillor on Aberdeen City Council.

To ask the Scottish Government whether it will clarify what the education and skills secretary meant by "radical reform of Scotland's education system", following publication of the recent programme for international student assessment results. (S5O-00551)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): In my statement to Parliament on 6 December 2016, I reaffirmed the Government's determination to pursue radical change to improve education in Scotland.

That change includes a wide range of reforms that we have introduced, such as the first-ever national improvement plan for education and our targeted approach to closing the attainment gap through the Scottish attainment challenge. It also includes reforms to governance arrangements on which we have recently consulted. We will introduce proposals that will empower teachers, parents and schools to drive further improvements in education in due course.

Ross Thomson: In its submission, the commission on school reform advocates empowering schools in relation to staffing appointments and budgets, because all the evidence shows that decisions are best taken closest to where they have an effect and that the

greater the autonomy of schools, the better the results.

The Government's governance consultation suggests that the devolution of power is a good thing, but it is not clear on what that will involve. Will the cabinet secretary clarify what the Government really means by greater autonomy and empowering teachers and whether it is prepared to take on all the vested interests to achieve that?

John Swinney: The first thing that I want to say to Mr Thomson is that the Government's governance review has closed just recently. It attracted just short of 1,100 submissions, which the Government is currently considering. Parliament will accept and understand that I will take the necessary time to consider the review and to do justice to those 1,100 submissions. They cover a range of different perspectives, as is customary—and as I am becoming accustomed to—in any review of this type in Scottish education.

My sense is that Mr Thomson is being mildly critical of the Government for not setting out in detail exactly what it plans to do. The Government undertakes to consider the views of a range of different stakeholders and to come to a considered conclusion in setting out its response to the governance review. That is the correct way to make policy and that is how the Government will proceed on the matter.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): Does the cabinet secretary not agree that the Education and Skills Committee report that was published earlier this week provides strong evidence that radical reform is needed, as is reform of the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Education Scotland?

John Swinney: Mr Gray will understand that the Government's consultation on governance included a variety of questions about the role of a range of organisations, including the two that he has mentioned. I give Parliament the assurance that all of those issues will be part of my consideration.

I make the fundamental point to Parliament that if there is as much concern across Parliament about the performance of Scottish education as I heard being expressed in the debate last Thursday, it is right that I should pose hard questions about everybody who is involved in Scottish education. If local authorities are responsible for the delivery of education in Scotland—and that is their statutory responsibility—then, if Parliament is as concerned about education as it says it is, it is right that I should be asking hard questions about local government as well. That is where the

performance of Scottish education is at its most acute.

I have asked the questions in an open fashion in the governance review. I will take the time to consider the issues that have been raised, but I want to make it clear to Parliament that I will be asking hard questions of all organisations that are involved in Scottish education to ensure that we have an education system that can deliver on the expectations of every young person in Scotland and their parents, carers and supporters within our country.

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): I commend the hard question approach to the issue. One of the hard questions that the cabinet secretary might wish to consider asking is of the curriculum for excellence management board, from which we heard this morning at the Education and Skills Committee, given its inability to answer the question of who was responsible for the implementation of curriculum for excellence. When he is going through his review of these matters, will he undertake to ensure that parents and teachers, in particular, know who is responsible for what in respect of the future of the education system across our country?

John Swinney: I will look very carefully at the *Official Report* of this morning's proceedings; I was not able to follow all of them.

Mr Scott's question gives me the opportunity to rehearse the answer that I gave in closing the debate on Thursday, which I understand that Mr Scott was not able to attend, although it is all in the *Official Report* if he wants to have a look at it.

My point to Parliament last Thursday was that the curriculum for excellence management board involves—if my memory serves me right—about 20 organisations, which are brought together to try to create consensus and agreement around the implementation of curriculum for excellence. That is the model that it has been customary to use to take forward Scottish education—one that brings together everybody to try to achieve consensus.

Therefore, my answer to Mr Scott's question about who is ultimately responsible is that nothing in the implementation of the curriculum for excellence has been forced on anybody else and everybody has agreed as we have gone along, with the exception that on one occasion the Educational Institute of Scotland asked for a delay to the implementation of examinations by one year. That is the only occasion on which a minister took a decision contrary to a unanimous view of the curriculum for excellence management board.

I am sorry that this is a long answer to Mr Scott's question, Presiding Officer, but it is complicated territory. We have drawn together on the curriculum for excellence management board

all the relevant stakeholders to seek a consensus on the implementation of curriculum for excellence, and ministers have respected their views.

That is my explanation of how curriculum for excellence has been implemented. I told the Education and Skills Committee in December that, as part of the governance review, I am looking afresh at decisions in that regard. In the months for which I have been the education secretary, I have done a few things to push matters at a faster pace and to take decisions that might otherwise have taken longer. I did so because I felt that it was necessary. Perhaps we need a sharper approach to decision making than we have had in the past, and that is one of the issues that I am currently addressing.

The Presiding Officer: Apologies to James Dornan, but we now move on to question 4.

Attainment Scotland Fund (Falkirk Council)

4. Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with Falkirk Council regarding the attainment Scotland fund. (S5O-00552)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): We are in regular contact with Falkirk Council, which has received £413,663 from the attainment Scotland fund.

Angus MacDonald: The Deputy First Minister will be aware of concerns that have been raised by Falkirk Council's education service in its submission to the Scottish Government's consultation on the governance review regarding the potential for additional bureaucracy for schools following the recently announced attainment fund moneys. Will the cabinet secretary take on board those concerns and ensure that schools are not required to implement cumbersome additional monitoring and reporting mechanisms and that existing accountability arrangements and systems are utilised?

John Swinney: We have to take account of the fact that funding will go directly to schools to enable them to have sharper decision making about how the moneys can be used effectively. I have seen for myself in Falkirk the product of decisions being taken at school level and how that improves the way in which educational performance is delivered in individual schools. The money is public money and has to be properly accounted for. I give Mr MacDonald the assurance that I do not want to have accountability mechanisms that are any more onerous than required, but I have to have accountability mechanisms in place that will satisfy the scrutiny

of Parliament and the Auditor General for Scotland in relation to the utilisation of public money.

Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con): The cabinet secretary alluded to this earlier, but what evidence can he provide that will reassure my constituents in Falkirk that the proposed new regional education boards would protect and enhance local accountability?

John Swinney: Educational collaboration across local authority areas, and the discussion in the governance review about regional education boards, is about ensuring that the best expertise is available to enhance educational provision in individual schools and for individual young people. Published information from Education Scotland and the Accounts Commission highlights the fact that not all of our local authorities can add value to the educational provision of individual schools. As education secretary, I cannot ignore that evidence, which is why I am encouraging collaboration and co-operation between authorities through regional education bodies.

I stress to Parliament, as I stressed to Liz Smith when I answered her question on the launch of the governance review, that the bodies will be not an extra layer of bureaucracy but a collaborative area in which to improve performance, so that every school in the country has the same chance to improve education as a consequence of the interaction of education bodies. In the north of Scotland, the northern alliance is a very good example of local authorities coming together to provide services jointly across an area to tackle particular issues, such as numeracy and literacy and staff shortages. There is an argument for that, and that is part of what I am considering in the governance review.

Physical Education

5. Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how physical education is helping to narrow the attainment gap. (S5O-00553)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Physical education can have a positive impact on children's health, educational attainment and life chances. It encourages the development of movement and thinking skills and, in doing so, contributes to and reinforces learning across the curriculum. I am delighted that 98 per cent of primary and secondary schools across Scotland are providing at least two hours or two periods of PE per week.

Health and wellbeing's substantial importance is reflected in its position at the centre of the curriculum and at the heart of children's learning. It is also a central focus of the Scottish attainment

challenge and the national improvement framework for education. Along with literacy and numeracy, it is one of the three core areas that are the responsibility of all staff in schools.

Jeremy Balfour: We all agree that sport can help to narrow the attainment gap, yet a report by Reform Scotland recently discovered that some local authorities, including some within the Lothian region, are charging for sports activities that form part of the active schools initiative. Does the cabinet secretary agree with me that, given that the activities are co-ordinated through a Scotland-wide organisation, it seems strange that there is a difference in charging practice, and that pupils from poorer backgrounds are more likely to miss out as a result of what is a postcode lottery?

John Swinney: On the specific point about the charging arrangements, I will, if Mr Balfour will forgive me, take the opportunity to delve into the detail of that and consider whether there is an issue that needs to be addressed.

In general, the Government is taking a number of steps to encourage greater levels of physical activity. I mentioned in my original answer the performance in 98 per cent of primary and secondary schools, where at least two hours or two periods of PE are being provided each week. There are additions to that, such as the daily mile, which has engaged Scottish schools significantly in the process. For completeness I also point out that later this month I will meet Kenny Logan to hear more about the STEP programme, which he is taking forward and in which there is a great deal of active interest.

I reassure Mr Balfour that the Government is strongly reflecting the importance of exercise and health and wellbeing by placing them at the heart of the curriculum and the education of young people.

I will specifically consider the issue that Mr Balfour has raised with me.

City of Glasgow College

6. **John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with Glasgow Colleges Regional Board and the City of Glasgow College regarding their relationship with each other. (S5O-00554)

The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville): The Scottish Government regularly meets the chair of Glasgow Colleges Regional Board. The Government also receives regular updates from the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council on Glasgow colleges.

John Mason: Does the minister agree that the resources for Glasgow colleges must be fairly shared between all three of them, and that the two more community-based colleges, Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College, should not be disadvantaged just because the City of Glasgow College shouts louder and has a louder voice?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: The allocation of resources to Glasgow colleges is, of course, a matter for the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board and the Scottish funding council, which have well-established systems in place for allocating those resources. All three colleges, the regional board and the funding council are going through due process at the moment, which is the correct and proper way of progressing. I reassure the member that the sole purpose of that approach is to ensure the delivery of high-quality further education throughout Glasgow.

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): On 16 November 2016, I received an answer to a parliamentary question, which confirmed that

“The Scottish Government does not hold information”—
[*Written Answers*, 16 November 2016; S5W-04392.]

to confirm the level of remuneration that is made to the chair of Glasgow Colleges Regional Board. On 1 December 2016, I received a letter from John Kemp, which confirmed that the Scottish funding council does not have that information either. Could the cabinet secretary explain why neither the Scottish Government nor the Scottish funding council has that information?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: It is very important that we have transparency and a full understanding about the system that we are setting up with the regional boards. If Liz Smith is not satisfied with the answer that she got back from John Kemp, I am more than happy to look into that correspondence from the funding council and to get back to her directly.

Skills Gap

7. **Rachael Hamilton (South Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to close the skills gap. (S5O-00555)

The Minister for Employability and Training (Jamie Hepburn): Scotland’s labour market strategy recognises that a skilled workforce will be a key component of a more successful and inclusive economy in the years ahead. Our enterprise and skills review, which is proceeding in partnership with stakeholders and the relevant agencies, aims to bring greater coherence and focus to the delivery of our skills support. It will focus on fully aligning and co-ordinating activity across the agencies to maximise their collective impact in meeting the needs of the labour market.

Skills Development Scotland has taken a strong leadership role to understand the skills needs of the labour market through improved regional skills assessments and skills investment plans. That information base will be vital in aligning future skills provision with business need.

Rachael Hamilton: A survey by the Confederation of British Industry highlighted that 69 per cent of Scottish businesses

“are not confident about filling their high-skilled jobs in future.”

That is supported by the Institute for Public Policy Research in its report, “Equipping Scotland for the future”, which highlighted funding as one of the

“challenges facing the skills system”

in the future.

Will the Scottish Government demonstrate its commitment to skills funding by increasing the longevity of the funding for developing the young workforce to allow greater sustainability, and will it increase the number of apprenticeships to 35,000 to tackle the skills gap that is so evident in the south of Scotland and across Scotland?

Jamie Hepburn: I will pick up on Ms Hamilton’s last point. She will be aware that the United Kingdom Government—her political party’s Government—introduced the apprenticeship levy without prior consultation with the Scottish Government, despite our having responsibility for skills policy. In response to that, we undertook a consultation. One of the questions that we asked was whether our target of 30,000 modern apprenticeship starts by 2020 was the correct one. The clear message back from business, including the CBI, was that it was correct and that we should not go further. We have therefore moved forward on that basis, and that is the target that we will work towards.

Ms Hamilton mentioned the IPPR report and the CBI’s concerns. I am always willing to engage with the IPPR and the CBI; indeed, I met the CBI just yesterday. I am always very willing to discuss those matters with them, but I can tell Ms Hamilton that the CBI very much welcomed our planned introduction of a flexible workforce development fund, as set out in our budget, so I hope that she will vote for the Scottish Government’s budget when it moves ahead.

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP): Could the minister advise on any progress that is being made in increasing the studying of science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related subjects beyond school?

Jamie Hepburn: That is, of course, a very important area for us as an Administration. We know that, in the future, that type of area will be

increasingly important for our economic growth. Significant emphasis is placed on increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities in the STEM sector, and my colleague, Shirley-Anne Somerville, has set out to Parliament the STEM strategy, on which we are currently consulting. We will continue to do all that we can to grow the STEM sector.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): Rachael Hamilton is right to raise the funding of the skills system. Indeed, one of the most important factors in closing the skills gap is supporting young people from low-income families to stay on at school or college. Why, therefore, is the Scottish Government cutting the budget for the education maintenance allowance by £10 million—or 25 per cent—as laid out in the draft budget, and what will be the impact of that measure?

Jamie Hepburn: I urge Mr Johnson to look a bit more closely at the budget. In the budget, we have said that that is a demand-led element and that we will meet every single requirement as a consequence of EMA claims. If there is a claim for EMA, we will meet it.

University Tuition Fees (European Union Students)

8. Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): To ask the Scottish Government when it will announce a decision regarding tuition fee support for European Union students applying for courses for 2018-19. (S5O-00556)

The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville): Despite the United Kingdom Government failing, as yet, to provide adequate reassurance for EU nationals on their immigration status after the point at which the United Kingdom leaves the EU, we have provided a clear commitment regarding the continuation of free tuition for eligible EU students applying to commence study in Scotland in 2017-18.

In order to plan for 2018-19 and beyond, we continue to urge the UK Government to provide assurances that the immigration status and rights of EU nationals who currently live and study in Scotland, or who wish to study or work here in future, will not change. A lack of clarity on UK Government policy in that area is hampering planning. Against that backdrop, it is difficult to point to an exact date when we will be in a position to decide future policy on that issue. However, I can confirm that officials will discuss the matter with representatives of Scotland’s universities in the near future.

Mark Ruskell: I thank the minister for that very clear statement. We obviously share the desire to see more talented EU citizens come to this

country, to contribute to our academia and our society—and that jars with the policy at Westminster. However, on the timescale, it is clear that universities are now drawing up prospectuses for next year, and they need that clarity by April. If there is anything that we can do to try to force the Westminster Government to give that clarity at that point, that would be very beneficial to EU citizens who are considering coming to Scotland but who do not yet have clarity on free tuition or, indeed, their immigration status.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: It would be fair to say that it would be good if we could force some clarity from the UK Government on that issue and on many others. I have here a copy of Theresa May's speech from yesterday, which gives no clarity to EU nationals or, indeed, to the higher education sector in general, which is a concern. However, Mr Ruskell can be reassured that my officials and I are in almost constant dialogue with the universities around that issue and, indeed, the other issues for the sector that they are concerned about regarding Brexit—whether those are to do with research, EU students or, indeed, EU researchers and academic staff, which are also important issues.

Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children's Services

9. Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Government when it will next meet representatives from Aberdeenshire Council's education and children's services. (S5O-00557)

The Minister for Childcare and Early Years (Mark McDonald): Scottish Government officials met staff from Aberdeenshire Council's education and children's services yesterday as part of a meeting of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland.

Mike Rumbles: Last month, Aberdeenshire Council had 42 teaching vacancies, while Aberdeen City Council reported that 96 full-time-equivalent posts were vacant. Does the minister understand that his Government needs to provide the resources to attract adequate numbers of teachers to the north-east and to change the situation whereby both councils constantly receive among the worst levels of resource funding from the Scottish Government?

Mark McDonald: As Mr Rumbles knows, the Government has put in place funding to protect pupil teacher ratios. As well as that, we are working with the councils that are part of the north alliance to look at, for example, expanding opportunities for teacher education places. We are also looking at new routes into teaching, which include offering opportunities to individuals in the oil and gas sector who have recently been made

redundant and who wish to look at teaching as a future opportunity.

We are exploring a variety of routes for individuals to get into teaching in north-east Scotland. If Mr Rumbles has any constructive suggestions to bring to the table, the Government will be more than happy to hear from him.

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con): What has happened to full-time-equivalent teacher numbers in schools in Aberdeenshire from 2007 to the present? How has that affected pupil teacher ratios?

Mark McDonald: As Mr Burnett knows, and as I just highlighted to Mr Rumbles, we recognise the pressures that exist in north-east Scotland in relation to teacher recruitment and retention. That is why we have been working closely with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to ensure that there are additional places for teacher training and new opportunities for individuals to get into teaching.

I say again that if individuals such as Mr Burnett have constructive suggestions to bring to the table about how we could address those matters further, the Government will be more than happy to listen to them.

Teacher Workload

10. Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to reduce teacher workload. (S5O-00558)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Our education delivery plan made clear the Scottish Government's commitment to tackling bureaucracy and addressing excessive teacher workload. We issued a definitive statement on curriculum for excellence to all teachers that set out clearly what they are and are not required to do. Her Majesty's inspectors also carried out a focused review of the demands that are placed on schools by each local authority in relation to curriculum for excellence.

We have announced concrete proposals to address workload issues, including the decision to remove mandatory unit assessments for national 5, higher and advanced higher qualifications. The removal of the mandatory units will significantly reduce workload and liberate teachers to focus on teaching their pupils. My priority in all this is to free up teachers to concentrate on learning and teaching.

Donald Cameron: Enable Scotland research found that 62 per cent of subject teachers have experienced anxiety because of a lack of support to help those with additional support needs.

Moreover, there has been a 9 per cent drop in the number of teachers in special schools since the Government took power in 2007. What action will be taken to stop teachers being overworked? Does the Scottish Government agree that teachers, whether in mainstream or special schools, deserve better?

John Swinney: There were a number of issues in Mr Cameron's questions. The first was the general issue of reducing teacher workload to enable teachers to concentrate on learning and teaching. That is my absolute priority and I have demonstrated swift action to ensure that that happens.

The second issue concerned the changing mix of educational provision. Mr Cameron will know that there is a presumption in favour of mainstream education for all young people, with the exception that, when that is not appropriate for a young person, they should be educated in appropriate surroundings. That has led to a significant change in the profile of education, with the reduction in the number of special schools and the much greater integration of young people into our mainstream education.

I accept that teachers must be adequately trained and supported to provide for the educational needs of all young people in their educational setting. On that question, I have engaged with the Enable Scotland research, which is thoughtful. When I discussed the issue with Enable Scotland before the turn of the year, it made it clear to me that its argument is not about having more money in the system but about having more effective training and support to enable the fulfilment of young people's educational needs. The Government is committed to ensuring that that happens.

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): There is a stark contrast between the Scottish National Party Government, which has invested to maintain teacher numbers and reduce workloads, and Donald Cameron's Tory colleagues in the United Kingdom Government, who say that mainstream schools in England should cut spending on their workforce by £1.7 billion over the next three years. What are the cabinet secretary's views on that?

John Swinney: Parliament is familiar with the measures that the Government has put in place to enhance the resources that are available for the delivery of education in schools in Scotland. The finance secretary announced an extra £120 million to support the Scottish attainment challenge, which is more than what the Government committed to in our manifesto, to ensure that we can put the resources where they are needed to support young people's attainment and performance. The Scottish Government believes

in investing in education, and that is what our proposals aim to do.

St Margaret's Primary School

11. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how much funding it provided toward the building of the new St Margaret's primary school in Cowie. (S5O-00559)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Through the Scotland's schools for the future programme, the Scottish Government provided Stirling Council with £2.6 million towards the construction of St Margaret's primary school in Cowie.

Bruce Crawford: I was fortunate enough to attend the opening of the fantastic new primary and nursery school in Cowie on Friday.

Is the cabinet secretary aware that on 27 January the official opening will take place of yet another new school—St Ninian's primary in Stirling? How much funding is the Scottish Government contributing to the building of St Ninian's primary? What other funding has the Scottish Government provided since 2011 for school buildings in the Stirling Council area?

John Swinney: I am delighted that the Government's construction programme is providing such opportunities to keep Bruce Crawford busy on his constituency Fridays. It is delightful that they are such happy occasions.

I confirm that St Ninian's primary school received £5 million from the Scottish Government in the award to Stirling Council. Through the same programme, the Scottish Government has awarded Stirling Council funding of £1.9 million towards the refurbishment of Riverside primary school. That is all part of the wider investment programme that the Government is taking forward to support the development of first-class education facilities.

Education Governance Review

12. Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to concerns expressed by the Royal Society of Edinburgh regarding an "absence of a clear rationale" for the school governance review. (S5O-00560)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Our education system has many strengths, with thousands of excellent teachers and hard-working children and young people actively involved in it. However, the system faces challenges. The disappointing programme for international student assessment results that were

published in December reinforced the need for reform. The PISA results are consistent with the 2014 Scottish survey of literacy and numeracy, which told us that we needed to do more to make our education system one of the best in the world. That is why I am committed to empowering teachers, parents and schools to drive improvements in education and why I launched the education governance review. We owe it to every child and young person in Scotland to ensure that our system supports them to achieve the best possible outcome.

Iain Gray: The RSE did not say that it did not believe that reform of the education system was required; rather, it said that the school governance review missed the mark. It was not just the RSE that said that. The Educational Institute of Scotland, the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association, the Scottish Parent Teacher Council, the National Parent Forum of Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers and even the Scottish National Party-led Dundee Council have all, in one way or another, made submissions to the review that query the whole thrust of the review. When parents, teachers, headteachers, academics and even the SNP's own councillors tell the Government that it is barking up the wrong tree, is it not time to think again?

John Swinney: Iain Gray confused two things when he said that the RSE did not question the need for reform. The Government accepts the need for reform very clearly; we set out the need for it in our manifesto for the election in May. However, what we undertook in the governance review was an open consultation. The Government did not just say, "Here is our prescribed model. What do you think of it?" We posed a number of searching questions about the performance of every aspect of education.

I return to the points that I made in answer to a Conservative member. If performance is not as we would like it to be, how on earth can the Government conduct a consultation exercise without asking hard questions of everybody who is involved in education, including the Government? Of course, the Government's agencies are involved and the Government itself is part of the process. The issues that have to be confronted are to do with performance in Scottish education. Is it a surprise that COSLA tells me, "Just leave things the way they are"? Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of education in Scotland and, if that performance is not good enough—which Mr Gray regularly tells me is the case—I should be asking hard questions of local authorities and other bodies. We should not be surprised if local authority bodies tell us not to disturb anything and that everything is fine,

because they are the ones who are responsible for the current system.

Iain Gray: That is not what they are saying.

John Swinney: Mr Gray tells me that that is not what they are saying, but I have read COSLA's submission and that is what it is saying to me.

On the RSE's comments, the test of whether there is a clear rationale for reform will come from the proposals that the Government produces. That is the test that we must pass. We have to listen to the evidence, and I will take care to do that. I am not going to be in a hurry to address the matter; I will listen carefully and consider the issues carefully. I will then set out a clear rationale for reform of Scottish education that is based on the fact that we must improve performance to give every young person the best possible chance for their future in Scotland. Nobody in Parliament should be in any way shy of confronting that issue.

Trauma Network

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is a statement by Shona Robison on delivering an enhanced trauma network for Scotland. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of her statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

14:42

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison): I am pleased to be able to set out the next steps in the creation of an enhanced trauma network for Scotland. This builds on the excellent services that are already provided by national health service staff across the country and will lead to full implementation of four major trauma centres in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The dedication of our NHS staff in delivering trauma care is beyond question. These plans will help to support them to achieve even more. Through the new, enhanced network, our trauma teams up and down the country will work together and with the Scottish Ambulance Service to make sure that patients who are facing life-threatening injuries receive the best care possible as quickly as possible.

A trauma network provides clinical leadership throughout the entire patient journey, not just in a trauma centre, from trauma prevention right through to rehabilitation in the community. Trauma centres sit at the heart of a trauma network, providing multi-specialty care for severely injured patients. They provide consultant level care and are fully equipped to provide definitive care for the most severely injured—people with multiple, serious and complex injuries to the head, chest and other parts of the body.

Uniquely, trauma centres provide a dedicated trauma service through a highly specialist team that is expert in major trauma care. The team also has a dedicated trauma ward that is led by specialist trauma consultants and supported by doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other health professionals on a 24/7 basis. The last vital component of any trauma network is existing hospitals that are called trauma units, which deal with the vast majority of trauma involving those who are not as seriously injured as major trauma patients.

A trauma network cannot succeed without all those vital components being in place. It should therefore come as no surprise that trauma networks require significant planning and investment if they are to be appropriately resourced and to give seriously injured patients

the best care possible. There has been a rigorous debate in the clinical community as to what the optimum model for Scotland would be. I am grateful to the community and to the chief medical officer for shaping the plans that we are now taking forward.

In September 2013, the national planning forum major trauma sub-group produced a report that contained a number of recommendations for the development of a major trauma network. The group recommended that a trauma network be developed and that, as a first step, there should be a four-centre model. However, the group recognised that there was no clear consensus among clinicians on the optimum number of centres.

In April 2014, my predecessor Alex Neil asked for the suggested four-centre model to be taken forward, as a practical first step. However, in line with the 2013 national planning forum report, we knew that

“the findings of the GEOS study”—

the geospatial evaluation of systems of trauma care study—

“should be taken into account when considering future configurations of a trauma network in Scotland, including whether the number of major trauma centres can and should be reduced further from 4 MTCs and where the optimal location(s) might be.”

The fieldwork of the GEOS study was conducted in 2014 and the report was compiled thereafter. The study was noted on a number of occasions by the NPF major trauma oversight group as it took forward its work.

In 2015, the GEOS study cast doubt on the four-centre model and instead suggested that two trauma centres would be the optimal configuration for Scotland. I had to choose whether to ignore the GEOS report, accept it or ask that further work be done to assess the relative benefits and risks of the alternative model. I judged that the report had to be fully considered, to ensure that the right model for Scotland was being developed and to try to address clinical concerns.

Clinicians and other NHS staff then worked tirelessly with the GEOS study group, to assess the risks of having just two centres. In spring last year, it became clear from that further work that the risks outweighed the notional benefits. The views and concerns of clinicians and the Scottish Ambulance Service about a two-centre model were critical at that stage.

As a result, I asked the chief medical officer to lead an implementation group, to look at how a new trauma network, based on the original model of four major trauma centres, in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, could be made

to work in practice, taking cognisance of the lessons learned from the GEOS report, the concerns of the Scottish Ambulance Service and Scotland's unique geography.

In June last year, the Scottish Government announced that the necessary preparatory work for an enhanced four-centre trauma network would be completed by December 2016. That commitment was repeated in our programme for government, and we have delivered on it.

As part of building a consensus around the model, the chief medical officer has visited clinicians across the country to get views on what the model should look like and how it can be made to work in practice. All that has been done with expert advice, collaboration and support from our NHS throughout, which meets the commitment in our programme for government. I thank the chief medical officer for her hard work and perseverance in taking forward this complex project.

The chief medical officer's report, "Saving Lives. Giving Life Back", sets out how we will deliver an agreed and unique network model of trauma care in Scotland, which will enhance trauma services across Scotland and deliver improved outcomes for our most severely injured patients.

A great deal of good work has been done in parallel with work to develop the network model—complementary initiatives that can and will help to make the trauma network sustainable and, simultaneously, start us on the road to delivering enhanced trauma care. Early progress will include the expansion of the Scottish Ambulance Service trauma desk to operate 24/7, so that patients can be triaged appropriately and access definitive trauma care as quickly as possible, with the desk up and running by October; the testing, in summer, of a triage tool that helps paramedics to identify major trauma patients quickly and tells them where patients should be taken; and the recruitment by the Scottish Ambulance Service of additional staff, with the aim of having staff in place by July. Vital trauma equipment for all Scottish Ambulance Service vehicles has already been procured and will be in universal use by the end of February.

We anticipate that Aberdeen and Dundee will take a shorter time to establish trauma centres—that will happen over the next 12 to 18 months. Work will be guided by the Scottish trauma network steering group and set out in a national phased implementation plan later this year.

It is extremely important to note that the steering group's plans will not be developed in isolation. Clinicians from all regions, including Aberdeen and Dundee, have been fully involved in the development of the network model, and will

continue to be fully involved as the network develops.

The new trauma network model and the way forward is now fully supported by healthcare professionals across Scotland and by the Scottish Ambulance Service. They will continue to work with the new network steering group and the trauma centres and hospitals in their areas in order to deliver the changes that are needed. We are investing an extra £5 million in 2017-18 to accelerate those improvements. Over the lifetime of implementation, the anticipated cost of the new enhanced network and four-centre model is approximately £30 million; the final costs will be informed by the development of the network steering group's plans.

The new network will not only benefit people with major trauma. Six thousand of Scotland's seriously injured patients each year, of whom around 1,100 will have major trauma injuries, will benefit and, once the network is fully operational, we expect that an additional 40 lives can be saved. However, many more people will go on to have an improved quality of life due to improved rehabilitation pathways.

If members still have any doubt about the scale and complexity of what we are trying to achieve, I urge them to speak to the doctors and NHS staff who have been involved in developing the network model.

The eleventh of January marked an important day in changing trauma care in Scotland for the better. Through this network, we will provide world-class trauma care that will save more lives and help thousands more people to make a better recovery and get on with their everyday lives.

I am confident that the right model has come out of all this work, and that it will enhance our trauma services and save more lives every year. I am proud of the efforts of our NHS staff who have helped steer us through this complex and difficult process and I am happy to take questions on the statement.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The cabinet secretary will take questions on issues that were raised in her statement. I will allow around 20 minutes for questions. A lot of members want to ask questions, so I ask all participants to bear that in mind.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I thank the cabinet secretary for prior sight of her statement, but I find it strange that it took calls from Ruth Davidson at last week's First Minister's question time to get her to come to the chamber to address the issue. The fact that the First Minister went to the media instead of telling the Parliament what was happening is unacceptable. Will it always be the case that we

have to apply pressure to the Government in these circumstances?

I am afraid that there has been a complete failure of forward planning, given that these vital trauma centres were supposed to have been in place last year and are now subject to a three-year delay. That delay is intolerable, because these are quite literally lifesaving centres whose very existence will often make all the difference between life and death for those with severe injuries, as the cabinet secretary recognised in her statement.

Given that the week ending 8 January 2017 revealed the worst accident and emergency figures since March 2015, and that the Scottish Ambulance Service tells us that ambulances are struggling to attend life-threatening call-outs quickly enough, there is clearly serious pressure on the whole A and E and trauma system. Further delay to the trauma centres is just about the last thing that the system needs.

There is a distinct lack of clarity on another issue. The Scottish Government said that it did not know how much the new network will cost—that is the analysis of the Scottish Government, which told the Scottish Parliament information centre last week that the costs of the Scottish trauma network have yet to be determined. We have now learned that the network could cost up to £30 million to establish, but we do not know what the running costs will be.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Could we come to the question please, Mr Cameron?

Donald Cameron: With that in mind, and on the basis that the cabinet secretary states that the necessary preparatory work is complete, I assume that she is in a position to confirm what the expected yearly operating costs are for the service.

Shona Robison: I was happy to come here and make a statement to Parliament and I am happy to set out the detail of the complexity of the issue and to share with Parliament some of the detail of why it was important to reach a consensus among clinicians, which previously was not there. I hope that members across the chamber will agree that it was right to take the time to build that consensus rather than to push ahead with a model that did not have that clinical buy-in. I hope that, in the light of the detailed information that has been provided today, members will accept that.

I do not accept Donald Cameron's criticism about a failure of forward planning. The issue was not a lack of forward planning but a lack of clinical consensus. That consensus had to be built, and the chief medical officer has done sterling work in that regard the length and breadth of Scotland.

Donald Cameron referred to pressures in our A and E departments and the Scottish Ambulance Service. Winter always brings pressures; what is important is the additional layer of support that the major trauma network will provide for those patients who are most injured and who have major trauma injuries. We are talking about approximately 0.2 per cent of the 6,000 people who are injured; a very small number of people with major trauma ever go anywhere near our A and E departments. Most A and E departments see very few major trauma patients, and the new layer of provision will help to support those patients who are the most injured and have major trauma injuries.

With regard to the cost, the £30 million has been on the public record for quite some time. I have said that the £30 million should be taken as a guide for the network to work on, but the steering group will be doing further detailed work around the phasing of it. We have already announced £5 million for 2017-18, and I outlined in my statement the early priorities for that spend. I hope that that gives Donald Cameron some clarity.

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): I thank the cabinet secretary for prior sight of the statement.

This is the second time that the cabinet secretary has attempted to hide behind the First Minister and has then been forced to come to Parliament to explain her failures. The cabinet secretary promised that the trauma network would be delivered by 2016, but it is now delayed until at least 2020. According to the Government's own figures, 6,000 patients each year are expected to benefit from the network, which means that up to 18,000 patients will be failed by the cabinet secretary.

I listened with interest to the cabinet secretary when she said, with a straight face:

"We are investing an extra £5 million in 2017-18 to accelerate those improvements".

Only in Shona Robison's world is a delay of three years an acceleration. One of the excuses that she gave for the delay was that there was a debate on whether to provide two or four trauma centres. We always knew that two of the trauma centres would be in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Can she tell us why they are not up and running already?

The cabinet secretary likes to talk about England. The fact is that, under this cabinet secretary, the major trauma centres in Scotland will be delivered 10 years behind those in the NHS in England. Will she take this opportunity to apologise?

Shona Robison: We give Opposition members copies of a statement an hour in advance so that

they can read it and frame their questions based on its contents. It is quite clear that Anas Sarwar has done neither of those things. If he had read the statement beforehand and then listened when it was delivered, he would be quite clear about why it has taken time to reach a consensus among the clinical community on the right model for Scotland. I reiterate that it was very important that consensus was built in the clinical community in order to provide a sustainable major trauma network to benefit the people of Scotland.

Anas Sarwar shows how ill informed he is by saying—to paraphrase his words—that 18,000 people will somehow miss out on good trauma care. If he had listened to the detail of the statement, he would have heard that 6,000 people a year who experience trauma in Scotland already get first-rate treatment and care for their injuries through our existing network of A and E departments. We are talking today about the 1,100 people within that group of 6,000 who have major trauma injuries. If he had listened to the detail and read the statement, he would be aware of that. We are talking about 1,100 people with major trauma injuries who will be treated in the new major trauma network. They already get excellent care; the new network is about providing optimal care and—importantly—rehabilitation. If Anas Sarwar listened to anyone other than himself, he might learn something for once.

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): I remind members that I am the parliamentary liaison officer for the cabinet secretary.

When will the detailed implementation plans be in place for the four trauma regions? [*Interruption.*]

Shona Robison: I do not know what Labour members find so amusing about the development of a major trauma network that could save 40 lives a year—perhaps they need to take the subject a little more seriously.

We expect the four regional trauma networks and the Scottish Ambulance Service to have their regional implementation plans completed by October this year. Those plans will inform the completion of a phased national implementation plan for the entire trauma network, which plan will be ready by the end of the year.

As I said in my statement, Aberdeen and Dundee will be the trailblazers for the network; they are ahead of Glasgow and Edinburgh at this stage. It is quite right that we support Aberdeen and Dundee to get on with the establishment of the major trauma centres, which will be followed by Edinburgh and Glasgow in due course.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): Will the cabinet secretary commit to publishing all materials and documents, including details of ministerial

discussions, that relate to the decisions to support four trauma sites? How will the trauma site network form part of the workforce planning strategy, and when will Parliament receive information about that?

Shona Robison: Quite a lot of that information is already in the public domain, for example the GEOS study. If there are other materials that would be helpful to Miles Briggs and others, I will certainly look at his request.

Regarding the workforce plan, the trauma site network will form part of that, although it should be remembered—as I said in my statement—that adding the major trauma network layer on top of our trauma services is about enhancing the existing capability. Part of the workforce planning will be to ensure that staffing resources are adequate, because we require not just those who work on the front line, but the staff who work behind the scenes. I confirm that that will be part of the workforce plan, which we will bring forward in the spring.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): The cabinet secretary will no doubt have spoken, as I have, to those who are involved in developing plans for the major trauma centre in Aberdeen, so I hope that she will understand their frustration that, even at this stage, the Government is not yet ready to go. However, I have read Catherine Calderwood's report that was published last week and I listened closely to what she had to say. If Aberdeen royal infirmary will be ready to provide a dedicated new trauma ward this year—if, indeed, a full-blown major trauma centre can be established at Foresterhill within the next 12 to 18 months—what is holding up those deployments? Is the issue that, as Catherine Calderwood seems to say, staffing is a constraint? Why will the cabinet secretary not put in place the regional trauma network for the north of Scotland that she has talked about—what is preventing that from happening now?

Shona Robison: There would have been a great deal more frustration in Aberdeen and the north-east if we had gone ahead with the two-centre model that came to my desk and to which we had to give consideration. The member asks why, but when a group of clinicians cast doubt on the sustainability of a clinical model that is being pursued, it would be reckless not to listen to their clinical advice. We had to rebuild a consensus around the four-centre model, which is what the chief medical officer has done with the clinical community. We now have that consensus, which is very important if we are to have a sustainable model. The model is unique and bespoke to Scotland; it is not based on centres and networks in places with major populations elsewhere. It takes into account Scotland's unique geography.

Regarding the trauma centres in Aberdeen and Dundee, the 12 to 18 month timeframe is realistic for those two centres. They are out of the stalls most quickly and they are very keen to get up and running. The steering group will set out the work that needs to be done over the next few months. As I laid out in my statement, before anything else happens, an important component is the Scottish Ambulance Service implementing its 24/7 trauma desk and ensuring that it has its enhanced triage services in place.

I will then want to see very quickly the detail of how Aberdeen and Dundee will get the trauma wards up and running and the staffing in place. I am happy to keep Lewis Macdonald informed of the detail of that as we take it forward and I am sure that the CMO will do likewise.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): With increasing pressure on every aspect of primary and acute care, getting triage right will be essential. I welcome the improvements to that end that were outlined in the statement.

When the last trauma survey was conducted, in the 1990s, the injury severity scale was calibrated so that scores of 16 or more were classified as serious trauma. Despite advances in triage of head trauma, a head injury of any magnitude is still always given an automatic score of 16. To prevent inundation of our new trauma centres from the automatic referral of head injury when the patient could receive exemplary and appropriate care in local hospitals, will the cabinet secretary commit to reviewing the injury severity scale in respect of head injury to take account of advances in triage in that area, while not, of course, compromising on patient safety?

Shona Robison: I am happy to write to Alex Cole-Hamilton on the detail of his question, but we have to be clear that the definition of major trauma is very specific. Within the 6,000 serious injuries each year, 1,100 cases involve major trauma, including major head injuries and major trauma to the head. A very specific group of patients require the services of major trauma teams. I am happy to write to Alex Cole-Hamilton, but I hope that he appreciates that we are talking about a small number of people out of those who have serious injuries.

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): How will effective communications on the development of the new network be delivered to clinicians and the public?

Shona Robison: The new Scottish trauma network steering group will work closely with clinicians and NHS staff from the four trauma regions to maintain effective communications in order to ensure that the national trauma network is implemented. The new Scottish trauma network

website will also serve as an effective communications tool that will help to keep clinicians and the public—and, indeed, members of the Parliament—informed as the network develops. The new trauma website is available at traumacare.scot and I hope that members will avail themselves of the information on it.

Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con): In her statement, the cabinet secretary said:

“We are investing an extra £5 million in 2017-18 to accelerate ... improvements.”

Will she clarify how much of that £5 million fund to militate against delay will be allocated to the Aberdeen trauma centre? How much does she expect will be required to deliver the Aberdeen trauma centre on time?

Shona Robison: I laid out in my statement the initial priorities for the £5 million spend, which include the development and enhancement of services in the Scottish Ambulance Service. I am sure that Ross Thomson will appreciate that, if the SAS could not do triage through its 24/7 trauma desk, there would not be the glue for the rest of the network.

We have asked the steering group to develop some of the more detailed costings, which will include the development of Aberdeen and Dundee over the 12 to 18-month period. That goes beyond the £5 million and that work will be on-going. The 12 to 18-month period straddles two financial years and, in planning for 2018-19, I will want to make sure that any additional costs of developing Aberdeen and Dundee are included. I am happy to keep Ross Thomson informed as the detail of that work is developed.

Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP): It is clear from some of the questions that have been asked that some members have not read the CMO's report and do not understand the concept of a trauma network. Will the cabinet secretary provide details of the additional services that will be provided by the major trauma centres over and above those that are already provided in local emergency hospitals? How will all those services combine with the Ambulance Service in the Scottish trauma network to improve patient outcomes through the trauma pathway?

Shona Robison: As I said in my statement, severely injured patients already receive excellent trauma care in Scotland. We should remember that. This is not about people not getting trauma care at the moment, because people already get trauma care. This is about optimising trauma care for the most severely injured—for those who suffer major trauma.

As I outlined in my statement, major trauma centres uniquely provide a specialist, dedicated

trauma service that involves a highly specialist team that is expert in major trauma care, with a dedicated trauma ward that is led by specialist trauma consultants who are supported by doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other health professionals on a 24/7 basis. Trauma units in other hospitals will support the major trauma centres. Those units deal with the vast majority of traumas and will continue to deal with those who are not as seriously injured as major trauma patients are.

The trauma network will provide clinical leadership through the entire patient journey, not just in the trauma centre but from trauma prevention through to rehabilitation in the community. It is important that clinicians in the trauma centres will be able to support colleagues in the trauma units and beyond when they deal with trauma cases and will help to develop and enhance the skills of all those staff. Staff will work together to ensure that the patient gets to the right place quickly and has the best possible outcomes.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): The chief medical officer has said that she expects Dundee to have its trauma ward operational in this calendar year. The cabinet secretary keeps talking about 12 to 18 months for Dundee and Aberdeen. Does she agree with Catherine Calderwood's expected timescale for opening? Other than the funding and workforce factors that Catherine Calderwood has outlined, will any factors affect the timeline for opening those centres?

Shona Robison: As I said in my statement, the first thing that has to happen is the enhancement of the Scottish Ambulance Service, because it is the triage organisation that will get the major trauma patient to the right place. That must be up and running first on a 24/7 basis through the trauma desk. I set out in my statement the timeline for doing that over the next few months.

I have met those who are leading on the major trauma centre in Dundee; they are trailblazers. They want to get on with delivering the centre in Dundee. They are keen and are getting on with the job. Some things have already changed, and things are already in place that were not in place previously to enhance the experience of patients in Ninewells hospital who have suffered major trauma. I confirm that improvements have already been made.

As for funding and the workforce, this is in the main about ensuring that people have the equipment and skills available to them. Most of the skill sets already exist, but they will have to be enhanced, and the new staffing that will be required to deliver the Dundee centre is being looked at. However, I am optimistic that that centre can be delivered within the CMO's timescale.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am afraid that we have come to the last question. Stuart McMillan should be very quick.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): The cabinet secretary indicated that the lifetime implementation costs will be approximately £30 million. How will investment in the trauma network in future years be determined?

Shona Robison: As I have said, the steering group will develop the detail of the costings. The figure of £30 million has been on the record for some time and I am happy to confirm it as a guideline budget. The phasing of the spend over the next three years will be important. As the network will be quite different from the model that was originally envisaged, the detail will have to be considered. That detailed work will be taken forward by the steering group. I am happy to keep Parliament updated on that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes questions on the cabinet secretary's statement. I apologise to members whose questions were not taken, but we ran out of time and lots of members were left over.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-03438, in the name of Donald Cameron, on retaining the Highlands and Islands Enterprise board.

I call Mr Cameron to speak to and move the motion. We have no spare time at all in the debate, so you have a very strict eight minutes.

15:14

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): At the outset of the debate, it is worth casting our minds back some 50 or so years to 1965, when Highlands and Islands Enterprise's predecessor, the Highlands and Islands Development Board, was set up. At that time, the Highlander was described as

"the man on Scotland's conscience".—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 16 March 1965; Vol 708, c 1095.]

There had been more than 100 years of population loss; and low productivity, low income levels and a lack of basic infrastructure were widespread. There had been some improvements, but the glens and islands were still emptying and a way of life was vanishing.

Into that void stepped the Highlands and Islands Development Board. It had six members of staff and a budget of £150,000. Today, HIE has 322 employees and a budget of £74.5 million, albeit that that sum has ominously just been cut by 11 per cent in the draft budget.

The organisation's 1965 name is instructive. It was not simply another Government body but a board—a board whose remit was specific and definitive and which had extensive powers, dedicated to reversing population decline and revitalising the economy across the Highlands and Islands. It was a board that—uniquely—saw the significance of social development alongside economic development, because it was as important to regenerate communities as it was to regenerate the economy.

When the organisation was renamed Highlands and Islands Enterprise by a Conservative Government in 1991, the board remained intrinsic and HIE has continued with its unique remit to the present day. In fact, the board is more than intrinsic; in terms of its legal definition, HIE is defined in primary legislation as the members of its board. Therefore, contrary to what the Government's amendment says, any change to the status of the board will necessarily change the legal status of HIE. In law, HIE is its board, and the board is HIE. It follows that, in debating the proposed abolition of HIE's board, we are not

simply discussing the dry, technical structure of just another Government agency; we are debating the fundamental nature of HIE and what it does.

We must not be sentimental; HIE is not perfect. It has not got everything right and it should probably have concentrated more on the peripheral areas in the north and west that are currently at risk of depopulation. Not all of its projects have succeeded—although an enterprise agency is in the business of risk, so there will always be winners and losers. However, it has undoubtedly been a force for good. We now have 20 per cent of Scotland's enterprises in the Highlands and Islands, despite having only 9 per cent of the population. That is a remarkable achievement, as is the fact that the declining population trend has been reversed. The population of the Highlands and Islands has grown by 22 per cent—nearly 100,000 people—since 1965, which is more than double the national average.

HIE has played a major part in, among other things, the thriving tourism industry, the University of the Highlands and Islands and transport infrastructure. It has invested in cultural activities, in *Commun na Gàidhlig* and *Fèisean nan Gàidheal*, and, more recently, in community land ownership. It has truly transformed the region.

To those who say, "Don't worry. HIE will carry on doing what it has always done, because its network of offices across the region will continue; nothing will change," I say that if the Government's ill-conceived proposal goes ahead, everything will change. With respect, there are plenty of organisations that have a presence in towns across the Highlands and Islands—any high street bank, for example—but which plainly operate as national rather than local bodies. It is the board that makes HIE special—having a separate and independent board allows HIE to use the experience and expertise of business leaders to further its aims.

When she gave evidence to the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee last month, HIE's interim chief executive said that the board helped HIE to prioritise where strategy was implemented. She said:

"The knowledge and expertise of the board members, based on the walks of life from which they come, is useful, as is their insight into the Highlands and Islands."—[*Official Report, Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee*, 6 December 2016; c 18.]

She said that HIE ensured that board members, as the visible face of HIE, spent time meeting and engaging with businesses and communities. She said that communities appreciate that, because it gives them an opportunity to talk to and influence the board. That is why it is imperative that the HIE board remains and that it

“continues to take all strategic, operational and budgetary decisions”,

as the motion states. Nothing else will do, because nothing else will achieve the same kind of success. Members should be in no doubt that the loss of the board will, in effect, mean the end of HIE as we know it.

Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Donald Cameron: I do not have time, I am afraid.

I defy anyone to find an organisation that supports the proposal. Keith Brown revealed last month at the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee that there is not one—he was unable to name one body in favour of abolishing any of the current boards.

The prevailing mood in the Highlands and Islands is the same. Highland Council recently agreed a motion that spoke of the

“further distancing of decision-making and strategy from local communities”.

Jim Hunter—a highly respected figure and Scottish National Party member—has spoken of “centralism run riot” and “ministerial control-freakery”. Those comments demonstrate that, at the heart of all this, something much deeper and more profound is happening that impacts on everyone in Scotland: the inexorable centralising agenda of this Government.

It is a tragic tale. First it was the police. Then it was the fire service. Now we know that there are to be cuts to the core grant to local government, and there is talk of super-health boards.

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work (Keith Brown): Will the member take an intervention?

Donald Cameron: I do not have time. The minister will have time to respond in his speech.

The narrative of centralisation is fixed and unrelenting. A Convention of Scottish Local Authorities report in 2014 described Scotland as the

“most centralised country in Europe.”

It is no wonder that many of us believe that disbanding HIE’s board is simply the next chapter in that story, and that we will see another local body replaced by an all-Scotland organisation, based here under the watchful eyes of its political masters. Let me even hazard a guess at a name: enterprise Scotland? It is all so predictable.

With HIE, members should note the ultimate irony: a United Kingdom Government in faraway Westminster gave us the board, but a Scottish Government here in Edinburgh will take it away,

and that at the hand of the Scottish National Party of all people—a party of devolution and autonomy. When it comes to localism, however, its instincts are anything but local.

Community empowerment cannot be preached while removing powers from local organisations. Communities in the peripheral areas of remote and rural Scotland are not helped by passing power in completely the opposite direction.

Some of the SNP’s Highlands and Islands MSPs are here. Memories are long in our part of the world and the people of the Highlands and Islands will remember how they vote tonight. There are basic questions that they must ask themselves. Either they believe that power is best exercised closest to the people that it affects or they do not; either they believe in local communities deciding for themselves what is in their best interests or they do not; and either they believe in allowing for diversity and divergence from central Government or they do not. What is it to be?

In tonight’s vote, we in this chamber have an opportunity to say enough is enough, to stand up for small communities and businesses across Scotland, to end the withdrawal of decision-making powers from our localities, to end the hoarding of power and influence in the centre and to end—once and for all—the passing of control over vast areas of Scottish life from the many to the few.

I move,

That the Parliament opposes the Scottish Government’s plans to abolish the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE); recognises the vital work that HIE carries out for businesses and communities across the Highlands and Islands, and calls on the Scottish Government to reverse this decision and ensure that the HIE board continues to take all strategic, operational and budgetary decisions.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Keith Brown to speak to and move amendment S5M-03438.2. You have up to six minutes, please, cabinet secretary.

15:23

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work (Keith Brown): First, I make it clear that, where possible, I fully intend to listen to the points that have been made. I would like to engage and it might have helped in that regard had Donald Cameron accepted my intervention.

I want to work closely with MSPs from across the chamber to explore constructive ideas about how we can support and maintain sustainable and inclusive economic growth and protect—as we have guaranteed to do—local decision making, management and delivery.

I would have made the point that it seems impossible to reconcile the fact that we are about to be the first Government to establish a south of Scotland agency and our work on regional partnerships as part of the review with the idea of centralisation; indeed, what we are doing is the very reverse of centralisation.

However, my determination to deliver better economic and social outcomes for all Scotland means that I cannot support the Conservative motion. I will briefly explain the rationale for change and the actions that will ensure that HIE continues to deliver for the Highlands and Islands and for Scotland. HIE is not being abolished.

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Will the minister take an intervention?

Keith Brown: I am sorry, but are we not in the pattern of not taking interventions? I recognise Liz Smith's interest, though, so I will take her intervention.

Liz Smith: I thank the cabinet secretary for doing so. On the rationale for change, will he spell out whether he has had any communications from the four boards that he proposes to abolish? What advice has he been getting from them?

Keith Brown: It would take me some time to recite all the information that is contained in the letters, but I have had various correspondence from the boards. As you would expect, they raise an awful lot of issues in respect of which they are very supportive of what the Government is doing, and they also raise issues of concern. It is perhaps too much to go into in a short six-minute speech, but I would be happy to have a further conversation with Liz Smith about it, as I have done already.

When we announced the enterprise and skills review, our aim was to pursue the long-term ambition that was embedded in Scotland's economic strategy: to rank in the top quarter of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries for productivity, equality, wellbeing and sustainability. That ambition is the foundation for the work of our enterprise and skills agencies. Creating greater alignment would help HIE: it would ensure international support, which we do not have enough of now; and more local decision making in relation to skills development could take place in the Highlands and Islands as a result of greater alignment and cohesion.

We recognise the strengths of the four agencies and also that, as good as they are—I think that Donald Cameron conceded this point—they can do more. They have developed since they were first conceived; they have changed their names, they have changed their structures and they have certainly grown in size. As Donald Cameron mentioned, other parts of the Highlands and

Islands frequently say that they could do with more of a HIE presence, and there is an important lesson there as well.

The first phase of the review that we have undertaken has shaped our vision, our guiding principles and a set of actions under seven themes. Moving ahead, we will strengthen the strategic direction and governance of our enterprise and skills system and ensure that appropriate regional approaches are undertaken. We will also take action, as I have mentioned, on internationalisation, innovation, skills, digital and enterprise support.

The review has focused on how we can best ensure that our agencies are working together. Respondents said that there was a complex and cluttered landscape, which was often confusing, and that we needed clearer alignment of our services to deliver our national ambitions. That is why we will align those key agencies under a strategic Scotland-wide board and also protect local decision making, local management and local delivery.

I say once again: HIE will not be abolished.

Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): SNP Highlands and Islands members met the cabinet secretary several months ago to discuss this very topic. Will he now commit to being open minded about retaining some sort of mechanism that ensures local decision making in the Highlands and Islands? Will he commit to bringing the second part of the review back to this chamber for a full discussion of the findings and recommendations?

Keith Brown: In addition to the points that Gail Ross, Kate Forbes, Richard Lochhead and others have made to me about what the structure beneath the strategic board should be and in relation to each of the agencies, there have been a number of other proposals. Some have appeared in the press, where there has been talk of supervisory boards and advisory boards, as there are in other countries; there are suggestions from those who are currently undertaking the review, which will be led by Professor Lorne Crerar, the chair of HIE; and we have had suggestions from members of the different agencies.

So, yes, we have the ability to look at the nature of the decision-making powers that are exercised by the tier between the strategic board and the agencies, if you like, and I spoke to Lorne Crerar this morning to ensure that his review, which has already begun, takes account of the Government's open mind in that regard.

I am more than happy to come back to the chamber once we have that governance review—not phase 2 of the enterprise and skills review,

although I will be happy to come back with that as well, of course. I recognise the interest expressed in both the motion and the amendment and in the discourse that I have had with individual members.

We recognise that the four agencies have strengths and that, as good as they are, we must always seek to improve them. I recognise the success of HIE over a number of years that Donald Cameron talked about—it has had substantial success; indeed, one reason why the South of Scotland members have championed having something similar in their area is that they recognise HIE's success.

We must build on that in future. The additional support that HIE needs in respect of internationalisation and, perhaps, additional powers for local decision making should be an outcome of the review. The review should also focus on how we get the agencies to work together. It is a question of building on success, engaging with the agencies and delivering more for Scotland.

This debate confirms that all of us in the chamber recognise that HIE is a success story. As has been mentioned, the transformation of the Highlands and Islands over the past 51 years is testament to that. However, it should be recognised that the status quo is not an option, not least given the comments that Donald Cameron made. We are always looking to see how we can improve things.

The future of HIE is secure; it is not being abolished.

I look forward to the rest of the debate.

I move amendment S5M-03438.2, to leave out from "opposes" to end and insert:

"recognises the vital work that Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) carries out for businesses and communities across the Highlands and Islands: welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to retain HIE, its legal status, chief executive, management team, local base and local decision-making powers, and expects that the Governance Review being undertaken by the chair of HIE, Professor Lorne Crerar, and others will provide for the work of HIE to be supported by, and more closely aligned with, the other agencies within the Enterprise and Skills Review to drive the changes needed to further improve the economy of the Highlands and Islands and the rest of Scotland."

15:29

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I welcome the debate and I support the motion. The Highlands and Islands Development Board and Highlands and Islands Enterprise have, between them, more than 50 years of proven economic and social success. Why would anyone want to dismantle that? Despite how the Scottish National Party Government wriggles and recants, that is

exactly what it is trying to do. John Swinney's announcement of the end of the HIE board was met with anger and disbelief in the Highlands and Islands.

Kate Forbes: Will the member take an intervention?

Rhoda Grant: Let me make some progress.

In response, Keith Brown tried to appease by saying that he expects there to be strong Highland representation on the new single board. He also told me that there was no commitment to a single geographical headquarters for the new board. Does that mean that the Government has not decided where the new board will be located or maybe that it will not have a base at all?

The more digging we do, the more it seems clear that the SNP is making it up as it goes along. Its only aim is centralisation and a power grab that ignores the needs of the Highlands and Islands. The SNP now wants to take away the very essence of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, whose roots are firmly based in the region, and to make it subject to a board that covers not only enterprise but education and skills.

Kate Forbes: Does the member accept that only phase 1 of the review has been published and that the reason why we do not have all the details is that we await phase 2? Does she also accept that she voted for the Government's motion welcoming the publication of phase 1, which stated that a statutory board would be created?

Rhoda Grant: We know now that the board of HIE is going to be dismantled, which we did not know at the time of that vote. The announcement of that proposal was sneaked out in answer to a different question. We did not have that information and we actually gave the Government the benefit of the doubt—we will maybe learn from that.

When the Highlands and Islands Development Board was founded in 1965, its main remit was to stem population decline from the north-west Highlands and the islands and at the same time enhance the way in which the economic and social needs of the whole area were met. Most people, including the cabinet secretary, agree that it has been a success. At the last count, the population had increased by 20 per cent. However, that is not to say that the job is done. Many parts of the region still face challenges that are as great as those in 1965 and we need to redouble our efforts to meet the demands of and challenges facing those communities.

That is where HIE's social remit comes in and why we have lodged our amendment. HIE has used its funding and knowledge to support businesses that would not have been supported

elsewhere in order to strengthen communities and ensure that people have access to services. It has supported businesses such as pubs and petrol pumps that would never be supported in other parts of Scotland. Our amendment seeks to emphasise that point. We have seen economic development over the past decades, but it has decreased over the past few years due to budget cuts. Communities of course complain that they cannot get the help from HIE that they once did. They want HIE to have its own distinct board and the ability that it once had to grow their local economies.

The Scottish Government's approach should not be a surprise, as it has a track record on centralisation. In the Highlands and Islands, we once had our own police force, governed by a joint board that was made up of locally elected representatives, but the Government centralised that; it did the same with the fire service in the Highlands and Islands, which is now centralised. All that has had disastrous results for service delivery. This time, it is HIE. What next?

The Scottish Government must recognise that it has no support for the plan. The Government cannot tell us who supports scrapping the HIE board, but I can give a lengthy list of those who totally oppose it. For example, Dr Stephen Clackson from Orkney Islands Council told me:

"Before long, with a single police force, single ambulance service, single fire and rescue service etc, this country will have come to resemble a large English county. The SNP will have transformed Scotland into Scotshire!"

How ironic that, as Donald Cameron said, the HIEB was set up by a UK Government in Westminster and is now being dismantled by a Scottish Government in Edinburgh. That was not the aim of devolution. Regardless of what the Scottish Government says, the move is taking powers from the Highlands and Islands and centralising them. Power over how an organisation spends its budget is the crux of decision making, and the new board will retain power simply by being able to open and shut the funding tap.

We must make a stand to save not just the HIE board but the very essence of HIE, and to demand the re-empowering of an organisation that has made a real difference to the economy of the Highlands and Islands. I make a direct plea to SNP MSPs for the Highlands and Islands: they might have been put up for election by the SNP, but they were elected by their constituents—do not let them down at decision time tonight.

I move amendment S5M-03438.1, to insert at end:

“, and recognises the impact that the Scottish Government's plans for centralisation will have on HIE's unique social remit.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We now move to the open speeches. We are extremely tight for time. In order not to jeopardise the next debate, I ask all speakers to aim for three and a half minutes, please.

15:35

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I will try to cut down my time to meet your deadline, Presiding Officer.

When I started working in Inverness in 1995, I had little knowledge of HIE. In fact, to be truthful, I was somewhat sceptical of what it had achieved and what it could achieve. However, over the 15 years I worked as a surveyor covering the Highlands, my views changed, and I came to appreciate what HIE had achieved in the north. Of course there were times when my original scepticism surfaced, but that was when the HIE board became political rather than dealing with Highland issues.

It is therefore perhaps strange that, like my colleague Donald Cameron, I wish, at the outset of my speech, to identify with somebody with whom I would not naturally identify. I agree with Professor Jim Hunter's comment on the SNP Government's plans for HIE and, as Donald Cameron did, I paraphrase what he said: that, in a country as diverse as ours, this is centralism running riot. I agree with that.

We must never forget why HIE exists. Simply put, it aims to increase the number of people who choose to live, work, study and invest in the Highlands and Islands. We should be asking whether it does that well. I believe that it does, and I will give three examples—in fact, I will give two examples, due to the shortage of time.

First, HIE worked with Highland Council, the University of the Highlands and Islands and Inverness Chamber of Commerce to make viable proposals for the Inverness city deal. The result was a £315 million investment. Secondly, HIE invested £25 million in the UHI campus to help make it possible. The result is a campus that we can be proud of, with huge diversity.

What has that excellent work cost Scotland? As we heard, it is £74 million, but that is shortly to be cut. Is that good value? Before I answer that question, it is worth pointing out that the SNP has already cut HIE's budget by 11 per cent in six years, abolished the 10 local enterprise companies and, to quote Jim Hunter,

“turned the organisation into a Scottish Government 'delivery agency'”.

Kate Forbes: Will the member take an intervention?

Edward Mountain: I am sorry, but I am very pushed for time, and I know that the member has intervened already.

As a Tory, I am putting myself in a dangerous position by quoting Professor Jim Hunter not just once but for a second time. Members must understand that, if somebody is right, I will stand with them. We should not allow the Government to act further and remove the board, making HIE purely a delivery agency.

We accept, and I think I have proved, that, in local situations, success is more likely if the decision is kept local. Who can deny that? The examples that I have given prove it. That is why the board needs to be local, not situated elsewhere in Scotland.

As Donald Cameron pointed out, we have all been told by the Scottish Government that there has been plenty of support for its plan to scrap the HIE board and to subsume it within a national body. The problem is that we still have not heard who supports that. Furthermore, I do not understand how the Cabinet can interpret as a signal to break up HIE the First Minister saying that

“Highlands and Islands Enterprise does a fantastic job”.—
[*Official Report*, 29 September 2016; c 15.]

Before I close, I briefly mention the compromise by the MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, Ian Blackford, on how to dilute the dissent to the Government’s suggestions. We have now done that—I have given it the attention it deserves—so let us move on.

In summary, I say to the Government: “Listen to what is being said to you. HIE is not broken. It works. Stop trying to break it.”

15:39

Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): Words are so devalued in our political discourse that they are hurled about until the air is so thick with exaggeration, hyperbole and superlatives that it is impossible to see the truth. The future of Highlands and Islands Enterprise is the latest battleground in our war of words, and I am really quite disappointed that Opposition parties have spread such fear among local communities and HIE staff with their irresponsible rhetoric.

For Donald Cameron to praise land reform when his party voted against it smacks of the same hypocrisy. That is one thing that the Highlands and Islands have not forgotten. Let me be clear: Dean Lockhart said this morning that HIE was to be abolished, but that is a downright mistruth.

We need a strong economy—not for its own sake, but because our friends and family members

need job opportunities, a steady income and reliable public services across this country.

HIE has been instrumental in turning the Highlands around in the past 50 years. Interestingly, it has done that partly with more than £23 million in European Union funding between 2007 and 2013. Therefore, it is cheek—absolute cheek—for the Conservatives to accuse this Government of undermining HIE when their London colleagues will be pulling the rug from under the feet of HIE on EU and other funding for the Highlands and Islands.

I apologise to Edward Mountain, but the purpose of the review is to empower HIE with more resources and to expose HIE to more international opportunities—all that while maintaining the current management structures, the office of the chief executive, the staff and the local decision makers. In other words, the purpose of the Scottish Government’s review is to strengthen HIE’s service to communities. That is devolution of power—not centralisation.

Rhoda Grant: Will the member take an intervention?

Kate Forbes: With pleasure.

Rhoda Grant: Is the member actually saying that the board has no purpose at all? Why are we setting up an overreaching board if that is the case?

Kate Forbes: That is a good point, and a fair one. I think that the board has an important role to play. Over the past few years we have seen that our economy is changing. We need to open up new opportunities. For example, I come from an agricultural background. I see far fewer export opportunities for our food and drink in the Highlands at the moment, under the current arrangements, than there would be if there was more collaboration with others, with local decision-making powers and powers over the budget—on which I agree with Rhoda Grant’s earlier statement—maintained.

First and foremost, I say that we should look at what the Scottish Government has done, often in partnership with HIE, over the past few years and months. The Scottish Government worked with HIE to safeguard 150 jobs at the Lochaber smelter and unlock the potential to create hundreds more. Eighty miles of the A9 are finally being dualled—on time and within the £3 billion budget—after decades of waiting under Labour, Liberal and Tory Governments. Tens of affordable homes are being built across the Highlands and Islands. Communities now own acres and acres of their own land, with new land reform legislation and an expanded Scottish land fund. Investment is being made in tourism, food and drink and renewable energy across the Highlands. We should look at

those things; we should look at the exact wording in the review; and we should look at the need to support businesses and communities in the Highlands.

I think that we should stop spreading fear. As a member of the Scottish Parliament for an area of the Highlands, who has lived, worked and gone to school in the Highlands and who loves the Highlands, I look at those things—that list of investments and partnerships—and I see a Government that is empowering Highland communities.

15:43

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): Presiding Officer,

“It has never been more important than today that all the country’s resources should be fully exploited, and the Highlands”

and Islands

“have much to contribute. This is not a case of giving to the Highlands. This is a case of giving the Highlands a chance to play their ... part in the future of Britain.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 16 March 1965; Vol 708, c 1086.]

Those are the words of the iconic Secretary of State for Scotland, Willie Ross, speaking in the House of Commons during the second reading of the Highland Development (Scotland) Bill, which set up the groundbreaking Highlands and Islands Development Board in 1965.

The HIDB was set up with operational freedom—unshackled by ministerial direction—and with combined economic and social development tools. In 1991, HIE took the HIDB’s place, and both Conservative secretaries of state—Rifkind and Lang—kept those principles alive in the new body.

Professor Jim Hunter, an ex-chair of HIE and an SNP supporter, has been quoted already today. In December 2016, he said in *The Press and Journal*:

“The Scottish Government’s decision to deprive Highlands and Islands Enterprise of its own board is no bolt from the blue—it is the culmination of repeated moves by SNP Ministers to rein in and now end the independence of the north’s development agency.”

In my view, it is crucial that we keep the HIE board, fight creeping centralisation and give HIE the strategic direction to devise and formulate its own priority initiatives, keeping faith with the spirit of Willie Ross’s passionate address in the Commons in March 1965.

The big question today is why abolish HIE’s board. If it ain’t broke, why fix it? Where is the stampede of local people and organisations building the barricades to demand change? I ask

the cabinet secretary to name them. Hands up how many back-bench SNP members for the Highlands and Islands want this move? How will HIE’s unique social function be protected? Where is the evidence of duplication? Who will employ the HIE staff? Who will appoint the HIE chief executive—the HIE board or the superquango?

Will the changes require fresh legislation, which might well be defeated, or will the cabinet secretary sneak through a so-called Henry VIII order using powers in part 2 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010? I looked at that procedure earlier. Members will be aware that it goes back to the statute of proclamations in 1539, which gave Henry VIII the power to make statute by proclamation. Clearly, the cabinet secretary has been taking some history lessons over the past few days.

Who will chair the superboard? Who will be the members? I will be happy to supply a free map of the Highlands and Islands to successful applicants if required.

I thank the Scottish Conservatives for their positive initiative in securing this debate. Those words are not often heard from this part of the chamber, which reinforces the point that cross-party consensus exists on the issue. The SNP faces almost universal criticism in the Highlands and Islands for its centralisation agenda, with opposition from the Lib Dems, the Greens, the Tories, Labour and—we should not forget—Highland Council as well. In the SNP’s ranks, it has caused discomfort on the back benches, and spies tell me that members of the SNP group at Westminster are muttering into their beer in the strangers bar because of the lack of consultation from SNP high command over the abolition of the board.

Tonight, there is a chance for democracy to strike back. All that we need is the will to do and the soul to dare.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): Time is tight. I ask for speeches of up to three and a half minutes, please, or members at the end will lose their speaking time.

15:47

Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP): I remind the Parliament of my role as the parliamentary liaison officer to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work.

The work of Highlands and Islands Enterprise is well recognised. It provides valued services to the businesses and communities of the region. There is no doubt that a successful Scotland requires a successful economy in the Highlands and Islands, and HIE is seen as a key driver of that success.

The Scottish Government's commitment to the Highlands and Islands cannot be doubted. The recent deal to enhance the Fort William smelter and hydro power station, which adds high-value manufacturing and brings in significant external investment alongside Scottish Government support, demonstrates that. The dualling of the A9 and the A96, together with the focus on delivering broadband across the Highlands and Islands as a priority, will significantly improve connectivity.

Let us be clear about the proposals that are outlined in the Scottish Government's enterprise and skills review. As the Government amendment states, HIE will retain

"its legal status, chief executive, management team, local base and local decision-making powers",

and it will continue to have autonomy over local decisions, using local expertise and knowledge. All the factors that drive its success will continue. That is not in doubt. The same services will continue to be delivered by the same people to businesses and communities in the Highlands and Islands, which will continue to access those services through local staff in local offices as they do now.

Scotland has enjoyed success in inward investment in recent years, with a large part of that being down to the work of our enterprise agencies, including HIE, but the challenges that lie ahead require us to do more and to do it better. If we are to reach the top quartile of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development nations for economic growth, productivity and social inclusion, and to do so against the headwinds that have been created by the chaos and confusion of Brexit, more of the same will not be enough. As well as asking our businesses to innovate, we need to innovate across the range of enterprise and skills support services that the Government offers.

Business respondents to the review pointed to a cluttered landscape with a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities leading to duplication and suboptimal use of resources. The system was viewed as lacking coherence and co-ordination. A strategic focus with a single vision, goals and shared ownership is required to deliver more effective collaboration. That is not just something that is nice to have; it is essential to support Scottish business to perform and compete at the levels we need in order to deliver inclusive growth across the Scottish economy.

The review makes it clear that a greater degree of co-ordination is required, and the best way to achieve that is through a strategic board that ensures that the agencies complement and enhance each other. The new single strategic Scotland-wide statutory board will co-ordinate the

activities of Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. That will strengthen governance and bring greater integration, coherence and focus to our enterprise and skills support for businesses and users of the skills system. It will enable robust evaluation and the development of common targets that are aligned with the national performance framework and the economic strategy, which will aid performance.

There is no threat to HIE or the work that it does to benefit the economy of the Highlands and Islands. The changes that will be brought about as a result of the review will enable HIE to leverage in the support of other agencies and move forward to the next level of its work, and the Government amendment recognises that.

15:50

Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green): I thank Donald Cameron for bringing this important debate to the chamber. My colleague John Finnie has long been an advocate and enthusiastic supporter of the role that HIE plays in the Highlands and Islands and he regrets that he is unable to be here to speak in the debate.

HIE has been serving communities in the north of Scotland for more than 50 years, partly in its former guise of the HIDB, and in that time it has achieved remarkable things. The region faces unique challenges and opportunities and, in our view, its needs are best met by a development agency that takes the big view and the long view on the development of the Highlands and Islands and implements its distinctive social purpose alongside conventional economic development concerns.

The report of the phase 1 review highlights the distinctiveness of the Highlands and Islands and the need for an agency that is

"locally based, managed and directed".

That sentiment is at odds with the Government's proposal to abolish the HIE board. The Scottish Government's consultation summary notes that there were

"very few negative issues of note in relation to HIE and responses mentioning HIE were very positive in relation to their specific expertise and support to strengthen communities and address issues faced by remote, rural and fragile areas."

Last September, the First Minister assured John Finnie that HIE would remain in a position

"to carry out"

its

"functions and provide its excellent services to the Highlands"—[*Official Report*, 29 September 2016; c 15]

and Islands.

I have three questions for the Government. First, will the cabinet secretary explain how scrapping the board and amalgamating it with other agencies will ensure a continued focus on the Highlands and Islands? Secondly, will he tell me how he proposes to bring forward his proposed changes? Does he plan to introduce primary legislation to enact them or, as David Stewart suggested, does he intend to use the order-making powers in part 2 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 as they apply to schedule 5 bodies? The third and crucial question is on status. The cabinet secretary told the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee in December that, in relation to SE and HIE,

“there will be no change to their status”—[*Official Report, Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee, 20 December 2016; c 10.*]

Keith Brown’s amendment talks of retaining “legal status”, but “status” and “legal status” are ambiguous terms. Mr Brown has legal status, I have legal status and Donald Trump has legal status, but we are very different entities. The acid test is—this was the scenario that I put to Mr Brown in December’s economy committee meeting—whether, after the reforms, HIE would be able to take Scottish Enterprise to court over, for example, a disputed liability over property on the Isle of Arran. I am not suggesting for a moment that it would wish to, but would it be able to? In other words, will HIE retain not its legal status but its legal personality after the reforms?

HIE plays a vital role in supporting communities and businesses across the Highlands and Islands. It is widely supported. The changes that the Government proposes are unnecessary and could well undermine the excellent work that is done by HIE. We see no evidence or reason at this time to change the governance of HIE, and the Greens will be supporting the motion in the name of Donald Cameron.

15:54

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I thank Donald Cameron for making the debate possible by lodging the motion, which the Scottish Liberal Democrats whole-heartedly support. I also thank *The Press and Journal* for the vigorous campaign that it has fought over the past few months to keep Highlands and Islands Enterprise local. It has acted in the best traditions of campaigning journalism, exposing the lack of any basis or support for the Government’s proposals and keeping the issue firmly in the public eye. Finally, I record my thanks to local businesses in Orkney, across a range of sectors, that have taken the time to voice their concern about the SNP’s plans to abolish the board of HIE.

I have listened closely to the cabinet secretary and his back-bench colleagues this afternoon as they have desperately sought to justify the proposals. In response, I am tempted to quote—as other members have—the highly respected former HIE chair Professor Jim Hunter. That would, at least, give Parliament a fair representation of the concerns that are felt by my constituents and by people across the Highlands and Islands. It would also more accurately reflect the views of most SNP activists and members in the region, of whom Professor Jim Hunter counts himself one. He speaks for most in declaring:

“there is no case—other than ministerial control-freakery—for undermining an agency whose record shows it to be one of Scotland’s success stories.”

As David Stewart said, the HIDB was established in 1965 with Government funding and with powers to act at its own hand. Roll forward half a century and we see how things have changed. Although the First Minister was happy to join HIE’s 50th birthday celebrations last year, since taking office the SNP has taken a hatchet to HIE. First, Mr Swinney’s “decluttering of the landscape” saw local enterprise boards including Scottish Borders Enterprise decluttered out of existence and tens of millions of pounds raided from HIE’s budget. Now that agency is to be stripped of its strategic responsibility for economic development in the Highlands and Islands, including the distinctive social cohesion aspect.

It is simply not credible to argue that a single, overarching superboard encompassing enterprise, skills and funding agencies for all Scotland will have the necessary laser-like focus on the needs of the Highlands and Islands. Yes, effective collaboration between those bodies is essential but, for the past 10 years, SNP ministers have assured us that that has been happening. Now, out of the blue, we are told by Keith Brown that abolishing HIE’s board and centralising strategic decision making is the only way of making that happen.

Unfortunately for the Government, no one else seems to agree. Certainly, no one who contributed to the first phase of the Government’s enterprise and skills review appears to agree. The idea was cooked up in Bute house by a Government with an unhealthy appetite for controlling absolutely every aspect of what goes on in our country. At a time when HIE desperately needs to be reinvigorated to rediscover its early ambition, creativity and independence, SNP ministers seem intent on neutering it. Starving HIE of funds and freedom is not the recipe for success.

I conclude by quoting Professor Jim Hunter, who says:

“In a country as diverse as ours ... this centralism run riot needs resisting.”

The cabinet secretary and SNP Highlands and Islands MSPs should take heed. This unwarranted power grab must be abandoned and power left where it is needed—in the Highlands and Islands. I hope that Parliament will reach the same conclusion at decision time.

15:58

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

We agree that a review of enterprise and skills policy is an important and urgent priority if we are to promote economic growth and skills development in Scotland. Indeed, figures that were published only today by the Scottish Government show that the economy continues to struggle, with gross domestic product growth of only 0.7 per cent in the past year compared with growth of 2.2 per cent in the rest of the United Kingdom. Today's figures also show that unemployment has increased over the past quarter to 5.1 per cent compared with a UK average of 4.8 per cent.

Given that economic background, we support some of the objectives that are outlined in the Scottish Government's phase 1 report on enterprise and skills, including the need for greater alignment and accountability across enterprise and skills agencies. However, as our motion sets out, we categorically do not support the abolition of the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. In addition, we do not support the proposed 33 per cent reduction in the Government's budget for enterprise support—however, given the time constraints, I will leave that for another day.

The SNP's amendment to our motion highlights that HIE will retain its separate legal status and local base, but that misses the issue at the heart of today's debate. As other members have highlighted, HIE's unique social and economic remit has shaped and been shaped by the unique needs of the Highlands and Islands communities and the businesses that they support, and the HIE board plays a central and vital part in all that. HIE is not just an enterprise development agency like Scottish Enterprise; it has a unique and distinct remit to support and develop communities. Unique needs are identified and addressed by a dedicated HIE board.

Jim Hunter, who wins—by a long way—the award for most quoted person in today's debate, called the Scottish Government's attempt to scrap the HIE board a direct "assault" on its founding principles. When the chief executive of HIE gave evidence to the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee, she said that the HIE board helps the agency to

"prioritise where we implement strategy across the Highlands and Islands",

and highlighted the

"knowledge and expertise of the board members".—[*Official Report, Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee*, 6 December 2016; c 8.]

We want that approach to continue.

As other members have said, a number of stakeholders are against the Government's proposal and have submitted responses to that effect, but there is little or no evidence of support for the proposal.

If we want improved alignment, accountability and performance across the enterprise and skills agencies, as well as higher economic growth in Scotland, the answer is in the Audit Scotland report "Supporting Scotland's economic growth: The role of the Scottish Government and its economic development agencies". Audit Scotland said:

"the enterprise bodies are performing well but the Scottish Government needs a clearer plan for delivering its economic strategy".

We agree. The Government should follow Audit Scotland's advice and take a closer look at its own performance and strategy and at how it implements policy, instead of dismantling the board of HIE, which has been successful.

Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member cannot give way, as he is in the final seconds of his speech.

Dean Lockhart: I am about to conclude.

The Government should by now have learned the lessons from the disastrous centralisation of Police Scotland. Centralising decision making is not the right answer, when different parts of Scotland have very different needs and policy requirements. The Scottish Conservatives are clear that the Scottish Government should reverse the decision to scrap the board of HIE and keep a local board, which understands the needs of the Highlands and Islands.

16:01

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): As members have said, the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee spent a fair bit of time looking at the enterprise agencies, in particular Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. As part of that, we examined the Audit Scotland report "Supporting Scotland's economic growth: The role of the Scottish Government and its economic development agencies", which was published in July.

I will focus on the Audit Scotland report. Much of it is very positive. Audit Scotland described what is

being and has been done by the HIDB and HIE since 1965, and by the Scottish Development Agency and SE since 1975. A lot has changed in the intervening years. On page 7, Audit Scotland said that the Scottish Government should work with relevant partners to

“identify the full range of public sector support for businesses to identify duplication and potential gaps and to ensure that public sector support complements private sector support”.

Audit Scotland went on—I could quote a lot of the report but I will restrict what I quote. On page 28, in paragraph 67, Audit Scotland said:

“It is not possible to directly compare Scottish Enterprise’s and HIE’s spending. Both record their spending against their individual priorities and categories. This means it is not possible to compare, for example, how much each spends on supporting businesses.”

In paragraph 76, Audit Scotland talked about potential duplication, saying:

“Scottish Enterprise and HIE offer similar forms of support ... The arrangements for providing this support are complex”,

and gave the example of Scottish Development International, which

“is a joint partnership between the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and HIE. It is staffed by Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government and funded through Scottish Enterprise.”

In paragraph 77, Audit Scotland explained that

“Other forms of support are delivered by one of the bodies, on behalf of the other, to businesses and communities across all of Scotland”,

and described how Scottish Enterprise leads on the Scottish Investment Bank, major grants programmes, the Scottish manufacturing advisory service and Co-operative Development Scotland, while HIE leads on community broadband Scotland, the Scottish land fund and Wave Energy Scotland.

As Audit Scotland said,

“It is not clear why some forms of support are delivered jointly or on behalf of the other”.

Sometimes that seems to be for “historical reasons” that everyone has forgotten. Audit Scotland went on to say:

“It is also not clear why some forms of support are delivered separately. For example, Scottish Enterprise and HIE offer the same or similar products and services for businesses (for example training courses) but these are developed, delivered and reviewed separately.”

Finally, in paragraph 80, Audit Scotland described how SE, HIE and the Scottish Government all have sector teams, for example, for food and drink. Those three teams collaborate, which is encouraging, but they all do their own research and analysis.

When I read such a report, I get a bit concerned. Of course the HIDB and HIE have done a tremendous job in the Highlands and Islands—everyone accepts that—and of course we need a specialist service for the region, given its particular challenges, but maybe some things are a little out of date.

Centralisation versus decentralisation is a tricky subject. There is no single right answer for every situation. From what I can see, we are trying to get the best of both worlds. I welcome the Government’s plans.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I thank members for keeping to their time limits. We move to winding-up speeches.

16:05

Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): The Highlands and Islands Development Board was created by politicians of vision. I am bound to ask the cabinet secretary where the political vision for the Highlands and Islands is in his mediocre phase 1 proposal. I do not say this lightly, but the proposal amounts to the replacement of good policy with bad.

I remind Parliament of some of the past chairpeople of the HIDB and Highlands and Islands Enterprise; they were big figures in the public life not only of the Highlands and Islands but of Scotland, such as Robert Grieve, Andrew Gilchrist, Ken Alexander—who wrote that the board provided

“leadership and guidance to the development process”

and gave

“a substantial boost to morale in the area”—

and Robert Cowan and Jim Hunter. They were and are people of towering intellect and steely determination, fiercely independent and unafraid to challenge politicians, irrespective of party, in pursuing the best interests of the Highlands and Islands. Those are the very voices of dissent and challenge that I fear that the SNP wishes to silence.

The reasons for creating the Highlands and Islands Development Board were clear, and the clue is in its name—it had an independent board, whose remit was to strengthen the economies and the communities of the Highlands and Islands and to uphold the demand and the right that people should no longer have to leave their islands, their villages and their communities to find work. It is to the credit of the HIDB and HIE that net migration figures for the Highlands and Islands have been reversed. However, behind that global figure lie communities that are still fragile, economies that are still peripheral and therefore still need acute support, and people—especially young people—

who still leave to find work because there are not enough opportunities locally.

Those are precisely the reasons why a distinctive agency with strong independent leadership and its own ring-fenced budget is essential. The very idea that one body can deal with everything from the funding of Scotland's higher education to the micro-economies of fragile crofting communities beggars belief. The overarching board will have less knowledge of and even less interest in the very places that really need an independent board.

The very idea that Highlands and Islands Enterprise will continue to operate unaffected, as we have been told by SNP speaker after SNP speaker in the debate, has not an ounce of credibility. I say to those members that, before they vote tonight, they should have another look at the stated aim in the Government's phase 1 report. It says that the action is being taken to

"strengthen governance and deliver the benefits of a single system."

I urge them to read John Swinney's parliamentary answer from 23 November, when he told Iain Gray that

"the overarching board will replace individual agency boards".—[*Official Report*, 23 November 2016; c 6.]

SNP members should make no mistake: Highlands and Islands Enterprise is being administratively disembowelled in their name.

We do not need a business-led Scotland-wide statutory board that is chaired by the cabinet secretary in Edinburgh or Glasgow to determine budgets, operational priorities and so on. Those decisions should be made as close as possible to the people who are affected in the Highlands and Islands.

I fear that SNP members in the Parliament are in denial. However, I say to them that this is no time for silence. The proposal was not in the manifesto on which they were elected, so they should stand up and represent the views of their constituents, not their party leaders, and support the motion tonight.

16:09

Keith Brown: The debate has certainly been stimulating and interesting. We have heard references to Henry VIII, spies in the bars of the House of Commons, Donald Trump and even disembowelling. Despite that, some important points were made. I reiterate that I am listening to and will take on board the points that members have made.

I repeat the commitment that we have made to HIE, and I recognise the significant contribution

that it has made—as a number of members have said—to the region's economic transformation over the past 50 years.

A couple of specific points were raised by—I am sorry; I forget his name.

Members: Oh!

Keith Brown: It is Andy Wightman. He referred to the Government amalgamating the board with other agencies, but I confirm that the agencies will not be amalgamated. He also raised a question about the future process. As I said at committee, that will depend on the outcome of the governance review, which will help to determine the remit and the nature of the board and thus determine the process that follows. I will come back to Mr Wightman on the point about legal personality.

Richard Leonard asked where the vision for the Highlands is. As has been mentioned a number of times—this relates to Inverness in particular—no previous Government has committed the necessary £3 billion for the A9 and A96 projects. Those projects have been promised for many years and have been taken forward by this Government.

The Inverness city deal was mentioned. The Scottish Government was the biggest contributor to that deal, which also involves HIE. Much of what has happened in the Highlands has taken place through active collaboration, and not only with HIE. One example is the huge Rio Tinto project. Saving those jobs and building on them will have a huge economic impact on the area, given the population sparsity. That was the result of a joint effort between Scottish Enterprise and HIE. We want to see more of that collaboration happening, and it is part of the vision for the new board.

There have also been smaller projects, such as the Mosstodloch to Fochabers bypass. People had been campaigning for a bypass for 50 years, and the project was undertaken by this Government. The need for improvements at the Berriedale braes is being addressed now; that is another long-term ambition that dates back at least to the times when I went to the Highlands during my childhood. There are many other projects that relate to health, life sciences and so on.

The University of the Highlands and Islands was mentioned. The Government provided support for that project, not least to the agencies that were involved.

That is the sort of vision that has been encapsulated in the transformation of the Highlands over many years, as has been discussed today. It is an inspiration for the creation of a new board—not one member has mentioned that—that stands against the idea of centralisation;

that is the south of Scotland agency that is being established. The vision that we have for the Highlands is to continue with those achievements.

Rhoda Grant: I am not sure whether the cabinet secretary made a slip of the tongue, but he said that the Government is creating a new board for the south of Scotland. Why would he abolish HIE and then create a new board for the south of Scotland?

Keith Brown: We are creating a new agency for the south of Scotland—that is what I said. In fact, that was an outcome of phase 1 of the review.

The plans that we are putting forward are about improving the services that HIE is able to offer and giving opportunities to businesses and individuals in the Highlands. There has been much talk about the value of the board, and I understand that point, but there should be more talk about the value of the employees of HIE who provide the services. After the review, they will still be there to provide to businesses and individuals in the Highlands the services that are so valued by people locally.

The reforms and the setting of key local and national economic ambitions for all our agencies are important. When other parties in the Parliament have been in government, they have bemoaned the region's lack of growth, productivity levels and export growth, and our proposals seek to address those issues.

Kate Forbes made an excellent speech. Increasing internationalisation and exports from the Highlands, to which she referred, is central to what we are trying to achieve, and I hope to get support for that from members.

As I said, I have had a number of pieces of correspondence from members, to which I have responded or am responding. I am willing to meet individual members—I have met members already, in some cases where I have initiated the meeting, and I will continue to do that.

A very important point was made about the timescale. The Lorne Crerar-led governance review will report shortly. I understand that members might want to stick to the position that they take now, but they might want to take a new position in the knowledge of what the chair of HIE proposes. I hope that members will approach the results of the review with an open mind, and I will certainly be willing at that point to engage in further discussion and to work with members on all sides of the chamber.

The purpose of our amendment is to ensure that the Parliament

“recognises the vital work that ... HIE ... carries out for businesses and communities across the Highlands and Islands”.

Parliament should welcome the commitment that we have made

“to retain HIE, its legal status, chief executive, management team, local base and local decision-making powers”.

Let us see what will be the total sum of that decision-making power and the organisation's remit—whether that will contain new powers in relation to skills, for example, which would be welcomed in the Highlands and on which HIE could go further.

I do not understand the point that was made about police and fire reviews by parties that supported the unification of those boards, yet now criticise it.

The enterprise and skills review is very important and should be tested, measured and justified by the extent to which it improves exports from and productivity in the Highlands. I ask people to approach it with an open mind. I also ask for recognition of the efforts of other agencies in the review to drive the changes that are needed to further improve the economy of the Highlands and Islands and the rest of Scotland. Collaboration in that area is what will work for the Highlands.

16:15

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Unfortunately, I will not be able to take any interventions, because I have a lot to get through in wrapping up all the interventions and speeches that we have heard.

The debate has shown that the SNP's plans for the centralisation of HIE are ill thought out, lack any support from parties other than the SNP and threaten the excellent work that HIE has done for decades throughout the Highlands and Islands.

I know that we do not use the “L” word in the chamber but, when Kate Forbes put across her views about HIE on Twitter this morning, she said that she was responding to the

“outright lies I'm hearing from the Tories on #HIE”.

Those are very strong words and I do not think that they have been replicated in the chamber today.

Kate Forbes: Will the member take an intervention?

Douglas Ross: No—I have said that I will not.

Calling Scottish Conservatives liars—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is for the member to decide whether to take an intervention.

Douglas Ross: Calling Scottish Conservatives liars because we have taken such a strong position against the SNP's centralisation plans

begs the question why we have gained so much support for our opposition. As the debate has shown, every member of every party except the SNP knows the threat that HIE is under if it is subsumed into a national body.

While we are on the topic of misinformation, it was disingenuous of the First Minister to stand up in the chamber weeks before the plans were announced and tell John Finnie that

“Highlands and Islands Enterprise ... has done a fantastic job over the past 50 years and I give the member an assurance that we will make sure that it is in a position to continue to carry out those functions and provide its excellent services to the Highlands of Scotland.”—[*Official Report*, 29 September 2016; c 15.]

I say to the First Minister and to SNP members that HIE’s position is at the heart of the Highlands, where it has been doing its excellent work for decades, not dragged to the central belt as part of a national body.

I will go over a number of the points that members raised. Rhoda Grant was right to say that Highlands and Islands Enterprise has firm roots in the region and to highlight that Keith Brown cannot and has not given an assurance on where HIE will be based in the region.

Edward Mountain spoke about his experience as a surveyor, as well as the great work that HIE has done in collaboration on the Inverness city deal and the new UHI campus. Kate Forbes continued to give examples of the great work done by HIE, including the 150 new jobs at the Lochaber smelter, the A9 project and house building. I have to ask why, if HIE has done all that great work, the Government has to change it.

Kate Forbes: Will the member take an intervention?

Douglas Ross: No—I cannot take any interventions.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please sit down, Ms Forbes.

Douglas Ross: David Stewart gave a useful history of HIE, and he moved on to parliamentary history by quoting Henry VIII. I was momentarily distracted in looking at the Government front bench and wondering which SNP minister looked least like Henry VIII. I quickly got back into my swing when I listened to Ivan McKee, the SNP MSP for Glasgow Provan, who, after announcing that he is the parliamentary liaison officer to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, read out the party line exactly.

Andy Wightman asked three crucial questions, which were not fully answered by the cabinet secretary—I am sure that John Finnie briefed Mr Wightman well. Liam McArthur rightly highlighted the excellent campaign that *The Press and*

Journal has run, and Dean Lockhart said that the Scottish Government should follow Audit Scotland’s advice and get its own house in order before looking to scrap the board of HIE.

I have lived and worked in Moray my whole life and I have seen the benefits that our area has gained from HIE. I know that that is replicated across the Highlands and Islands. The only people who are defending the move are elected SNP politicians. I say “elected SNP politicians” because some members of the SNP disagree with the plans. Jim Hunter has been quoted ad nauseam today—by Donald Cameron, by Edward Mountain, by David Stewart, twice by Liam McArthur and by Dean Lockhart—but I have an unused quote from him in which he criticises his own party’s plans. He said:

“As an SNP member, I hope the party’s Highlands and Islands MSPs join with others to reject the government’s plan.”

That leads me nicely to a quote from Keith Brown from yesterday’s debate. He accused Conservative MSPs of doing as we are

“told by the UK Government.”

He continued:

“We will not do that; we are here to represent the people of Scotland.”—[*Official Report*, 17 January 2017; c 69.]

I ask Richard Lochhead, Kate Forbes, Gail Ross, Maree Todd, Fergus Ewing, Mike Russell and Alasdair Allan this question: at decision time tonight, will they do what the SNP Government tells them to do or will they represent the people of Scotland?

As we head towards the council elections, people will be considering who to support who will stand up for their area and against centralisation such as the type that the SNP is imposing on HIE. The public should know that their local SNP candidate will not support their area.

How do I know that? I have in my hand the voting record from a recent meeting of Highland Council. That meeting had a motion in front of it from the independent leader, Councillor Margaret Davidson, that raised concerns about the Government’s plans for HIE. The motion said:

“such an approach is not in the best interests of the Highlands and Islands.”

It continued:

“The Council condemns further distancing of decision making and strategy from local communities”.

That motion was agreed to by 44 votes to 14. Who were the 14 members of Highland Council who we would expect to stand up for their local area but who voted against the motion? They were the entire SNP group at the meeting. SNP members say that they stand up for Scotland, but

really they just stand up for whatever Nicola and the SNP Government tell them to. People should not forget that in May.

While the SNP will not stand up for local communities, Parliament can speak for them at decision time. MSPs have sent a strong message to the SNP in the debate and I urge members to support the Conservative motion so that Parliament as a whole can add its voice against the plans.

Health

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): I will move on to the next debate swiftly because we have practically no time in hand; it is on motion S5M-03440, in the name of Brian Whittle, on health. I call on Brian Whittle to speak to and move the motion. Mr Whittle, you have eight minutes.

16:22

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I am pleased to open this debate on the preventable health problems agenda, following on from the recent launch of the Scottish Conservatives' consultation document on a "Healthy Lifestyle Strategy", in which we detail the importance of approaching health from a long-term perspective. Indeed, we will argue that it is not only that a huge step change in the approach to health is required; it is imperative if we are to reverse the continuing worrying slide in the health of our nation.

We know that the Scottish population is increasingly likely to be inactive, more likely to have weight issues, more likely to have mental health problems and increasingly likely to contract type 2 diabetes. Moreover, the health inequality facts and figures show an increasing health gap between those in the most deprived quintile compared to those in the least. However, most shocking of all, for the first time in history, children born today could have a life expectancy less than that of their parents. A different approach must be required.

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): What you just quoted is in relation to Tory austerity.

Brian Whittle: I will treat that with the disdain that it deserves. [*Interruption*] Thank you. One of the key preventable conditions is poor mental health. However, I keep hearing of the need for more mental healthcare professionals. Surely what we need is a strategy that prevents the fall into poor mental health? The Scottish Association for Mental Health has quite clearly stated that tackling poor mental health requires inclusivity and regular physical and mental activity. CenterStage in Kilmarnock uses music to bring people together, Morven day services uses art, and SAMH is collaborating with Scottish Athletics to develop a positive mental health intervention.

What we have to consider is that preventing health problems is not a medical intervention; rather, the drive for a healthier nation will require an educational lead. According to the British Medical Association and the digital health and care institute, among others, we need a shift from medical intervention and a move to a community-

based wellbeing approach. The truth of the matter is that the biggest impact on the long term health of Scotland must come from the education portfolio.

The key question is: what are the behavioural drivers that lead to an active and healthy lifestyle and how do we ensure that those pathways are available to all? Educational initiatives and interventions in a long-term preventative health strategy must begin pre-school. The blueprint for health and activity is basically set by the time that our children reach primary school age. The neuromuscular system, proprioception, the cardiovascular system and bone density are all pretty much set in pre-school years. The baseline pathways for balance, co-ordination and eye tracking are predominantly embedded at that age. The older a child gets, the more difficult it is to rewire the system and to impact on their physical ability.

We all support the introduction of 30 hours of free childcare for three and four-year-olds. Although the Scottish Conservatives would like intervention at a younger age, that at least should offer us the opportunity to deliver a basic active play framework. If members want to see that in action, they should visit the nursery that Ruth Davidson and I went to when we launched our long-term health strategy. Those kids put us to shame as they performed quite complex movements and exercises, and they had fun doing that.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): If we listen to public health experts across Scotland, the first thing that they will say to do to address health inequality is to address income inequality. Will the member address that point?

Brian Whittle: I will come to that.

Out in the garden at the nursery of my youngest, the children had their own vegetable patch in which they planted, tended and grew their own vegetables. They would harvest them and bring them in to the cook, who served them up for dinner. Guess what vegetables my daughter now eats?

By the time that children get to primary school, they have the basic movement patterns to move on to active games. Kids need to be active every day. One key element that I would like the Parliament to explore is how we can enable our children to safely cycle, walk, skateboard and scoot to school. Being active pre-class has a positive impact on attention, behaviour, learning capacity and, ultimately, attainment. Consider this: reading and writing are physical activities. If that physical literacy path is followed when our children reach secondary school age, activity should be the norm, and they should have a choice in what

activities and sports they are most likely to participate in.

Closing the health inequality gap means ensuring that activity is accessible to all. Currently, too many children have to go home first and then go somewhere else, yet the facilities are at school. That is the point at which we can make the biggest impact on health inequality and eliminate barriers to inclusion: create a policy that means that schools remain open after school hours for activities and sport, and make it easy to be active.

Sport and diet have a symbiotic relationship. When a person is active, they are much more likely to have better eating habits. If we look at preventable cancers, we see that smoking, obesity, a lack of fruit and vegetables, and drinking alcohol are major contributors to an increased cancer risk. If a person participates in sport, the likelihood is that they will not smoke, their weight will be under control, they will drink less alcohol, and their diet will be healthier. Sport is a key driver.

A major delivery mechanism for activity resides in the third sector, where volunteers at clubs and organisations engage with communities daily. That gives opportunities for inclusivity and activity. Tackling health inequality should involve recognising and investing more in the volunteer sector.

I point out that the badge that I am wearing was made for me last Monday by the 21st Ayrshire cubs. I promised them that I would wear it and give those boys and girls a name check.

Yesterday, I attended the sports policy conference, at which I heard the Minister for Public Health and Sport talk about the high importance that the Scottish Government places on sport, the positive impact that sport has on the health and wellbeing of the nation, and the need to quicken the pace of improvement. That is all very laudable. However, at a time when the sports spend is 0.1 per cent of the Scottish Government's budget, how can she and her Government reconcile those words with the proposed £4 million slashing of the sports budget, the withdrawing of funds from jogscotland, which has 40,000 weekly participants, 80 per cent of whom are women and 70 per cent of whom are from inactive backgrounds—I am talking about a £100,000 investment, which equates to £2.50 per person per year—or the withdrawing of funding that allowed every primary school child free swimming lessons? Some 15,000 children now go to secondary school unable to swim. Apart from anything else, that is inherently dangerous.

The actions just do not match the rhetoric. That is just not good enough, and it is time to step up and take preventable health problems seriously.

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): Will the member take an intervention?

Brian Whittle: Yes. I have enough time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The minister should be very brief, as the member is in his final minute.

Aileen Campbell: I think that there will probably be agreement across the chamber on much of what Brian Whittle has discussed and articulated and on prevention, but I still do not understand why he has failed to address austerity issues and the fact that our Government's budget has had to mitigate many of the decisions that his party has taken at Westminster. Many of the barriers to participation in sport are to do with poverty.

Brian Whittle: Food banks are an austerity problem, but people in Scotland are more likely to use food banks than people anywhere else in the UK. The Scottish National Party has had 10 years in office, but what has it done to address that? Absolutely nothing. When will the SNP take responsibility?

Aileen Campbell rose—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, minister—you cannot have another intervention.

Brian Whittle: Sport is chronically underfunded in this country, and it is becoming more inaccessible as the basic cost of entry rises. If we continue in that direction, we will accelerate the inactivity and therefore the health inequality and the ill health of our country.

Facts, figures and truths can be manipulated to suit a particular narrative, but it is an absolute truth, for which there are absolute facts, that preventable conditions are putting greater pressure on our health service. Despite the fact that all those issues sit in the preventable health problems agenda, the Government continues to pursue policies that are inconsistent with that narrative. There is a decision to be made: will the Government continue with short-term policies, keep its head buried deep in the sand, avoid the big decisions and ultimately pass on these critical problems for future Governments to deal with, or will it recognise the growing problems and take responsibility for setting us on a better course that will at long last tackle health inequality and the ill health of our country?

We have set out our stall with the launch of our long-term health and sport consultation document. The SNP asked us for suggestions and input. Now it has it, so will it follow our lead?

I move,

That the Parliament believes that health inequalities are a serious problem in Scotland; considers that preventative

health measures could reduce the pressures placed on the NHS; notes the BMA's opinion that "prevention requires interventions that are essentially non-medical if the differences in health and wellbeing are to be reduced"; understands that education and early years intervention are key to improving Scotland's health, and believes that enabling people to have an active lifestyle and make healthy choices will reduce both health inequalities and preventable health problems.

16:31

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): The challenges that the motion points to are familiar to us all. We have an ageing population, our country is one in which people continue to have an unhealthy relationship with alcohol, it is now more common to be overweight than not, and the population needs to increase its activity levels. As I said to the Faculty of Public Health in October, all of that is exacerbated and magnified by deep, unfair and persistent inequalities that are driven in part by the harsh consequences of austerity and welfare reforms, no matter how much Brian Whittle wants to ignore his party's culpability in that regard.

It is well known that Scotland has particular and long-standing challenges in its relationship with obesity and with alcohol, tobacco and other substances, but where there is challenge, we must seek opportunity. We have the opportunity to positively transform Scotland's public health and wellbeing.

We have some cause for optimism. October's "Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS)—National Overview (2015)" showed that smoking, drinking alcohol and drug use among young people are now among the lowest levels recorded by the survey.

Brian Whittle: Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

Aileen Campbell: Thank you for the promotion.

Brian Whittle: We are talking about health inequality, and the Parliament has rightly done some fantastic work on smoking cessation, but will the minister recognise that 9 per cent of people in the top 20th percentile smoke, whereas 35 per cent of people in the bottom 20th percentile smoke? There is a huge health inequality that has yet to be addressed.

Aileen Campbell: We have travelled a great distance on tobacco, and action has been taken across a number of Administrations, which has been supported by many different parties. However, that does not mean that there is not more that we must do to tackle some of the choices that people make in life. We must understand that poverty is an underlying cause of some of the activities that we are discussing and

the fatalistic approach that many people have as a result of a lack of aspiration and a lack of hope, but we must return to the fact that some of those consequences are driven by austerity and the welfare reforms that Brian Whittle's party is pursuing.

We know that the pace of improvement is not quick enough. The challenges were set out by the late Campbell Christie, who challenged us to reform our public services in a way that would meet the needs of our population against a challenging fiscal backdrop. We must therefore prioritise prevention, reduce duplication and empower individuals and communities.

Early intervention is not only about action in the important early years. Public health policy contributes to many aspects of our lives at different ages and stages, so it is imperative that we get it right to deliver better outcomes for people and better value for the public purse. We can change our country's health. In a country of just 5 million people, we must work together to do so, and that will require bold ideas and innovation.

Scotland has frequently led the way. The Parliament passed legislation that would allow for minimum unit pricing for alcohol. The Scottish courts have found the legislation to be lawful, and it is with much regret that we must now go to the Supreme Court on a matter that would save lives—in the past three years we could have seen more than 200 fewer deaths and more than 4,500 fewer hospital admissions.

Similarly, our efforts on smoking have been bold, and remarkable progress has been made across different Administrations. Just one in five adults smoke and the number of 15-year-olds who smoke regularly has dropped by more than two thirds in the past decade to the lowest level since surveys began. That is good progress towards achieving the goal of being tobacco free by 2034.

Despite the welcome news in the recent Scottish health survey that the proportion of children of healthy weight has increased in the past year to 72 per cent, and that for boys it has increased every year since 2011, the stats hide a widening gap between the well-off and the poorest children. There continues to be a problem. Obesity is and will remain a pressing issue that impacts not only on the health of individuals, but on the health of the nation.

As we did with alcohol, we need to follow the evidence and make the right decisions that will address the problem of excess weight and enable us to better support people to be more active, to eat less and to eat better.

This is a tough and sensitive issue. We all eat and attempts to address obesity will challenge all society. It again brings into sharp focus the

devastating inequalities in our communities as people struggle not only with access to food, but with the resource to cook it.

Further to that, and—again—in the spirit of co-operation, perhaps when Brian Whittle and his party sum up, they might want to add their voices to our calls to the UK Government to ban junk food advertising until after the 9 pm watershed. The UK Government's decision not to do that has led to significant disappointment across the stakeholder community that the opportunity to make a tangible difference to young people's lives has been missed. If the Conservatives do not want to change the policy at the UK level, if we had the powers here, we could take that action.

As I prepare our obesity strategy and the consultation on it, I ask the Parliament to repeat what we have done on major public health challenges: find common ground, be brave in pursuing measures that give our children the best start in life and allow our whole population to make the best choices for themselves.

As part of pursuing that goal, we will continue the work started on public health reform. We will work with local government to agree a set of national public health priorities that will inform local, regional and national action.

Efforts to achieve a fairer Scotland are not solely a matter of getting people more physically active or helping them to find better nutrition. True health equality is approached by looking to the underlying socioeconomic drivers of poor outcomes. The fairer Scotland action plan, published in October 2016, features 50 concrete actions that this Government will take in this parliamentary term and beyond to make the changes that we need.

The strength of the plan comes not from any one action, but from the conviction that genuine fairness—human rights, equality, social justice and democratic renewal—needs to be realised to stop our communities feeling left behind and disempowered.

I move amendment S5M-03440.4, to insert at end:

“; believes that the forthcoming Scottish Government strategy on diet and obesity will be strengthened from contributions across the Parliament, and welcomes that the new strategy will be subject to consultation in 2017 to ensure that it is informed by the best evidence from across Scotland.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Colin Smyth to speak to and move amendment S5M-03440.1. You have five minutes.

16:37

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): I declare an interest as a councillor in Dumfries and Galloway.

When Labour created the NHS in 1948, life expectancy in Scotland was 64 years for men and 69 for women. Today, it is about 77 for men and 81 for women. That shows the success of Britain's greatest achievement: our NHS. However, if we are to ensure that life expectancy continues to increase, new challenges will be posed for Government and for us all as individuals, parents and families.

If our bodies are to be on the road for longer, our children need the healthiest start in life and the earliest intervention when needs arise and, as we grow older, we all need to take better care of ourselves if we are to get the most out of life in our later years.

It is still not widely understood the extent to which lifestyle has an impact not only on the chances of developing cancer and heart disease, but on the chances of developing diseases like dementia.

The truth is that individuals and communities need to be helped to take more responsibility for their health—that includes no-one's health being disadvantaged by where they live or what they earn. If we do not make changes, the NHS will not be sustainable at a time when funding is simply not keeping up with demand.

The nature of the public health challenge that we face has changed. If the 20th century challenge was about adding years to life, the 21st century challenge is about adding life to years. The problem is that the very nature of 21st century living works against that. Our complex and fast-moving modern world exposes children to ever-more sophisticated commercial pressures and we are all absorbing higher levels of stress and insecurity, which can erode our mental health and wellbeing and lead to poor diet and addiction.

We all risk taking on more sugar, fat and salt than is good for us—and then we fail to move enough to burn it off. The consequence is probably the most pressing public health issue that Scotland faces today: obesity, or rather, an obesity crisis.

Two thirds of Scotland's adults are now classed as being overweight and, shamefully, almost a third of children are at risk of becoming overweight. Not only does that have an impact on our nation's health by contributing to a whole host of health issues, it impacts on our public finances, with an annual cost to the NHS in Scotland of £600 million.

It has now been six years since the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities published the obesity route map. Although it provides a positive policy framework, it is clear that the route map's action plan has not reached its milestones. Therefore, Labour welcomes the commitment by the Scottish Government to consult on a new strategy on diet and obesity. That plan needs to include ensuring that the proceeds of any sugar tax are invested in after-school sports. Serious consideration needs to be given to better regulation, for example, of the advertising of unhealthy foods and of multibuy discount promotions.

However, what we really need to see is a comprehensive, cross-government strategy to tackle the root causes of obesity. That means tackling inequality. We know that there is a clear link between deprivation and obesity. A quarter of children aged 4 to 5 from the most deprived areas are at risk of being overweight, compared with around 18 per cent of children from the least deprived areas.

That gets to crux of the issue. Deprivation and inequality are all too often the drivers of a person's health. To tackle health inequality, we need to tackle wealth inequality.

The first paragraph of the Health and Sport Committee's "Report on Health Inequalities" from 2015 is chilling. It said:

"A boy born today in Lenzie, East Dunbartonshire, can expect to live until he is 82. Yet for a boy born only eight miles away in Carlton, in the east end of Glasgow, life expectancy may be as low as 54 years, a difference of 28 years or almost half as long again as his whole life".

It is clear that the solutions to health inequalities cannot be tucked away in the national health service or written off as a problem of individual behaviour. That is why in a 2014 report, the Scottish Public Health Observatory concluded:

"Interventions that redistribute income, such as increasing the standard rate of income tax or implementation of a Living Wage are among the most effective interventions for reducing inequalities and improving health".

Yet the Scottish Government's recently published "Health and Social Care Delivery Plan" does not say enough about tackling health inequalities. The Government has taken its eye off the ball when it comes to what is happening with inequality in Scotland, because it is too distracted by what is happening between Scotland and England.

Worse than that, the recent Scottish Government budget shows contempt for the fight to tackle health inequalities, by making a £327 million cut in local council core budgets. Cutting local council budgets will not cut health inequalities. It is our local councils that deliver the

early years framework to give our children the best start in life. It is often our local councils that provide the sport and leisure centres to keep people active. It is our local councils that are often there when our most vulnerable need a home to keep them safe and warm. Yet, as a result of this Government's budget, councillors right here in Scotland, right now, are wondering what services they will need to axe next.

We know that it does not need—

Aileen Campbell: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is in his last 20 seconds. Mr Smyth, you will have to wind up.

Colin Smyth: This Parliament has the power to make sure that we do not have to make those choices. We have the power to be progressive, and to say that, if we want decent public services, we need to fund them properly.

Later today Labour will support the Conservative motion and the SNP amendment. The challenge to those parties is to show that they are serious about tackling inequality, to support Labour's amendment and to put a stop to the cuts.

I move amendment S5M-03440.1, to insert at end:

“; further believes that tackling health inequalities requires well-resourced local services; considers that the Scottish Government's £327 million of cuts to local council budgets will only further increase health inequalities rather than tackle them, and believes that it should use its tax powers to stop these damaging cuts in the Scottish budget.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We are now moving to open debate. There is no spare time. Speeches are of a tight four minutes.

16:43

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): It is a pleasure to contribute again to a health debate. I want to make four specific and quite focused observations in relation to the preventative health agenda.

The first is in relation to the baby box. When, during the last Scottish election, I was asked whether I could name a policy from another party that I wished we had come up with first, I said, “The baby box.” I think that it is a commendable idea, but imagine my disappointment on finding that the baby boxes are branded “A Gift from the Scottish Government”. The logical extension of that is that patients will wake up in hospital with a tattoo across their abdomen saying “Your operation is a gift from the Scottish Government”, and children at school will wear uniforms that say, “Your education is a gift from the Scottish

Government.” The baby box is not “A Gift from the Scottish Government”: it is an entitlement that we have now offered to every new family in Scotland, funded by the taxpayer. If anything, it is a gift from the Scottish taxpayer and the Scottish people, so there should be no nascent SNP propaganda saying that it is “A Gift from the Scottish Government”.

My second point in relation to the baby box is that the reception for it has been pretty welcoming, but there have been comments on its contents. I hope that the Scottish Government will consult, on an on-going basis, other parties and the Health and Sport Committee as we evolve the contents of the box. However, it is a good idea and an early start, and I applaud it as part of the preventative agenda.

My second point relates to free school meals. I was surprised to be contacted by constituents in my area who discovered that under the council's cashless card system in schools, pupils who did not take advantage of the free school meal nonetheless had the amount credited to their cashless account, and some were then using the sum that was for the free school meal to buy sweets and fizzy drinks elsewhere on the school campus. Now that that has been drawn to the local authority's attention, it has acted to stop the practice.

However, I wrote to the Scottish Government asking whether the practice was more widespread and the response that I got was, “We don't know—we don't keep that sort of information.” I expected something a little more proactive than that, which might have been to add, “but we're going to find out.” As a result, I have been sending freedom of information requests to other local authorities and am quite encouraged by the responses. Many authorities do not have cashless systems, and some are quite crafty and immediately withdraw the credit after the lunch period so that it cannot be used for anything else. However, it would be helpful if the Scottish Government were to be absolutely clear that the sum that is being credited to pupils for a free hot school meal is being used for that purpose and not for another, as was the practice in my local authority.

My third point has been referred to already. I suppose that it touches on the point that Neil Findlay made. I do not resile from the fact that income equality is at the heart of health equality, which is why we believe in a strong economy and in ensuring that people are in employment and able to secure dignity and the income that provides for that.

We have noted before that many of the things that affect the development of a child are apparent at age three. We have talked previously about the New Zealand study that has, since 1972, been

testing the brains of 1,000 people at ages three, five, seven, nine, 11 and so forth. The latest survey, which was conducted in December 2016, confirmed that many trends can be identified at age three. Out of the entire population, people who scored low on language, behavioural, movement or cognitive skills at age three were responsible for 54 per cent of smoked cigarettes and 44 per cent of excess obese kilograms, were in receipt of 78 per cent of prescriptions, and accounted for 55 per cent of hospital stays and 66 per cent of benefit payments.

That is why Scottish Conservatives in our manifesto last year committed—we remain committed to it—to a universal general-practitioner-attached national health visiting service that offers genuine support to young families and children from ages nought to seven. I know that a few extra health visitors have been promised, and I am interested to know exactly how many of them are now in place having been recruited—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must stop, there, Mr Carlaw.

Jackson Carlaw: —but that is how we must proceed. I support the motion in Brian Whittle's name.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you very much.

16:47

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): They say that people's first step to recovery is their recognising that they have a problem, so I am thankful that the Conservatives have turned their attention to the impact that socioeconomic factors have on people's health. It is demonstrably true that social and economic factors impact on health inequalities and that health inequalities have a greater impact on children. A child who is brought up free of poverty will grow up to be a healthy adult, and a child who has access to facilities and opportunity will achieve more and has a better chance to live a fulfilling life. Now that we agree on the importance of non-medical factors in health and wellbeing, let us consider how we can go about using that information to improve people's health.

We could seek to smooth out inequalities by ensuring that children have the best start in life. I, too, draw attention to the baby box programme as a recent example of what the Scottish Government is doing to ensure equality in the earliest years for children in Scotland. We can try to promote what the Royal College of Nursing refers to as a "positive physical environment". Increased wealth and privileges afford easier access to a healthier lifestyle, be that through food choice or exercise,

but we can and should work to improve publicly accessible facilities that encourage everyone to take up an active lifestyle.

Since 2007, the Scottish Government has supported a variety of excellent initiatives that seek to improve lifestyles and encourage healthy choices, especially in deprived areas. Cuningar Loop, which is in my constituency of Rutherglen, has been developed by the Forestry Commission Scotland and Clyde Gateway with the support of the Scottish Government. It is a fantastic project that has seen derelict land being transformed into a huge outdoor activity centre that offers walking, cycling, adventure, play and other active pursuits. Such facilities that are open to all and free to use improve the lives of people who most need that improvement. They also show the power that local and national government have to make people's lives easier. When we actively invest in our citizens we can, as the motion suggests, improve people's lives.

Also in my constituency is the Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust, which is funded by the Scottish Government and various other public bodies. The trust supports families by promoting emotional and mental health, by breaking down isolation and by promoting physical activity. Through the bike town initiative, Healthy n Happy seeks to encourage people of all ages, abilities and circumstances to get on bikes and to live healthier lives. Organisations like Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust seek to improve people's health and wellbeing not by offering a sticking plaster but by allowing people to assert themselves and become active citizens.

I welcome the recent announcement by the Scottish Government of the aspiring communities fund, which seeks to tackle poverty by using public money to fund projects that are aimed at increasing economic activity and enhancing services. Services and projects that create opportunities and provide support for people improve their lives and, by extension, their health.

However, the Scottish Government is operating within an overall environment of austerity, in which funding from Westminster is under increasing pressure. Austerity guarantees inequality. When we talk about austerity, we are talking about underinvestment in public services, in programmes and in projects that lift us all up, and which have a disproportionate effect on those who need it most.

Although I agree with the sentiment of the motion and welcome the late conversion of the Tories to the cause, I have to note that the Westminster Tory agenda is the greatest barrier to further progress in tackling health inequalities in Scotland. The Tories are pushing their austerity agenda, cutting back on public spending, turning

the screw on benefits claimants through punitive sanctions, and presiding over dramatic growth in the number of food banks, so it is obvious that their rhetoric does not match their actions.

Until the Tories recognise in Government policy at Westminster the concept of basic human dignity, I cannot say that I am looking forward to further Tory motions that express surprise at the impact that their policies are having on ordinary people in Scotland.

16:51

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Health inequality is Scotland's greatest national scandal. People are dying in our country years before their time because they are poor and because they do not have a decent home or income or job to sustain them and support a fulfilling and healthy life.

Health inequality is the manifestation of social and economic inequality, but we will never resolve it or even begin to address the problems from a health perspective alone. We have to address income inequality, housing and support services, as well as the failure to redistribute wealth and power and the complete unwillingness to put money and resources into the communities that are in most need—but we heard not a word about any of that from Mr Whittle. Those are the key issues and the failures of public policy.

Brian Whittle: Will Mr Findlay take an intervention?

Neil Findlay: No. I have only four minutes.

Those policies are anathema to Tory philosophy. The Tories are the party of cuts, privatisation and austerity, and they have never given a toss about ending class inequality; their every action has increased it. I ask them, please, to spare us the lectures.

Brian Whittle: Will the member take an intervention?

Neil Findlay: I have only four minutes. I am not taking any interventions.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Findlay is not taking an intervention.

Neil Findlay: Let me say clearly what I would do to address health inequality. I would make it the direct responsibility of the First Minister and would hold her or him to account for it. I would make full employment the key economic objective of the Government. I would use every available lever to introduce the living wage. I would use public procurement to deliver a number of key fair work policy initiatives. I would expand collective bargaining and increase trade union membership, because an organised workforce is a healthier and better-off workforce. I would end the appalling

benefits sanctions regime. I would invest in primary and social care, but I would do so first in areas that are in most need.

I would redemocratise local government, which is on the front line in the fight against poverty and inequality. I would end the disgraceful and hellish cuts to councils, which are increasing health inequality. I would build at least 10,000 social or council houses a year, or more if we could, and I would regulate the private sector—something that is badly needed.

I would expand childcare, using schools as hubs. I would immediately reinstate the funding that was cut from the drugs and alcohol services budget, which was shamefully slashed last year—that was continued this year—and I would invest heavily in community psychiatric and counselling services to help to address the mental health crisis.

I would do all that in an open and transparent way by saying to the voters and to members of Parliament that if they want a fairer and more equal society, if they want people not to have to resort to food banks to feed their families, if they do not want to walk past homeless people in doorways and if they do not want our fellow citizens to die years before their time, we all need to act collectively to do something about it.

We cannot do that without putting more money into the system—significantly more money into the areas that need it most. I see no evidence whatsoever that the Scottish Government is willing to do that. I do not expect the Tories to support such a move—they never have—but I am sick of hearing SNP members making grand speeches about how much they care, how progressive they are, and how much they are on the left. Yet not one of them has the independence of mind to advocate raising taxes, not one of them will call for significant redistribution and not one of them will call for an end to the attack on council services. That is the equivalent of walking past on the other side of the road. I call on members of all parties in Parliament to end that approach—starting now, with the Scottish budget.

16:55

Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): I will admit that I was surprised to see a Tory motion about health inequality. There are some who might say that the Tories have a bit of a brass neck, given the impact that their policies have had—and continue to have—on some of our communities in Scotland.

However, the motion states that health inequalities are “a serious problem” here, and it advocates use of preventative measures to address them. I agree with that, as does the

Christie commission, which was set up by the SNP Government in 2010. Indeed, the concepts of prevention and early intervention are well understood and are beginning to be embedded in our public sector. I also agree with the motion that

“education and early years intervention”

have important roles to play in prevention. Those are both complex issues, with many different facets. The Glasgow Centre for Population Health recently published a hugely insightful report on that topic. It identified several overlapping spheres of influence that impact on children’s health and wellbeing: family and parent environment, learning environment, neighbourhood environment and—last and most important—socioeconomic context, which cuts across all the other spheres.

For example, the report detailed how school attendance has been found to vary according to deprivation, with children from communities in which there are the greatest socioeconomic challenges showing the lowest attendance rates. It also highlighted how participation in school clubs and after-school activities presents problems for families that are on lower incomes, in particular when lengthy journeys, high costs or reliance on school transport are involved. Attention was also drawn to the shameful issue of increasing food poverty.

The connections between income inequality and health and education outcomes could not be clearer. Although physical education at school has an important role to play in prevention, we must also focus on getting children to school in the first place—making sure that they are well fed, clothed and ready to participate.

It is understandable that the Tories might not want to draw attention to those issues, but I must say that I found it quite astounding that a motion that is focused on reducing health inequality did not at any point mention the income inequality and poverty that is at its heart. That connection is not glossed over by the Glasgow report, which states:

“The link between poverty at all stages of the life-course and subsequent poor health is proven and profound.”

It is also clear to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, which states:

“Many of Scotland’s health problems are historic and intrinsically tied to poverty and income inequality”

and

“can only be met by switching focus to preventative methods [and] tackling economic inequality”.

It is at the very centre of the British Heart Foundation’s hearty lives prevention programme, which is driven by evidence that

“People living in the poorest areas of the country are, on average, more likely to die from cardiovascular disease ... than people living in the richest.”

The connection is not ignored by the current SNP Scottish Government, which is taking focused action to address the underlying causes, including measures such as driving investment in affordable housing, increasing free school meals and continuing with free prescriptions and concessionary travel. There is also the fair work agenda, with the Scottish business pledge and the closing the attainment gap initiative. Also, let us not forget what has already had to be invested to mitigate the worst effects of Tory austerity and welfare reform, or all the effort that has been made to protect us from the economic catastrophe of a hard Brexit.

At its most fundamental, preventing inequalities in health and wellbeing means tackling the income inequality that ultimately lies behind them. Poverty and inequality are not inevitable: they are man made.

I welcome the steps that are being taken by the Scottish Government and I look forward to hearing positive contributions and fresh ideas from the bold movers of the motion.

16:59

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I was glad to see a motion on health inequalities being moved by the Conservative Party. As Brian Whittle’s motion states,

“health inequalities are a serious problem in Scotland”.

In fact, health inequalities are the biggest problem in western Europe. In his book “The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World”, Professor Michael Marmot says:

“Health inequalities are not a footnote to the health problems we face, they are the major health problem.”

Development of a more preventative focus demands cross-party support, and we have a long way to go. Before last year’s elections, researchers from the University of Edinburgh’s global public health unit said that the Scottish Greens offered

“the only innovative public health proposal”

with our supermarket levy, and it highlighted

“the apparent ambivalence to public health among the other Scottish parties.”

General practitioners at the deep end published a report that said that MSPs have been “quiet on the issue”—in particular, on unequal access to GP services. Recent figures show that GP practices in the most deprived 20 per cent of postcodes in Scotland receive £1.34 less per patient than practices in the least deprived areas. That means

that GPs cannot respond to complex health problems or tackle unmet need, and it entrenches health inequalities. I hope that the cabinet secretary will soon update us on the review of the allocation formula, because we badly need fairer funding for GPs who work in our most deprived communities.

We clearly need to move health inequalities and preventative approaches much higher up the agenda, and this debate is a step forward. However, we must recognise that health inequalities are not primarily the result of individual choices. Good health is not just a matter of personal responsibility. Expert research and evaluation from a wide range of public health bodies including NHS Health Scotland repeatedly demonstrate that health inequalities are fundamentally caused by people's social circumstances—by inequalities in wealth and power, by poverty, by marginalisation and by stigmatization.

We will support the motion today, but we must acknowledge that it is hard for people to prevent poor health when they are living on polluted main roads in damp and cold houses. It is hard for people to have the means, never mind the energy and time, to prepare nutritious food when they are juggling two or three low-paid insecure jobs.

We have to tackle those root causes. That is why I was glad to secure from the cabinet secretary a commitment to roll out the healthier, wealthier children project across all NHS boards, it is why the Scottish Greens are calling for child benefit to be increased by £5 and it is why we need to introduce a young carers allowance.

If we are to relieve pressure on the NHS, it is essential that we improve public health more broadly. Physical activity champion Dr Andrew Murray tweeted today that the six best doctors are sunshine—we cannot do much about that—fresh air, exercise, a healthy diet, water and rest. At yesterday's conference on policy priorities in sport, Mel Young, the highly regarded new chair of sportscotland, said that we have a "comparatively tiny budget" for sport. How can local authorities support policies to keep us active and encourage engagement in sport when they are facing such drastic cuts? As Colin Smyth's amendment points out, that will only increase health inequalities.

Speaking of tiny budgets, I note that only 1.6 per cent of the draft transport budget will be spent on active travel at a time when the transport budget is set to rise to £2,376 million due to record spending on motorways and trunk roads. I will be interested to see whether Brian Whittle, who supports more walking and cycling, will advocate a shift in that budget. Investing in sustainable and active travel—in cycling, walking and safer streets—will not only improve our fitness and cardiovascular

health, but will help to tackle air pollution in our cities. It also helps to make transport more affordable for people on low incomes—those who suffer most from health inequalities.

17:03

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): I very much welcome this Conservative Party debate and I endorse many of the points that colleagues on all sides have made, particularly on poverty, obesity and healthy lifestyles.

The spend-to-save agenda has occupied the consciousness of this institution since its establishment. As we have heard, in 2011, the commission on the future delivery of public services, under the late Campbell Christie, enshrined the principles of reform, and prevention was at the heart of each of them.

In the health sector, the cost of failure demand caused by health inequalities is measured in human lives. At every stage in the health journey, we see pressures that exist because of the failure to invest in prevention upstream in promoting active lifestyles, tackling obesity and reducing poverty, and in turn those pressures exert the highest demands on primary care. Put simply, we have failed as parliamentarians to meet the challenges that Campbell Christie set for us.

I could point to many examples of where political rhetoric has failed to be met with action, but that is not a criticism that I level fully at this Government. All of us who represent parties that at one time or another have been entrusted with the governance of this nation have been blinded by the severity of need at the sharp end. In many ways, it has been like drinking from a fire hose. That demand is replicated in the frontiers of prevention. Because time is short, I will restrict my remarks to what I believe are the two most urgent frontiers, which are mental ill health, and drug and alcohol services in our communities.

Mental ill health accounts for one of the greatest strains on primary care. It is linked to as many as a quarter of GP visits, and 640,000 work days are lost because of mental ill health every year. It can take months to approve even the most basic community psychiatric evaluation. Spending on mental health has measurably declined as a percentage of the overall health budget in the past 10 years.

We have let down our adult population who seek assistance, but we have catastrophically failed our children who seek it. I have named in this chamber several constituents who have spent significant proportions of their adolescent lives on child and adolescent mental health services waiting lists or who have been turned away from tier 4 beds due to short staffing. Upstream

interventions such as Place2Be, which is delivering amazing early interventions on mental health in schools, live a hand-to-mouth existence.

Put simply, the country needs a step change in our approach to mental health, which is why we are calling on the SNP to double CAMHS spending and introduce a fully trained mental health practitioner in every GP surgery and police station in the country.

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

Alex Cole-Hamilton: I do not have time.

Mental ill health is a drain on the NHS, but dealing with drug and alcohol use and its effects is not far behind.

The Scottish Government is to be applauded on treatment: Audit Scotland has said that treatment targets are being met. However, what the Government gives with one hand in its efforts on prevention it takes away with the other. As Neil Findlay rightly said, the 22 per cent cut to alcohol and drug partnership services in our communities is astonishing and a national scandal. It represents a fire-sale cut of £1.3 million in our nation's capital and the decimation of the budget of the lifeline recovery service in Pennywell in my constituency, and it has led to a measurable outbreak of HIV in Glasgow. Those services are about stabilising lifestyles and normalising healthy living, yet we are letting down the people who use them.

Given the manifest and hidden harm that drugs and alcohol inflict on our communities, I can think of no greater example of prevention in our society than the work of our ADPs. That is why the Liberal Democrats are calling on the Scottish Government to reinstate those budgets to full strength immediately.

Health is about more than the absence of symptoms. It is about empowering individuals and communities to live full and active lives, sound in body and in mind. We welcome the debate and we will support the motion and all the amendments.

17:07

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I am pleased to take part in today's debate. I echo my colleague Brian Whittle by emphasising the importance of the preventative health agenda and its critical role in reducing the ever-growing demand and pressures on our health services. Brian Whittle highlighted our proposals in relation to physical health and the role of exercise and sport, and I fully agree with what he said. I will focus my contribution on prevention in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

Building resilience among our young people is an area where we need to do more through encouraging more of our youngsters to become involved in youth organisations. Recent research from scientists at the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow that was published in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* has suggested that taking part in the scouts or guides lowers the risk of mental illness in later life. The scientists analysed data from the lifelong national child development study of 10,000 people from across the UK who were born in 1958, which found that those who had been in the scouts or guides were around 15 per cent less likely to suffer from anxiety or mood disorders at age 50. The researchers suggested that the development of skills such as self-reliance and teamwork through the scouts and guides and being active outdoors may have lifelong benefits and help to build resilience to common stresses in later life.

The lead researcher, Professor Chris Dibben, of the University of Edinburgh's school of geosciences, has suggested that, in light of the findings, a focus on voluntary youth programmes to help tackle mental health problems in society would be a sensible idea, and I agree. He points out that scout or guide membership appears to remove almost completely the health inequality of mental ill health that is associated with economic disadvantage, as has been mentioned in the debate. Given the difficulty that many Governments around the world have in reducing health inequalities, that evidence of substantial impact is, I believe, significant and should be taken into account.

The Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme is another youth programme that has the potential to help our young people prepare for the challenges that they will face in later life and the impact that those can have on mental health.

Scottish Conservatives believe that every school pupil in Scotland should have access to such groups. That is perhaps most important for young people in the most deprived communities, where health inequalities are the most severe. We need to look at how we can support more volunteers in youth organisations and help those organisations to expand. I hope that that will form a part of the Scottish Government's mental health strategy when it is produced.

It is a shocking indictment of this SNP Government's record on mental health—and, I say to Mr Findlay, of the Labour Government's record before that—that some children in our country have to wait over a year for mental health support and that some adults in Scotland have to wait over two years to begin treatment.

Maree Todd: Will the member take an intervention?

Miles Briggs: I do not have the time.

If we, as a country, are truly to transform our approach to mental health, we need to look again at patient pathways and the use of antidepressants as a first resort to treat depression. In 2014-15, 814,181 people across Scotland—almost 20 per cent of the Scottish population—were prescribed antidepressants. In Norway, which has a similar population, the figure was just 6 per cent. Since this Government came to power, the use of antidepressants in our health service has increased by 28.5 per cent and is now costing more than £44 million a year—a decade after SNP ministers pledged to halt the increase.

Maree Todd: Will the member take an intervention on that specific point?

Miles Briggs: I am sorry, but I am in my last minute.

I do not doubt that there will always be a place for such medication to treat extreme cases of depression, but the fact that we are seeing such increasing numbers of people being prescribed antidepressants is, I believe, a symptom of the crisis that mental health services in our country face and should act as an alarm call for ministers. If the Government and Parliament are truly to address the mental health crisis that our country faces, we need to see cross-portfolio working and a step change in mental health support.

Scottish Conservatives will continue to press the Scottish Government to do more on preventing health problems so that our population becomes healthier and more resilient both physically and mentally.

17:12

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): I remind colleagues that I am the parliamentary liaison officer to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport.

I am pleased that there is consensus on the need to tackle health inequalities in our country, and I am glad that the Tory party recognises that more needs to be done in the area. I am sure that, as others have said, having brought the debate to the chamber, the Tories will now adjust their policy of bending to the hard-right, austerity, hard-Brexit policies of their London colleagues and finally start to stand up for the people of Scotland.

It is correct to say that early intervention is crucial and that tackling health issues before they happen has a massive benefit for everyone, not just for those who are directly involved. As has been mentioned, preventative measures lead to fewer hospital admissions, freeing up some precious time for our doctors and nurses.

Exercise is an important part of staying healthy, and the ambitious targets that have been set by this Government—150 minutes per week for adults and 60 minutes per day for children—have seen some fantastic successes throughout Scotland. Last week, in a members' business debate that was secured by Liz Smith, I spoke about the daily mile and the different ways in which schools in my constituency are making sure that their pupils walk at least a mile a day.

An organisation in my constituency, Parent Action for Safe Play, has developed some fantastic and innovative ways of not only getting children to be more active but getting them involved in helping others. Social deprivation is one of the areas in which health inequality can exist most profoundly, and the area where the organisation is based is in the top 10 most deprived areas in the country, according to the most recent Scottish index of multiple deprivation figures. I say to my Tory colleagues that that is because of successive Tory Prime Ministers. Maggie Thatcher took the heart out of Coatbridge, and Theresa May and David Cameron have are doing nothing but kicking us in the head. I cannot let my Labour colleagues off, either, because decades of so-called socialist Labour politicians in the council and the Parliament have done nothing to change the situation. Only one organisation has done anything for the people of Coatbridge over recent years, and that is the Scottish Government. *[Laughter.]* Well, we only have to look at the voting—

Brian Whittle: Will the member take an intervention?

Fulton MacGregor: I do not have time.

Parent Action for Safe Play concentrates on providing sports and opportunities to play in disadvantaged areas. It has a purpose-built playground and runs an active play programme in schools across the constituency. A crucial point is that it teaches primary 6 and 7 pupils skills that they can pass on to P1s and 2s, which leaves a legacy and ensures that children from age 5 receive the skills that they need if they are to pursue a healthy lifestyle.

We know that women and girls often experience inequalities early in life—the issue has been debated in the chamber. Recently, St Andrew's netball club in Coatbridge became the first club in Scotland to receive the Netball Scotland silver award. The club, which is run wholly by volunteers, was set up 10 years ago to increase female participation in sport in the area. It has grown—it now has more than 100 members—and plays a crucial part in encouraging young girls to be more active. I thank colleagues of all parties who supported the motion that I lodged in recognition of the club's achievements.

Another local organisation of which I am a long-time supporter is the shining stars theatre school, which Katie Slavin runs. The group was set up to get children from P1 to secondary 6 involved in drama, music and dance and encourages children and young people who have special needs and disabilities to get involved.

I can see that I am running out of time. I have talked about the importance of physical wellbeing, and I am glad that members have talked about inequality in the context of mental health. In the next couple of weeks, I will host a reception in the Parliament for the Scottish Association for Mental Health, at which the theme for discussion will be employability. Good work is usually good for mental health, so we should make every effort to make it easier for people with mental health issues to get productive work.

My time is up, so I will leave it at that.

17:16

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): I welcome this debate and the motion in Brian Whittle's name, but it is important that we recognise that austerity, deprivation, alcohol and drug use, diet, early years, education, mental health, employability, pay and wider equalities have direct links with health outcomes and life expectancy.

For that reason, I am disappointed that the new NHS delivery plan makes little mention of health inequalities and no mention of the inverse care law, to which Alison Johnstone referred, whereby people in the most deprived areas have the least time with healthcare professionals.

We cannot ignore the cuts in local government, either. Cuts of £327 million will directly impact on early years, education and sports and recreation facilities, and the cut to the sports budget, which is 7.4 per cent in cash terms, according to the Scottish Parliament information centre, will also have a direct impact on outcomes.

As I was driving home last Wednesday, I was delighted to hear the Minister for Public Health and Sport live on "Superscoreboard", discussing health and access to sport. I hope that she had the opportunity to listen to the response of Andy McLaren, former footballer and winger for Kilmarnock Football Club. In case she did not, I will quote some of what he said. He said:

"I'm shocked by what the minister was saying ... She said cost wasn't prohibitive to young people taking part in sport ... The areas I'm working in parents are visiting food banks to feed their kids. They don't have disposable income to give kids access ... Lots of things she said weren't right, cost is a massive barrier."

Those are powerful words from Andy McLaren, which I am sure reflect a lot of people's thinking in local authorities throughout Scotland.

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): Does Anas Sarwar agree that the freeze on benefits that the Tory Government has introduced at a time of rising costs is detrimentally affecting the poorest people in our communities, disproportionately affecting women, disabled people and single-parent families and contributing to health inequalities in this country?

Anas Sarwar: I absolutely do. I welcome that intervention from Clare Adamson and share her anger about the consequences of the Tory welfare reforms at Westminster.

Members are right to condemn Westminster's attack on the poorest and most vulnerable people, but we should not ignore our responsibilities and the impact of the decisions that we make in the Scottish Parliament. The reality is that decisions that are being made in this place will cut local budgets and have a direct impact on health outcomes and young people. For example, I am shocked by cuts of almost £200,000 to the child obesity budget under this Government over the past four years.

I realise that I am in my last minute, but I just want to say that there is a different way. We can use the powers of our Parliament to tackle austerity and properly fund our local services, our NHS and our local government. We can use the powers of this Parliament to use the money that we will get from the sugar tax to invest in local sports facilities and give £100,000 to every secondary school across the country. We can use the powers of our Parliament to tackle obesity head-on, in the same way that we tackled smoking through the smoking ban. Let us not just attack the Tories for the wrongs that they do—although it is important to call them out—but let us recognise that we have powers in this Parliament to make decisions that can transform the lives of people in Scotland. Let us not wait to deliver that; let us do it now.

17:20

Aileen Campbell: My ministerial portfolio, public health and sport, is an attempt to demonstrate a clear and connected approach to exploiting the benefits of physical activity to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Scotland. We do not underestimate the challenges that are ahead, but we are absolutely committed to the task.

Many members have made good and constructive points today. Of course there will be challenges and criticisms; that is what happens in any democracy. However, I think that some of the points that were made were belligerent and missed the point, because they did not wholly recognise the way in which we need to proceed. I

think that Parliament is at its best when we unite and work together. In the past, that has been when we have done some spectacular things to tackle public health problems.

Many members have made comments about the importance of the early years. I whole-heartedly agree. When I was the Minister for Children and Young People, I heard that point of view articulated best by John Carnochan, who said that the most important four years of a child's life are up to the age of three. That demonstrates how important it is to get the approach right in those vital early years.

In that regard, I am slightly surprised by the belligerence that Jackson Carlaw displayed towards the baby box. That initiative is designed to help families and give all children the very best start in life. It is a pilot scheme and, if he has concerns about it, he can submit them to the Government while we are in this pilot phase. The initiative has been welcomed by many and will be of great benefit to many children across our country.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): The minister makes very well the point about children needing the best start in life. She is aware that I support the baby box initiative, but I have concerns about the scheme that relate to breastfeeding, which I have raised previously with Mark McDonald. The minister will be aware that, in the most deprived communities, only 22 per cent of new mums are breastfeeding by the time of the first health visitor appointment, whereas, in the least deprived communities, that figure is almost 53 per cent. Can the minister say something about that in order to reassure us that the pilot will take into account that serious point?

Aileen Campbell: I will certainly work with my colleague Mark McDonald on that. I share Monica Lennon's commitment to breastfeeding. As a breastfeeding mum of two, I absolutely know the benefits and agree that we must extend breastfeeding and find ways to support mothers with breastfeeding. Given the time that we have available today, perhaps the detail would be best dealt with outside the chamber, in correspondence.

We also seek to improve maternal and infant nutrition. From spring 2017, free vitamins will be available for all pregnant women, which is a move that puts us ahead of a lot of the other UK Administrations. We will also be developing a 10-year child and adolescent health and wellbeing strategy; expanding early learning and childcare; and encouraging within that physical activity indoors and outdoors, through well-designed space. The Care Inspectorate has developed tools and resources to help empower practitioners to enable that to happen. Further, we want to

become the first daily mile nation, which will involve a roll-out to our nurseries.

In our effort to encourage healthy habits early, there has been a massive investment in school sport. Some £11.6 million has been invested between 2012 and 2016 to help schools to meet our manifesto commitments on physical education. In itself, that has seen the number of children who do two periods a week of PE rise from less than 10 per cent in 2004-05 to 90 per cent in 2016. That is backed up by the £50 million that has been invested in active schools between 2015 and 2019. We have active schools co-ordinators for every primary and secondary school in the country and, of course, we want to develop and focus that active schools approach across areas of deprivation and through our attainment challenge areas.

Community hubs are up and running—with far more of them proposed—to give people, including children of all ages and abilities, better opportunities. We also have much to be pleased about in our walking strategy.

A lot of us will agree, aside from our political differences, with much of what members such as Ruth Maguire, Clare Haughey, Colin Smyth and Neil Findlay have said about inequality. That is why we have made great efforts to create the kind of Scotland that I think we all seek: one that is fairer and more equal. That includes free school meals, the abolition of prescription charges and the introduction of a child poverty bill. It is why we give the best start grant, and why we will deliver at least 50,000 affordable homes.

Although it may be uncomfortable listening for the Conservatives and for Brian Whittle, although I do not doubt his huge commitment to the health agenda, it is clear that the consequences of inequality are exacerbated by welfare reform and austerity measures. Our attempts in 2016-17 to help and support our most vulnerable people in Scotland, who have been affected by those welfare cuts, have included £38 million for the Scottish welfare fund and £35 million to mitigate the bedroom tax, among other measures for which we have had to find resource from our budget. If Brian Whittle wants to talk about those vulnerable people, he needs to look a wee bit closer to home to see who is culpable for creating and exacerbating some of the inequalities in people's lives.

Aside from the political differences, we need to work together. We recognise that there is a health challenge for Scotland, not least in relation to obesity and inactivity. We need to unite and push the boundaries of what is possible so that Scotland can respond in a bold and innovative way that delivers the tangible and demonstrable

results that are needed if we are to create the healthier country that we all seek.

17:26

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I am grateful to all the members who have participated in the debate. Three messages have come through this afternoon. With regard to the first, I did not agree with everything that Anas Sarwar said, but he made a very good point about the complexities of the debate. Secondly, the debate straddles five or six different portfolios, which is always going to present challenges in finding the silver bullets that we need to solve the issues. Thirdly, I think that we all accept that tough choices must be made in setting priorities, given that it is impossible to find the money to do everything that we would like to do. I will come back to priorities in just a minute.

The Scottish Conservatives have deliberately focused on prevention rather than cure, on the basis of the evidence and advice from experts in health and education. Before there are more interventions on party-political points, which members are perfectly entitled to make, I want to draw the Parliament's attention to the work of successive health committees in previous sessions of Parliament. In particular, I highlight the work of the Health and Sport Committee in 2009, which at that time was convened—if I am not mistaken—by the Deputy Presiding Officer, Christine Grahame. That committee promoted a collaborative approach across the Parliament, which is important because, if we are going to solve this problem, we need to work together, and we need to ensure that we are changing the health culture just as much as any of the policies that are behind it. That is an important message from successive health committees.

Neil Findlay is the convener of the current Health and Sport Committee. I am sure that he has picked up on that point, despite some of his earlier interventions in the debate today.

Neil Findlay: Will the member give way on that point?

Liz Smith: Yes, of course—I am delighted to do so.

Neil Findlay: Liz Smith argues for collaboration but, on some fundamental issues that are at the heart of the health inequalities debate, there is a chasm between us. She wants to cut taxes and rip money out of public services, whereas we want to put money back into public services.

Liz Smith: In the spirit of collaboration, I could reel off quite a number of things in the autumn statement that were designed specifically to help

people on lower incomes, but I will leave that for another time.

As the minister said, the early years are very important, and I agree with her point about the first four years up to the age of three, which are a crucial time. That is exactly why Jackson Carlaw said that we are very committed to and enthusiastic supporters of a universal health visiting system—a system in which there is virtually unanimous trust among parents and which is best placed to assist families at the most important stages in children's lives.

Likewise, the compelling need to invest in childcare and nursery provision is unanimously supported in the Parliament, but we cannot do everything that we would like with that spending commitment. That is why we have to make tough choices about the most vulnerable groups and about where we can get the best outcomes.

The minister also mentioned that nutrition has an important part to play, which is true. I point to the successes in many primary schools around Scotland in which, in collaboration with parents and children, they have developed successful schemes and ensured the maximum engagement, without compromising cost against quality. There are a lot of examples from which we can learn good lessons.

My colleague Miles Briggs mentioned mental health. I know that this is a very short debate, but it is vitally important that we do more on mental health. We have made a lot of progress in breaking down some of the taboos about that subject, but there is much work still to be done. It is imperative that we work together on that and the party-political mud-slinging that took place at some points in today's debate was unhelpful—that is exactly what past and present health committees have advised us not to do.

Physical literacy, PE and sport are all different, but they are related and they are all essential if we want to make our policy on physical health more coherent and comprehensive. There has been progress and we acknowledge what the Scottish Government has done, but there are a lot of other things that we need to do, too. I draw the Scottish Government's attention to the fact that there is not much focus on PE and physical extracurricular activity during school inspections, which is another issue that came back from the Health and Sport Committee. At a time when there is a reduction in the number of school inspections and school inspectors, that is another crucial point.

To sum up, we are all agreed on certain key areas in the debate, as the Parliament has been for many years. I encourage members to listen to and read what our health committees have said over a long period of time, because that is

important and there are a lot of lessons to learn from it. We give our whole-hearted support to Brian Whittle's motion and I hope that other parties will also sign up to it in a collaborative spirit.

Business Motion

17:32

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-03457, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, which sets out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 24 January 2017

2.00 pm	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Topical Questions (if selected)
<i>followed by</i>	Ministerial Statement: Draft Scottish Energy Strategy
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Debate: Delivering Forestry in Scotland
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business

Wednesday 25 January 2017

2.00 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.00 pm	Portfolio Questions Health and Sport
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Labour Party Business
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business

Thursday 26 January 2017

11.40 am	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
11.40 am	General Questions
12.00 pm	First Minister's Questions
12.45 pm	Members' Business
2.30 pm	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
2.30 pm	Ministerial Statement: Hate Crime
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Debate: Improving Scotland's Planning: Improving Scotland's Places
<i>followed by</i>	Legislative Consent Memorandum: UK Children and Social Work Bill
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time

Tuesday 31 January 2017

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 1 February 2017

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
Communities, Social Security and
Equalities

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 2 February 2017

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.45 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:33

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of a Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S5M-03458, on committee membership.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that—

Bill Bowman be appointed to replace Liam Kerr as a member of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee; and

Liam Kerr be appointed to replace Dean Lockhart on the Finance and Constitution Committee.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

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

Decision Time

17:33

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There are seven questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, if the amendment in the name of Keith Brown is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Rhoda Grant will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S5M-03438.2, in the name of Keith Brown, which seeks to amend motion S5M-03438, in the name of Donald Cameron, on retaining the Highlands and Islands Enterprise board, 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)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 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)
 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)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 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)

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)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (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)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 64, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-03438.1, in the name of Rhoda Grant, which seeks to amend motion S5M-03438, in the name of Donald Cameron, on retaining the HIE board, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (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)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)

Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 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)
 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)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 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)
 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)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 64, Against 63, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-03438, in the name of Donald Cameron, on retaining the HIE board, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

Apologies; although we think that the vote on the motion was okay, we need to rerun it, if members do not mind. That is because our screens have gone blank.

The question is, that motion S5M-03438, in the name of Donald Cameron, on retaining the HIE board, as amended, be agreed to. We will have a vote now—if you support the motion, press “Yes”; if not, press “No”.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (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)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)

Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 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)
 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)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 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)
 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)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 64, Against 63, Abstentions 0.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament opposes the Scottish Government's plans to abolish the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE); recognises the vital work that HIE carries out for businesses and communities across the Highlands and Islands; calls on the Scottish Government to reverse this decision and ensure that the HIE board continues to take all strategic, operational and budgetary decisions, and recognises the impact that the Scottish Government's plans for centralisation will have on HIE's unique social remit.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-03440.4, in the name of Shona Robison, which seeks to amend motion S5M-03440, in the name of Brian Whittle, on health, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-03440.1, in the name of Colin Smyth, which seeks to amend motion S5M-03440, in the name of Brian Whittle, on health, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 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)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 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)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 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)
 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)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 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)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 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)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 33, Against 94, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-03440, in the name of Brian Whittle, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament believes that health inequalities are a serious problem in Scotland; considers that preventative health measures could reduce the pressures placed on the NHS; notes the BMA's opinion that "prevention requires interventions that are essentially non-medical if the differences in health and wellbeing are to be reduced"; understands that education and early years intervention are key to improving Scotland's health; believes that enabling people to have an active lifestyle and make healthy choices will reduce both health inequalities and preventable health problems; believes that the forthcoming Scottish Government strategy on diet and obesity will be strengthened from contributions across the Parliament, and welcomes that the new strategy will be subject to consultation in 2017 to ensure that it is informed by the best evidence from across Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-03458, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on committee membership, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that—

Bill Bowman be appointed to replace Liam Kerr as a member of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee; and

Liam Kerr be appointed to replace Dean Lockhart on the Finance and Constitution Committee.

Point of Order

17:40

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer, under rule 8.17 of our standing orders. Parliament has now agreed that it opposes the Scottish National Party's plans to abolish the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Given that clear decision by the Scottish Parliament on the issue, how will you, Presiding Officer, ensure that the Government listens to and acts on the clear will of the Scottish Parliament?

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I thank Mr Ross for the point of order. As he might know, resolutions of the Parliament are not binding. However, the Parliament has made its views known, and it is now up to the Government to choose how to respond.

Caterpillar Plant Occupation (30th Anniversary)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-02865, in the name of Richard Leonard, on the 30th anniversary of the workers' occupation of the Caterpillar plant in Tannochside. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament celebrates what it sees as the courageous stance taken by workers at the Caterpillar Plant in Tannochside who staged a 103-day occupation in defence of jobs, beginning on 14 January 1987; recognises the support given to the occupation by the labour and trades union movement across the UK and internationally; regrets the decision of the company to seek an eviction notice from the courts; notes that this action by the workers resulted in improved pay-offs for the workforce, and believes that this occupation serves as a reminder of the value of workers standing together in the common interest against corporate greed.

17:43

Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): It is a great honour to serve the people as a member of the Parliament, and I can think of no greater honour than securing my very first members' business debate in Parliament to mark the 30th anniversary of the Caterpillar plant occupation. That is because we do not celebrate our history—labour history and working-class history—nearly enough. I hope that we can remedy that through the Parliament.

The story of the 103-day occupation that began on 14 January 1987 carries with it many important lessons. First and foremost, it reminds us that we make our own history and that history is not predetermined. Secondly, it reminds us that fundamental social, economic and political change will come about when injustice is challenged from below. That challenge comes when working people have the confidence to reject the centuries-old indoctrination that there is no alternative and start at last to believe in themselves.

I welcome to Parliament some of those working people who believed in themselves and made history in a small corner of Lanarkshire. In so doing, they lit a flame that still burns brightly and inspires and guides many of us three decades later.

I would especially like to welcome to the public gallery the convener, John Brannan—without bunnet, but still with a gleam in his eye—and John Gillen and Bob Burrows, central figures in the joint occupation committee then and the Caterpillar legacy group now. I would also like to extend a welcome on behalf of the whole Parliament to the

women and men who, directly and indirectly, took part in and supported the Caterpillar occupation who have joined us this afternoon.

If members want a chapter in our history that truly shows the value of trade unionism, collective action and real solidarity, they should look no further than the actions of the brave workers who occupied the Caterpillar plant in 1987. If members want a chapter in our history that truly shows the perils of a branch-plant economy—an economy that is too dependent on foreign-owned multinationals—they should go and look at the actions of the Caterpillar corporation in 1987. The Tannochside plant was declared a PWAF—a plant with a future—yet within weeks it had no future. The company contrived a scorched-earth policy, whereby all 1,200 direct jobs were to go. It was a corporate strike of capital. There was no sign of a ballot.

The response of members of the workforce was immediate. They chose to gatecrash the company's press conference and to padlock the gates of the factory. Most of all, they chose to fight. That was not an easy decision, given that we had had the miners' strike and the lock-out of the print workers in Wapping and Kinning Park in the preceding years, but as my friend the late Campbell Christie said in his foreword to "Track Record: The Story of the Caterpillar Occupation", the magnificent documentation of the occupation by Charlie Woolfson and John Foster, it was

"a forceful reminder that if workers do not fight for themselves, nobody else will."

What solidarity was shown. The Miners Welfare Club on Old Edinburgh Road ran a free soup and bread service day after day, cash collections were held at football matches week after week, and shop stewards committees and mass meetings were addressed by John Brannan, John Gillen, Frank Kelly and others the length and breadth of the country, not just in engineering shops, shipyards and factories across Scotland but in factories in Manchester, Birmingham, Coventry and Liverpool. Bob Burrows was instrumental in persuading Motherwell District Council to invoke section 25 of the Social Security and Housing Benefits Act 1982 to provide rent rebates and Strathclyde Regional Council to provide assistance to mortgage payers. In addition, of course, the Caterpillar women's support group, like the miners' wives before them, were there not to make the tea but to make the case for the occupation, to lobby Parliament and to organise the struggle beyond the factory gates. It was real, practical, never-to-be-forgotten solidarity.

What are the enduring lessons of the occupation? In my view, they are that the balance of power between labour and capital can be tipped in favour of labour; that industrial democracy can

prevail and does work; that working people are not just born wage earners but have the potential to manage and run industry themselves; and that the real division in society—the decisive division—is not between Scotland and England but between those who own the wealth and those who through their hard work and endeavour create the wealth.

For me, the real test of this Parliament is what we make of the Caterpillar occupation. Can we rise to the challenge that it throws at us? Can we learn the lessons that it sets? Make no mistake—the Caterpillar workers' action raises fundamental questions about who controls the economy and in whose interests. I suggest that we need to put democratic socialism on the agenda once more. We need an industrial policy that is not reliant on multinational corporations. We need to start planning our economy rather than leaving it to the market. We need to start promoting industrial democracy in place of industrial vandalism, and I, for one, would like the Parliament to pass an industrial reform act that follows in the footsteps of the land reform legislation that it has passed. We should not underestimate the size of the task before us, but neither should we exaggerate it.

I will leave the final word to John Brannan, who said at the conclusion of the occupation:

"There was never any guarantee at the start we were going to win. Maybe we aren't successful. But we proved a stand can be made. Workers could unite. I think the tremendous support of the public wasn't on a judgement whether they thought we could win or lose. It was supporting guys who'd decided to have a go."

Today, we do not look back with resignation, but look forward with hope. Let us keep that fighting spirit alive—that ray of hope that things can be different—and use this Parliament to forge the real change that working people need. [*Applause.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I request our visitors in the public gallery to hold off their show of appreciation until the end, and I will allow time for that, if they do not mind. Thank you.

17:50

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): I thank Richard Leonard for bringing this important issue to the chamber and congratulate him on his tremendous speech.

I welcome the opportunity to speak in a debate about this significant event, which took place in my Uddingston and Bellshill constituency, although it was known then as Motherwell North. I also welcome those ex-Caterpillar workers who are in the gallery and pay tribute to them and to all who took part in the Caterpillar sit-in.

The Caterpillar plant in Tannochside in my constituency enjoyed a successful heyday from its opening in 1956 to its peak employment of 2,700

people. The site was well known in our communities. Indeed, it was one that enjoyed royal approval—I recall Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh visiting the site in July 1962 during their visit to Lanarkshire.

As Mr Leonard stated, on 14 January 1987, the Caterpillar factory sit-in began, with managers at the site being locked out by the hard-working and committed workers. The action, as he said, was supported by all in the community, including a little girl who broke her piggybank and handed in £5 in loose coins for the fund, to support the workers and those who made the tea and worked in the soup kitchens.

When the company's executives announced the change of plan—that the plant would be closed and that the promised investment was not going to take place—that was not taken lightly. The workers sat in for 103 days before their occupation ended on Sunday 26 April, after Caterpillar had obtained an eviction order. However, that was not before the world had looked on as workers fought back against the executives who had treated them with disdain. Indeed, from the sit-in came the building of the famous Pink Panther, the workers' campaign tractor, which was taken to George Square. It truly captured the public's imagination and became a symbol of the workers' struggle.

Many characters were involved in the Caterpillar sit-in. I remember Jimmy Hamilton MP, who represented Motherwell North at the time, not only for the contribution that he made during the sit-in, when he told the House of Commons that he was "absolutely flabbergasted" at the news, but because I stood against him for the Scottish National Party in the 1983 general election and became the first Scottish National Party general election candidate in North Lanarkshire to retain their deposit. I came fourth out of four candidates. I hope that members do not mind me indulging in political nostalgia in the debate.

Let me escape nostalgia and come on to recent years. Work has been done to recognise the Caterpillar workers' contribution in our community, including the 25th anniversary reunion, which planted in the minds of the former workers who attended it the seed of the idea to build a memorial to the factory and the occupation, which has subsequently come to fruition. Now, every time that I drive from my surgery in Viewpark to other surgery venues, I pass by the memorial to the workers, and am proud to represent a constituency that has such a story to tell.

That the workers at the Caterpillar site are a true testament to the effectiveness of workers employing direct action to highlight their issue cannot be overstated; nor can the fact that, by standing up together, they showed that they could not only galvanise their colleagues' support but

instil the same desire to stand up for what is right in so many in the community who joined them in their action for fairness.

Due to long-standing commitments, I will be able to attend Richard Leonard's reception for only a short time. I conclude by saying that I recognise the efforts that were made by the workers of the Caterpillar factory, to whom we rightly pay tribute in this debate. Every one of them deserves that today.

17:55

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): I start by congratulating my colleague Richard Leonard on securing this very important debate commemorating the 30-year anniversary of the lock-in at Caterpillar. I also congratulate Mr Leonard on a very strong and passionate speech, which I am sure will have been welcomed by the representatives of that lock-in who are in the gallery.

I remember the event well, having grown up in Halfway, just a couple of miles from Tannochside. It is true that it resonated throughout not only Lanarkshire—the workers took their case throughout Scotland. In fact, I remember, as a young Labour Party activist, attending a fringe meeting that the Caterpillar workers had organised at the Scottish Labour Party conference in Perth. I was very impressed by the commitment and the passion that were shown by the speakers from that workforce.

It is worth recognising what a remarkable story it is. When we think back, it was a real kick in the teeth for the workforce. Initially they had been told that there was going to be a £62.5 million investment in the plant. That had given the community great hope. For the company to change its mind, commit such a U-turn and close the plant was a real hammer blow. As Richard Leonard pointed out, that came at a time when retrograde actions were being taken against trade unions on the back of legislation that was introduced by the Thatcher Government. That made it more difficult for trade unions to stand up and take action. Bear it in mind that, despite all those circumstances, they embarked on that 103-day lock-in with great dedication, commitment and dignity.

We would all do well to recognise and celebrate the solidarity that they showed. On a day that unemployment has risen in Scotland, what it also shows is the importance of work. A lot of those 1,200 men and women had been used to the dignity of work—how important it was to their lives and in their community. They were taking a stand, not only to save the plant, but to say that they recognised the importance of that employment.

It is important to celebrate the history of the event but also, as Richard Leonard says, to look at its lessons for today. One of the key points is that trade unions matter. We need that collective organisation that brings workers together, because if we stand together as one force, we are stronger. As was shown back in 1987, that strong, united, committed voice made such a case that it reverberated throughout Scotland and beyond.

It also shows the importance of having an industrial strategy. When I reflect on Lanarkshire in the 1980s, one of the sad things was the closures, not only in Tannochside but in places such as Cambuslang, where the Hoover plant was. There was also a reduction in the number of people working in the steelworks.

In Scotland, we still have a proud industrial heritage. We have many graduates leaving universities who are skilled in engineering. We need to reconnect to that industrial strategy, not only to show that we can have the cutting edge to produce an economy that is fit for the 21st century, but to give meaningful work to the men and women of this country and to ensure that the dignity that was exemplified in the Caterpillar workforce can be brought forward in Scotland in 2017.

18:00

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con): I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate on the 30th anniversary of the Caterpillar occupation. I thank Richard Leonard for lodging the motion and congratulate him on securing his first members' business debate.

The then Conservative MP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, Michael Hirst, when he spoke in the House of Commons debate on 28 January 1987 on the Caterpillar tractor factory closure, said:

"Any factory closure is usually a matter of great sadness, for the management, the work force, suppliers and the local community. When news of a closure is preceded by an announcement of a substantial new investment programme, which is started and then abruptly cancelled, that must surely be a matter of more than sadness. It is a matter of outrage involving justifiable accusations of rank bad faith. That is, in essence, the experience of the Caterpillar factory at Tannochside, Uddingston."—[*Official Report, House of Commons, 28 January 1987; Vol 109, c 461.*]

The House of Commons debate was held in response to the following developments. In January 1987, the workforce of 1,200 at the Caterpillar plant in Tannochside came back from the Christmas break to discover that not only was the £62.5 million proposed investment and expansion, which had been announced only months earlier, being abandoned, but the plant was to close. That was despite the management

and workforce having co-operated and responded positively to the many challenges that the automotive industry had faced, including competition from the Japanese, technological advances and world economic and market conditions.

The US company's explanation for the decision was that the losses that it was experiencing worldwide due to Japanese competition and a contracting market meant that the plant at Tannochside was no longer sustainable. The explanation of the closure was, with justification, questioned, as it came so soon after the planned major investment programme for the factory. The closure was a huge blow to the loyal and co-operative workforce, the company's suppliers and subcontractors, the local community and the UK Government, which had pledged substantial assistance.

The response from the workers was to stage a sit-in. Although legally they were prevented from continuing to make tractors and bulldozers, the workers kept the plant open by occupying it for 103 days. During that time, they succeeded in raising awareness of their plight around the world. As a consequence, a deal was secured that ensured that no compulsory redundancies would be made and that enhanced severance packages would be awarded.

Today, the site of the former Caterpillar factory is occupied by housing and Tannochside business park. Sadly, closures of businesses that are located there still happen, the latest being the closure of the branch of Kwik-Fit Insurance Services, which has 521 employees. However, the difference is that, when that closure was first announced, a huge effort was made to try to secure a takeover of the Kwik-Fit call centre by another company as a going concern. Now that that has proved not possible, Ageas, the parent company, has had to take the difficult decision to close the site and is now concentrating on doing everything in its power to help the workforce find new employment and/or to reskill. It is encouraging that more than 1,800 job vacancies with local and national companies have been identified.

The debate is testament to the fact that lessons can be learned from the past, including on the value of open lines of communication between workers and management and on the need for maximum support for the affected workforce when closures are announced, as will inevitably continue to happen.

18:04

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): I, too, thank Richard Leonard for bringing this important

anniversary to our attention with an excellent speech. I add my welcome to the veterans of the industrial action who are here with us today, and I remember those who are no longer with us.

As we have heard, Caterpillar came to Tannochside in 1956, and the jobs that it brought were vitally important to local people. I am sure that those of us who live in Lanarkshire will all have friends, family or neighbours who worked at Caterpillar.

North Lanarkshire Labour councillor Bob Burrows is one such worker. Bob was a shop steward, and he is one of the former workers who also organised a memorial at the site, as was mentioned by my colleague Richard Leonard. It is awful that that memorial was vandalised. Perhaps that is testament to the fact that there are people in our community who no longer remember or have not been told this story of local solidarity.

Bob Burrows retrained as a debt counsellor, and he went on to become an elected member. He said:

“The Caterpillar occupation changed everyone’s life”.

All the men and women who took part in that 103-day occupation to save jobs 30 years ago are examples of the power of workers’ struggle, the importance of solidarity and the need for a labour and trade union movement. They did not keep the plant open but, as we have heard, they did win a better settlement.

It is vital to remember their struggle and that of all workers who withdraw their labour or take action in other sometimes innovative ways for a greater cause. Workers’ ultimate bargaining power is their ability to withdraw their labour and stop production. To do that, workers must fight as a class. Other historic examples of class solidarity like the Caterpillar occupation are the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in and the Lee jeans occupation.

The women of Lee jeans won their fight, and Helen Monaghan, who was at the forefront, said about the start:

“We didn’t know when we occupied the factory where the help would come from, but we hadn’t long to find out. Without the support of trade unionists we wouldn’t have lasted this long and with your continued support we’ll keep fighting.”

My old friend and comrade Jimmy Reid, former shop steward at UCS, in his most famous address, said:

“Reject the insidious pressures in society that would blunt your critical faculties to all that is happening around you, that would caution silence in the face of injustice lest you jeopardise your chances of promotion and self-advancement. This is how it starts and before you know where you are, you’re a fully paid-up member of the rat-pack. The price is too high. It entails the loss of your dignity

and human spirit. Or as Christ put it, ‘What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?’”

The Caterpillar workers might not have won, but they are an inspiration in the way that they fought for their jobs, their community and their very dignity. That spirit of resistance, solidarity and community is the spirit that helped to create democracy itself in this country, to advance workers’ rights and to build the very party that I am a member of.

Many councillors, MSPs and MPs owe their opportunity to be heard over the years to the efforts of those who campaigned and battled against unfair practices and an unequal society. We stand on the shoulders of men and women such as those in the public gallery today, and we must never forget that.

Unfortunately, however, many people in Lanarkshire are still fighting for their very existence, facing unemployment, working on zero-hours contracts with inadequate benefits and no secure home and depending on food banks. That is not the legacy that our working-class trade union ancestors wanted for our area.

We must look to examples such as the Caterpillar struggle to push us on for a new struggle, although it is much the same as the one that we have always fought: standing up to the injustice and greed of those at the top and demanding equality and fairness for ordinary working people. That is the cause of Labour.

Once again, I applaud Richard Leonard for bringing this issue to the Scottish Parliament’s attention.

18:08

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): I thank Richard Leonard for giving us the opportunity this evening to remember the Caterpillar plant occupation of 30 years ago, and to celebrate the history of workers in Scotland and around the world who organise and fight together as a movement. It is fantastic that we have veterans of the occupation here with us in Parliament today.

Preserving and promoting the history of the labour movement is essential if we are to be capable of winning the fights that are yet to come. The 103-day occupation at the Tannochside plant symbolises a generation of workers who were unwilling to stand aside as their jobs and their communities were destroyed by deindustrialisation—in Scotland and across these islands.

The stories of what Caterpillar management said to the shop stewards when they announced the closure show starkly what a cruel and

dysfunctional capitalist system we were subject to then, as we are now. The plant manager said to the union committee:

“The company has a problem ... and you are a victim of the remedy.”

I only know about that, though, because I read it in the *Daily Record*, and I only know about the occupation because I am a trade unionist and active in left-wing politics. The story is not the history that I was taught at school—but why not? If we expect our young people to grow up with an understanding of the society that they live in—of its history and its defining moments—then why do young people in Scotland, and in west and central Scotland, in particular, not learn about the radical history of the labour movement in our communities?

I do not object to having learned about the wars of independence, the second world war or the Jacobite rebellion. However, surely I, and other young people, would have understood just as much, if not more, of the Scotland that we live in today if we had been told about red Clydeside; about Maxton, Maclean and Gallacher; about the battle of George Square, the centenary of which we will soon celebrate; or about the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders workers’ work-in. It has taken Herculean effort just to have erected a statue for Mary Barbour and her rent strikers. Those things are the history of a nation and a class, and are things that all our young people should know.

I have been inspired by the work of the Caterpillar workers legacy project, and I hope that its exhibition will make it to communities in my region, West Scotland. We must get the message across to new generations of workers that fighting together is far better than being exploited alone. The trade union movement in Scotland has a proud history, but we must be determined to build a winning future. As the nature of work changes, so must the tactics of the trade union movement.

With more people than ever, in particular young people, being exploited by zero-hours contracts and shocking conditions—most notably in the hospitality sector and by large employers such as Amazon, JJB Sports and Sports Direct—the better than zero campaign, which was launched by the Scottish Trades Union Congress youth committee, has shown that union campaigning can not only be fun but gets results. After a series of direct actions and consistent pressure on the G1 Group, followed by negotiations with campaigners, the better than zero campaign has won an end to zero-hours contracts, an end to charging for uniforms and training, a new and fairer tips policy, and a number of other improvements. It is now G1’s management’s responsibility to live up to their promises. They know that if they do not, their

venues will once again be shut down by workers demanding respect.

There is a new generation of activism within the trade union movement—young workers fighting for their rights because the generations who came before, including the Caterpillar workers, showed them, and showed us, that it is a fight that is worth having. I thank them for that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Just before I call Liam Kerr, I say that due to the number of members still wishing to speak in the debate, I am happy to accept, under rule 8.14.3, a motion without notice that the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes. I invite Richard Leonard to move the motion.

Motion moved,

That, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.—[Richard Leonard]

Motion agreed to.

18:12

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): First, I would like to congratulate Richard Leonard on securing this members’ business debate today. I, too, welcome the many Caterpillar workers to the chamber.

There are periods and events in history that are indelibly seared in our collective subconscious: famous battles, dates, places and events that make us the nation that we are. However, it is right that we remind ourselves of perhaps less widely recalled events that are of equal importance in our nation’s story. I echo Richard Leonard’s comments from the outset of this debate in that regard. Dare I say that Ross Greer made a very important and valid point about history? That will not happen too often, will it?

We remind ourselves today as we look back 30 years and recall the workers’ occupation at the Caterpillar plant in Tannochside. The workers’ sit-in there represented a seminal moment for those involved, their families and the community in which they lived. It is right to pay tribute to the courageous stance of the workers, but also to recognise the support of the union movement at the time and the people who supported the workers including—famously—the schoolchildren who donated their pocket money to pay for bus fares.

The decision of Caterpillar to announce the closure of the plant, just months after announcing a £62.5 million investment in new equipment, does seem to show, in the words of the then Conservative MP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, Michael Hirst:

“gross incompetence in the planning of their corporate strategic objectives”.—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 28 January 1987; Vol 109, c 462.]

James, or—as Richard Lyle will perhaps tell me—Jimmy Hamilton, the then Labour MP for Motherwell North, was so disbelieving that he said of the shop steward who had told him the news that he must have been “going stark raving bonkers”. Unfortunately—incompetent or not, bonkers or not—the plant at Tannochside eventually closed some 103 days after being occupied by the workers.

As the motion says, the anniversary also

“serves as a reminder of the value of workers standing together in the common interest”.

When there are genuine concerns about jobs, health and safety and the general public, it is right that the Government listens to the trade unions when they raise those issues.

Richard Leonard asked what we have learned. I hope that the Scottish Government learns to listen—and to listen hard—to the Transport Salaried Staffs Association, which warned just last week that merging the British Transport Police and Police Scotland would be a folly that would potentially cause big delays for travellers, lasting damage—

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Will the member take an intervention?

Liam Kerr: I will.

Neil Findlay: Given that Mr Kerr is expressing such care for working people, will he now put on the record an apology for his Government at Westminster bringing in the pernicious Trade Union Act 2016?

Liam Kerr: I think that, in the spirit of what I am trying to put forward here, that intervention is a little bit “pernicious”. The Trade Union Act 2016 is not really relevant to what we are trying to do today. Richard Leonard’s motion is very important and I wanted to speak on it. However, the 2016 act aims to rebalance the interests of all with freedom to strike. It is a sensible move and it is reasonable. That is what that democratically elected Government has put forward.

I want the Scottish Government to listen to the TSSA, Scottish Labour and the Scottish Conservatives and not to go ahead with merging the British Transport Police in Scotland with Police Scotland. The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, the TSSA and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen publicly opposed the merger when it was first mooted. The TSSA’s general secretary, Manuel Cortes, said:

“The SNP leadership know nothing about the practicalities”—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you come to a close, please, Mr Kerr?

Liam Kerr: Yes, Presiding Officer.

As we remember the actions of the past, let us not be blind to the present. The SNP should listen to the unions, the Scottish Conservatives, the BTP, Scottish Labour and—above all—the public, and stop meddling with the British Transport Police.

May I continue for 30 seconds, please, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. I am sorry, Mr Kerr. I remind members that the spirit of members’ business debates is that members stick to the terms of the motion.

18:17

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): I begin by congratulating Richard Leonard on his first members’ business debate, but also by thanking him, because this is an important point in history at which to congratulate the Caterpillar workers and their community on their achievements, which are relevant to the current day. They did not fight only for their jobs; they fought for their community and, as other members have said, they did so passionately.

The action mobilised the community—probably in a way that none of us had ever seen before. My father-in-law, Patrick Cahill, was a worker at the Caterpillar plant, and it always amused me that he thought that it was unbelievable that, post the occupation, people were wearing Caterpillar fashion. He said, “I used to wear those boots to my work. I don’t know why it’s a fashion.”

It was the ingenuity of the campaign that struck me. I remember that, at a Labour Party conference when I was a student, a friend of mine came dressed as the Pink Panther. That is my first recollection of the dispute. When I asked him why he was dressed like that, he said that he was drawing attention to the pink tractor. I do not underestimate the significance at the time of a mainly male workforce painting a tractor pink. It was really quite ingenious.

I am proud to say that there was an important connection to Glasgow, as there was to other cities—and not just in Scotland; the occupation was recognised internationally. People raised funds to support the workers who were in occupation.

Margaret Mitchell and many others quoted Michael Hirst, who said at the time not only that there had been

“gross incompetence”

but that it was

“At worst ... corporate treachery.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 28 January 1987; Vol 109, c 462.]

I never thought that I would hear that from a Tory. What that shows is that, at the time, the whole country felt the devastation of a corporate power reneging on its promise of investment.

This members’ business debate is also an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of workers, organised labour and trade unions, and their right to resist. There is relevance to the current day. As Elaine Smith said, the occupation campaign achieved many things, including enhanced redundancy packages. In employment law now, many workers do not have basic employment rights when they are made redundant—and that is not to mention poor redundancy packages. The living wage, the minimum wage, the right to be in a union and the right to be represented are things that we benefit from as a result of the trade union movement’s achievements.

The voice of an organised workforce is absolutely legitimate not just in an industrial setting but in influencing decisions on public service. I make this point to Liam Kerr: if he believes in challenging power wherever it comes from, he must believe in the legitimacy of a trade union’s voice to do that.

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers has a difficult fight on its hands now, and there are 49 Tory MPs who want to restrict the right of people who work in public services to strike. That is a dangerous route to go down. There should be conditions that trade unions must meet in order to go on strike—although they do not do it lightly—but I would ask those MPs whether they trust only the executive powers to decide whether our railways are safe or our public services are good. People who believe in democracy know that the voices of everyone are important.

We have a lot to thank the community around the Caterpillar occupation for: what they achieved then and what we have now. I am pleased to support Richard Leonard’s motion. I know that there will be some celebration after the debate, at which I will perhaps have the chance to talk to John Brannan and others about their achievements.

18:21

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): I thank Richard Leonard for lodging his motion and giving us the opportunity to mark the 30th anniversary of what is a notable event in recent Scottish trade union history, which is a history that, as Richard

Leonard noted in his speech, we do not celebrate enough.

The Caterpillar plant in Uddingston drew its workforce from across Glasgow, Lanarkshire and beyond, and its closure would have had a significant effect on workers from my constituency. Although the aim of the Caterpillar workers to save their plant and jobs was ultimately not realised, their action in occupying their place of work, in the face of global corporate disdain for them, was a lesson in solidarity and determination. Like the workers at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders 15 years earlier, they were determined that their right to work would not be prised from them easily or without a fight. Although they were ultimately unsuccessful, there is much to admire in the spirit that was shown by the Caterpillar workers in refusing to be ignored and disrespected. I welcome them to the public gallery today.

By 1987, the industrial and manufacturing base of Scotland and the UK, including my community, was being systematically eroded under the supervision of a Tory Government that was dismissive of the concerns of the communities involved. As with the miners’ strike earlier in the decade, which members have referenced, little or no consideration was given to what would replace long-standing industries that faced forced reorganisation or technical restructuring, which took food out of the mouths of children I went to school with.

The aim of the Thatcher Government and its global corporate friends was to erode the influence of trade unions and their ability to organise. By the time of the Caterpillar occupation, mainly as a result of the Tories’ policies, trade union membership had fallen by 28 per cent from its postwar peak of 12.2 million to 8.8 million, and it was to decline further.

Despite the onslaught on workers’ rights, the actions of the Caterpillar workers and other groups of workers who fought for their jobs throughout the period were certainly an inspiration to young socially aware teenagers, such as me, who were entering the world of work at a time of great change. Unfortunately, the Caterpillar workers did not change the company’s decision to pull out, but they achieved a redundancy package that was well above what was being proposed.

A lot has changed in the 30 years since then, but it is right that we should never give up on the concepts of fair work and workers’ rights that were at the core of the Caterpillar action. Since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, we have had an opportunity to progress a fair work agenda. The Scottish Government considers trade unions to be partners, and my own experience as a divisional convener for Unison in the national health service was of working in partnership, not

as opponents. That is a much more productive relationship for all those involved. The Scottish Government also opposed the Trade Union Bill, which threatens the fundamental rights of workers to organise and bargain collectively and, if necessary, withdraw their labour.

We should work to deliver responsible foreign investment to bring employers to the country and to further develop employee rights, which devolution of employment law would allow us to do. We have repeatedly called for the devolution of employment law in order to ensure that workers' rights are protected. However, that is something that Labour has, until now, refused to support. In the light of the current threat to those rights from an ultra-right-wing Tory Brexiteer Government, I hope that Labour can alter its stance and support our call for those powers. That would be a fitting tribute to those who have stood up for hard-won trade union rights over the years.

I wish the Caterpillar workers legacy project well with its planned exhibition and the other events that are planned this year to coincide with the anniversary of the occupation and commemorate the determination and solidarity of the Caterpillar workers.

18:26

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): I thank Richard Leonard for lodging the motion and securing this important members' business debate in Parliament. I also commend him for his speech. The occupation—just like the action at British Leyland, UCS and Timex, and like the miners' strike—is ingrained in the DNA of the labour and trade union movement. Those actions by workers who struggled not for higher pay but for the right to work, as well as many more industrial struggles, are not just our history and heritage but relevant to the times in which we live, in which corporate power and, all too often, corporate greed have much more clout than the people or their democratically elected representatives.

As the Brexit debate rages, I hear people mouth platitudes about the apparent benefits that we all derive from so-called free trade and the free movement of capital. Well, Caterpillar is but one example of the consequences of such policies. Time and again, we have witnessed multinational companies with production plants in Scotland—and, indeed, across the United Kingdom, the European Union and the globe—taking their production wherever they can maximise profit through low-tax inducements or ever-cheaper labour. The workforce is left behind, discarded like a fitter's oily rag by corporate power brokers, financiers and demanding shareholders. Only last week, Tesco announced closures and job losses,

and what happened? The company's share price shot up. What a brutal system capitalism is.

In the circumstances in which the Caterpillar workers found themselves, the only tool left in the locker—it is the only tool left in the locker of all working people—was solidarity: unity and organising together with loyalty to one another, to their community and to their class. A lot of us have mentioned people we know. My friend Alex Cunningham, who is sadly no longer with us, was one of the young Caterpillar workers at the time and he spoke with great pride about the occupation, the construction of the Pink Panther and the comradeship and solidarity of the occupation. The debate is a tribute to him and all his fellow workers who are still alive or no longer with us.

Ultimately, the Caterpillar plant closed when the employers resorted to the courts to bring about the end of the occupation, but it was not a failure. As members have mentioned, enhanced packages were secured. Its success was also in the international support—the finance and solidarity—that was received from trade unions and working people around the world coming together in a community that was united in support of those men and women.

A socialist icon once said that it is better to die standing than to live on your knees. The Caterpillar workers refused to live on their knees, and the current generation has much to learn from their action and other such struggles. I pay tribute to, and express my solidarity with, the shop stewards and others who are in the public gallery today. Let the Caterpillar workers' struggle be our generation's inspiration. Debates such as this are not some dewy-eyed nostalgia trip; they are about the lessons of yesterday inspiring the actions of today. Ultimately, the aim is to bring about social, political and industrial change—that is the lesson to learn from those events.

18:29

The Minister for Employability and Training (Jamie Hepburn): I thank Richard Leonard for bringing the debate to the Parliament. I admit that I was a little surprised to learn that it is his first members' business debate, given the frequency with which he participates in such debates. I think that I regularly come up against him—or rather, debate with him—in members' business debates. At any rate, this is a worthwhile and fitting subject for his first such debate.

I welcome the people who have come to the Parliament to watch the debate and to attend the reception that Richard Leonard has organised.

It is absolutely right that we recognise the 30th anniversary of the workers' occupation of the

Caterpillar plant, which is an important part of the history of industrial action in Scotland, as many members said. Neil Findlay said that the occupation is woven into the DNA of the labour and trade union movement in Scotland—his phrase was apposite, and I would go further and say that the occupation is woven into the DNA of our country's history.

Elaine Smith and other members talked about other industrial action that led up to and followed the action at Tannochside, such as the UCS work-in, the miners' strike—I represent a former mining community, as do other members who are here, so it behoves me to mention that—and the occupation of the Lee jeans factory in Inverclyde. In another example, which had an impact on the wider world, workers in East Kilbride refused to work on engines that were to be sent to Pinochet's Chile. All those seminal events deserve their places in our country's history, as Mr Greer said.

Members talked about the devastating impact of the Caterpillar decision. I think that all members can understand and sympathise with the sense of betrayal that prompted the occupation. The actions of Caterpillar in 1987 dramatically changed the lives of not just the people in the workforce in Uddingston, who embarked on a 103-day fight for their jobs, but their families and people in the wider community.

As we heard, there was widespread anger about a decision that displayed scant regard for the impact on individuals. The plant was not failing; it was profitable and it had an exemplary and highly skilled workforce. What happened was not dissimilar to the dismantling of British Steel's presence in Lanarkshire around the same time. As Richard Leonard said, Caterpillar had not only designated its plant a PWAF—a plant with a future—but backed that up with an announcement of significant investment of some £62.5 million to secure the plant's future. The company even persuaded the UK Government to line up with it to make the announcement, only for the decision to be quickly swept away.

As we look back 30 years later, the rationale for the decision to close a productive and profitable plant remains unclear. The workers' hopes had been raised by the company's positive public announcements but were swept away by the company's subsequent actions. The hopes of the workers and their families might have been dashed, but those people's dignity and defiance must always be recognised. We must also recognise the difference that they made. As Neil Findlay and others said, although the occupation's aim of keeping the plant open was not realised, the action led to enhanced packages for the workforce.

We must learn from the experiences of the workers at Caterpillar and from other industrial disputes down the years, which must inform our thinking today. The Government does not accept that such negative outcomes are inevitable and it will always support and protect workers' rights. We will seek to intervene where we can if a particular employer is in danger of ceasing operation and causing job losses, as happened at Ferguson's. We have worked in partnership with trade unions to safeguard jobs at Dalzell and Clydebridge, Rio Tinto and Penman Engineering. Those are positive examples of collaboration between the Government, trade unions and industry to achieve results.

All that indicates the value of trade unions and why James Kelly was correct to say that trade unions matter. The debate is a good opportunity to discuss the Government's valued relationship with trade unions, which is underlined by our memorandum of understanding with the Scottish Trades Union Congress. Trade union membership of our fair work convention was also crucial to delivering the fair work framework, which was published last year.

The framework defines fair work as offering an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect. Fair work balances the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers and generates benefits for individuals, organisations and our society. The vision not only challenges businesses, employers and the public and third sectors but has clear actions for the unions and the Government. Such partnership working is fundamental, and we have committed £500,000 this year to support the convention's work.

As an Administration, we repeatedly opposed the draconian measures in the Tories' Trade Union Bill, which is now the Trade Union Act 2016, unlike Mr Kerr, who made a misjudged contribution. I hate to stray from the usual consensus that we have in members' business debates, but it is apposite and appropriate for us to mention the act. We will continue to raise our voice against it. We have committed £500,000 of support for the further rolling out of the fair work framework, £2.26 million this year to support Scottish union learning and £100,000 for equality and leadership projects, as well as having created and invested in a trade union modernisation fund to support trade unions to mitigate the effect of and be able to respond better to the impact of the act. I hope that that demonstrates—among other activities that, inevitably, I do not have the time to set out today—the great value that the Scottish Government places on our relationship with trade unions.

I will bring my comments back to the 30th anniversary. The Caterpillar occupation in 1987 is

a marker in time. We must continue to seek to learn from that period, when profitable manufacturing in Uddingston was cruelly brought to an abrupt end.

I commend the efforts of those who were involved in the occupation—and I again welcome those who have come to the Scottish Parliament—and reassure the chamber that we, as a Government, will continue to work tirelessly to promote fair work and to secure jobs for workers here in Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I close the meeting. Any appreciation can now be shown. [*Applause.*]

Meeting closed at 18:37.

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

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

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