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AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 27 September 2017

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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 27 September 2017

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

## Portfolio Question Time

### Education and Skills

#### University Commercial Activities (Charitable Status)

##### 1. Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife)

**(Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking regarding the charitable status of university commercial activities. (S5O-01285)

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville):** There are no plans to review the charitable status of universities or their commercial activities. The Scottish Government responded to the recent Barclay review on 12 September and indicated that it will engage further on the recommendation to remove charity rates relief from certain types of university activity. Barclay was clear that the recommendation did not relate to the core functions of universities, including the provision of education and research and development. The Barclay review was also clear that it was not recommending that charitable status should be removed.

**Alexander Stewart:** The Scottish Government is still consulting on the decision whether to remove charitable status for commercial elements of universities, as laid out in the Barclay review. Will the minister comment on the advice that she has taken on that and on whether the Government has considered the possible financial impact on universities and local communities, in an era of very tight local government budgets?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** As Mr Mackay set out when he responded to the Barclay review, the Scottish Government will undertake a thorough consultation on the charity rates relief recommendation and other recommendations in the review. I am sure that Mr Mackay and I will have numerous conversations with Universities Scotland and different institutions to seek their views. I look forward to taking part in that process.

#### University of the Highlands and Islands (Inverness College)

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

**(SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what engagement it has with Inverness College UHI. (S5O-01286)

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville):** The Scottish Government is engaging regularly with Inverness College, along with four other colleges, as part of the colleges improvement project on retention and attainment. The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council also engages with Inverness College, as part of the University of the Highlands and Islands, through the annual outcome agreement process.

**Maree Todd:** In a recent newspaper article, the new principal and chief executive of Inverness College UHI, Professor Chris O'Neil, is reported as saying that

“the cloud of uncertainty about the nature of the final Brexit deal meant he still did not know what he was going to have to do to support his EU colleagues and UHI’s cohort of 374 EU students.”

The article continued:

“And expressing particular fears for the future of science industries, he said: ‘It was interesting that ... Brexit leader David Davis was talking about the way in which he wants to negotiate a relationship with Europe that preserves our extraordinary capacity to attract and to develop world-class science.’”

UHI would not have come into existence without European Union support. Does the minister agree with Professor O'Neil's description of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU as “a tragedy”?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** Yes—I agree with the principal's statements. We welcome the UK Government's wish to continue to participate in EU science and innovation programmes, but it is difficult to see how our institutions will be able to do that effectively without continued freedom of movement for our academics, researchers and students. I am afraid that that is yet another example of the lack of long-term planning and joined-up thinking in the UK Government's decisions about Brexit. Combining that with the UK Government's student visa policies and its intention to still tighten the grip on immigration for international students continues to send a negative message to students who are considering Scotland for their studies. The Scottish Government is determined to work against such an approach.

#### Diversity and Inclusion (Showpeople)

##### 3. Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill)

**(SNP):** I refer members to my entry in the register of interests as I am the convener of the cross-party group on the Scottish Showmen's Guild and a member of the Scottish Showmen's Guild.

To ask the Scottish Government what action it takes when drafting educational documentation,

equality monitoring and learning tools to ensure that showpeople are considered. (S5O-01287)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** As part of our commitment to excellence and equity in education and in planning and policy development processes, we routinely consider the needs of a wide range of stakeholders and groups. A recent example is the work to develop guidance on improving the educational outcomes of children and young people from Travelling cultures. My officials worked with a diverse group of stakeholders, with a breadth of experience and skills in working with a range of Travellers, to prepare the draft guidance that has been consulted on. My officials made sure that the Scottish Showmen's Guild was aware of the consultation, invited its input and met its representatives to hear their views directly.

**Richard Lyle:** I thank the cabinet secretary for the work that he is carrying out with the Showmen's Guild. Through my work as the convener of the cross-party group, I frequently come across issues that relate to the representation of showpeople in formal school documents. What further action can the Scottish Government take, perhaps through guidance, to deliver for showpeople by ensuring that they are represented as an ethnic group—they are not Travellers or Gypsies—in relevant school records and documentation?

**John Swinney:** Some of the issues that Mr Lyle raises are material to the decisions on the composition of the census, which is the responsibility of the registrar general for Scotland, and I will ensure that the registrar general hears the points that he has made. The issues that he raises were touched on in the meeting that he and I had on 15 March with Christine Stirling, who is the education liaison officer at the Showmen's Guild.

Having made those points about the classification issues, I assure Mr Lyle that the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places duties on education authorities to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of their pupils, whatever the reason is for those support needs. The act does not require a child to be identified as belonging to any particular defined group for the duties to apply. The issues and concerns that Mr Lyle raises should be taken into account by the provision that is designed to fulfil the statutory obligations on local authorities under that act.

#### **Primary Schools (Guidance on Use of Mobile Phones)**

**4. Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government when it will review its

guidance on mobile phone use in primary schools. (S5O-01288)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** The Scottish Government has no plans to review its guidance on mobile phone use in schools. We urge schools and local authorities to think carefully about how they can best utilise mobile phones to enhance education while educating learners about their appropriate use.

**Jeremy Balfour:** Is the cabinet secretary aware that two studies have identified a risk in allowing primary children access to mobile phones while attending school? Research that was carried out by the London School of Economics found that schools that restricted access to mobiles on average improved test scores by 14.2 per cent. In the USA, it has been shown that children between eight and 11 are significantly more likely to be the victims of cyberbullies if they own a mobile phone and take it to school. Given those and other findings, does the cabinet secretary agree that it is now time to ban mobile phones in all primary schools in this country?

**John Swinney:** No—I do not share that opinion. The research that Mr Balfour cites from the London School of Economics indicates what he ascribed to it, but it also notes that structured use of mobile phone technology can enhance learning and teaching.

Fundamentally, the issue comes down to the arrangements that are put in place for appropriate mobile phone use in our school system. I do not think that that should be prescribed from St Andrew's house; it should be decided by teachers in the classrooms of our schools, who should have the freedom to determine the appropriate approach to take and how mobile phones can contribute towards enhancing the learning environment.

Mr Balfour raises the significant issue of exposure to cyberbullying. I in no way minimise that, which is a significant point to be addressed. The Government needs to be part of the education process of equipping young people with the resilience to resist bullying in any circumstance—in relation to the question, that includes bullying in cyberspace. We also need to make sure that young people are educated in the proper and effective use of technology that can enhance their learning opportunities. That is how the Government will take forward the issues.

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Question 5 has not been lodged.

#### **Teacher Training (University of Aberdeen)**

**6. Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how the

number of teacher training places at the University of Aberdeen in the current academic year compares with last year. (S5O-01290)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** Student teacher intake targets are agreed annually between the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council and universities. The agreement is dependent on capacity in individual universities and subject requirements. The number of initial teacher education places available at the University of Aberdeen in the current academic year is 578, compared to 565 in 2016.

**Lewis Macdonald:** The cabinet secretary will know that across Scotland there has been a reduction in the number of postgraduate places for primary teachers, including a disappointing reduction by six places at the University of Aberdeen. Will he undertake that there will be no further reduction in the number of primary education training places at Aberdeen, and that the workforce planning model that is used for the purpose will take proper account of the continuing challenge in recruiting and retaining primary teachers in the north and north-east?

**John Swinney:** On the last question that Mr Macdonald asked, I assure him that the workforce planning model will be designed to address the requirement for recruitment to the teaching profession around the country. The model is informed by various strands of information, including the anticipated number of pupils in our schools, the level of retirement from the profession, the level of voluntary exit from the profession and a variety of other factors. The workforce planning model then drives the decisions that are made about initial teacher education intake to individual institutions. The work is undertaken openly and comprehensively using a range of information sources to enable us to arrive at the best assessment of the appropriate level of intake. That model is applied every year, and will be applied in future years.

**Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary outline what impact the teaching makes people campaign has had on the profession, and whether recent trends show an increase in the proportion of post-probationer teachers in employment?

**John Swinney:** Last year, the increase in teacher intake as a consequence of all our efforts, including the teaching makes people campaign, was a 19 per cent increase in the number of postgraduate diploma in education students in Scottish universities. The campaign has resulted in a 21 per cent increase in the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics undergraduates who are considering teaching as a

profession. The efforts that we have put into promoting the profession and encouraging people to see teaching as an opportunity to transform the life chances of individuals is proving to be successful.

I can share with Parliament that the census has indicated that the percentage of post-probationer teachers in employment increased from 58 per cent in 2010 to 87 per cent in 2016, which is a significant increase in post-probationer employment.

**Tom Mason (North East Scotland) (Con):** The cabinet secretary promised that secondary school class sizes would be no more than 25. Recently it has been reported that the number of classes with more than 30 pupils has gone up by 25 per cent. Does he have any comment on that? Will the teacher places be filled by enough people coming from colleges to reduce that gap sufficiently, so that the current generation of children will not be disadvantaged?

**John Swinney:** Recruitment into the teaching profession is a significant priority for the Government, which is why the level of places available in initial teacher education settings has increased by 77 per cent since 2010. The Government is making determined efforts to ensure that we have the appropriate number of teachers in our schools.

As I explained in my answer to Mr Macdonald a moment ago, we work with local authorities to identify the appropriate number of teachers that we need to recruit to ensure that we have an adequate supply. I am, of course, aware that there are challenges in certain subjects and in certain areas of the country, which is why the Government has put in place a number of specific measures that are designed to encourage individuals to come in to teach STEM subjects, home economics and English. We will continue to assess the scale of the workforce, and that will be driven by the information and data that come from our dialogue with local authorities on recruitment of teachers.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** Will the cabinet secretary clarify whether teacher training applications now include Scottish index of multiple deprivation data in respect of the criteria for widening access to universities? Is that data now used in assessing whether an undergraduate gets a place?

**John Swinney:** Obviously, the widening access agenda is comprehensive across all areas of recruitment to our universities. There will not be specific targets that relate to the teaching profession, but there are particular objectives that the commission on widening access set for us across the range of institutions.

As Tavish Scott will be aware, on Tuesday the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council published the information on the approach to widening access that the commission on widening access asked it to produce. That will now become an annual source of transparent reporting.

Obviously, ministers are encouraging institutions to engage strongly on the widening access agenda. That is a central part of the guidance letter that the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science issued to the sector, and it will be the subject of scrutiny of progress on the fulfilment of outcome agreements by institutions.

### Foundation Apprenticeships

**7. Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how many foundation apprenticeships there are. (S5O-01291)

**The Minister for Employability and Training (Jamie Hepburn):** We are committed to providing up to 5,000 foundation apprenticeship places by 2019. This year, we are already expanding the availability of foundation apprenticeships, and we are ensuring that they are available in all local authority areas.

Foundation apprenticeships are an additional choice for every pupil who sees the value in work-based learning. They are a new way for young people to learn, with the chance to get a head start in a career by gaining industry-recognised qualifications, working on real projects and gaining real experience that employers look for. The programme is designed to provide a challenging vocational learning experience with a focus on developing skills that employers and learners need.

For 2016-18, a total of 354 foundation apprenticeship starts were registered by the end of September 2016. In the coming weeks, we will be in a position to confirm the number of requested starts for 2017-19 foundation apprenticeships.

**Gail Ross:** The developing the young workforce initiative and the foundation apprenticeship scheme are bringing together schools, colleges and the business sector to give young people more opportunities when they are at school and when they leave it. Are there any barriers to accessing foundation apprenticeships? Are there any plans to introduce them in other sectors?

**Jamie Hepburn:** Gail Ross mentioned the developing the young workforce initiative. That is, of course, a critical element in ensuring that pupils come out of school better prepared for the world of work, and does indeed involve close engagement with employers. Ms Ross was quite right to talk about the business sector, but the initiative is, of

course, across all sectors—the public, private and third sectors. It brings close engagement between employers and the educational environment.

I have been very fortunate and privileged to have gone to the Highlands and Islands to see some of the great work that is being done there. I was not in Ms Ross's specific area, but if she would like me to visit there, I would be very happy to do so.

Foundation apprenticeships are a critical element of our developing the young workforce offer. About 400 foundation apprenticeship places are being provided in the Highlands and Islands this year. That offer is increasingly important. We are determined to grow not only the number of foundation apprenticeships, but the number of opportunities. Currently, 10 frameworks are in place, and there will shortly be 12: from 2018, there will be two new frameworks in accountancy and in food and drink operations. That demonstrates our commitment to the scheme and our determination to further embed it as an important part of the school experience.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** It was interesting to hear the minister's reply to the question. Unlike with modern apprenticeships, no statistics or numbers are published on a regular quarterly or even annual basis for foundation apprenticeships or, indeed, for graduate apprenticeships. Will the minister undertake to ensure that that information is made available, as the programme develops?

**Jamie Hepburn:** Yes, I will.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I am glad that the minister mentioned the Highlands and Islands. Unlike in the two pilot projects, in which there were seven choices, there are only two subject choices for young people in Kirkwall, Lerwick, Stornoway and Thurso, and young people in Elgin currently have only three. Can the minister assure me that the Scottish Government is committed to increasing the subject choices that are available for young people in Scotland's remote and rural communities?

**Jamie Hepburn:** Yes, I can.

**The Presiding Officer:** That was admirably brief.

### Continuing Care

**8. Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how many care-experienced and accommodated young people are eligible for continuing care, and how this compares with the number receiving it. (S5O-01292)

**The Minister for Childcare and Early Years (Mark McDonald):** Since 1 April 2015, 16-year-



olds who have been looked after in foster, kinship or residential care have been eligible for continuing care. Entitlement is being increased annually for that initial group of eligible young people until they reach the age of 21. Thereafter, all young people who are in these care placements will be eligible for continuing care between 16 and 21.

The first full year of data on continuing care will be published in the National Statistics publication "Children's Social Work Statistics" in 2019. We will consider that data and other information from local authorities to consider what is working well and what more we might need to do to ensure that looked-after young people are able to exercise their right to choose to continue living in care until 21.

**Kezia Dugdale:** I was incredibly proud of the Scottish Parliament when it introduced the continuing care provisions. I did my own freedom of information request on how well that was going and asked all Scotland's 32 local authorities about it. So far, 20 have replied, showing that 3,177 young people are eligible for continuing care but only 177 are actually receiving it. That is 99 per cent of people who are eligible to receive the provision not getting it.

Will the minister therefore agree to look at the findings of this FOI request and sit down with me to consider what we can do collectively to increase uptake of the continuing care provision?

**Mark McDonald:** I am more than happy to meet Kezia Dugdale. I am aware that she has lodged a number of written questions on the issue and she worked constructively with my predecessor during the passage of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. I can therefore give her that assurance.

We must remember that, as well as continuing care, there is after care. In the 2014 act, we estimated an approximate uptake of around 74 placements per year. I am more than happy to sit down with Kezia Dugdale and look at some of the detail that she received in the FOI responses. Obviously, we are waiting for the comprehensive picture from National Statistics before we can start to think about the different approaches that might need to be taken, but I am more than happy to discuss that.

### University Education (Access)

9. **Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that young people from Scotland are not limited in their ability to go to university. (S5O-01293)

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne**

**Somerville):** The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that all our young people have an equal chance of going to university. That is why we established the commission on widening access and why we have accepted all 34 of its recommendations in full.

Good progress on the implementation of the recommendations is being made, with all five of the Commission's foundational recommendations either delivered or on track for delivery by the recommended dates. That includes a full bursary for students with a care experience and appointment of the commissioner for fair access in December last year.

I have also established the access delivery group, which will coordinate and monitor progress on implementation of the recommendations across all parts of the education system. The group brings together all those who are responsible for delivering the recommendations, those leading delivery projects and other key stakeholders.

**Jamie Greene:** We already know that, in England, twice as many students from disadvantaged areas are going to university as in Scotland. Now we learn that the number of Scottish students enrolling at the University of Edinburgh has fallen, and there has been a 20 per cent rise in admissions of fee-paying students from the rest of the United Kingdom. Given that the number of Scottish students who are admitted is capped by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, what is the minister doing to ensure that Scottish students are not being left behind?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** That is why I was pleased that the total number of Scotland domiciled, full-time, first degree university entrants rose by 12 per cent from 25,790 in 2006-07 to 28,770 in 2015-16. Regardless, I am not complacent about the need to ensure that every young person in Scotland has the opportunity to apply to university and receive a place. That is why, in my role, I take widening access seriously and I will continue to do so.

**Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** Can the minister advise how student debt levels differ here in Scotland under a Scottish National Party Government compared to those in England under a Tory Government and in Wales under a Labour Administration?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** The latest student loan company figures, published on 15 June this year, showed that, in England, under the Conservatives, average student loan debt has risen to £32,220 and in Wales, under Labour, it is £19,280. In Northern Ireland, the average debt is almost £21,000. By contrast, Scotland has the

lowest average student loan debt by some considerable margin, at £11,740.

I am not complacent about student debt, however. As well as widening access, the Government is taking a serious look at it. That is why we have established the independent review to look into student debt, and I look forward to receiving the recommendations from that independent review later this year.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** Removing barriers to access to university is important, but so is support to complete courses. The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council tells us that 13 per cent of students from the most disadvantaged families drop out of university, which is almost twice the equivalent percentage of those from the most affluent backgrounds. Will the minister undertake to restore her Government's cuts to student grants in order to help poorer students see their studies through to completion?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** As I said in my previous answer, I await the recommendations of the independent review into student support. However, I point to the work that is already being done by this Government to seriously address the issue of retention. We have already developed recruitment and retention improvement work with our colleges and, in relation to our universities, I made it clear when I chaired the delivery group that retention was extremely important and that we are looking to widen access not to freshers fair, but to graduation. That point was taken up by the delivery group, and we will look to that in our work programme.

### Anti-Bullying Week

**10. James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it will support the respectme anti-bullying week in November 2017 to help promote respect for lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and intersex people in schools. (S5O-01294)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** Anti-bullying week aims to raise awareness of the bullying of children and young people in schools and elsewhere, and to highlight ways of preventing and responding to it. Bullying of any kind, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, is entirely unacceptable and must be addressed swiftly and effectively whenever it arises.

The theme for this year's anti-bullying week is the promotion of difference and equality in schools, and the tag line is "All different, all equal". The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will be encouraging young people, practitioners, parents and carers to share on social media what

respect means to them. In addition, respectme will undertake a number of activities during anti-bullying week, including organising a conference that will create a forum in which to showcase, share and discuss different examples of anti-bullying practice.

**James Dornan:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that, although Scotland has made great progress towards respecting members of the LGBTI community, the Scottish Government's policies can and must continue to help to create a more positive and respectful culture to help eradicate bullying in and outwith the school?

**John Swinney:** I associate the Government with those aspirations. The work that we are doing is designed to support that agenda. The findings of the most recent Scottish social attitudes survey show that discriminatory attitudes towards transgender people in Scotland are on the decline. We have taken forward a number of policy steps in that respect and we will continue with that agenda during this session of Parliament.

The progress that has been made towards inclusion for all is at the heart of our education agenda. Obviously, I have taken a number of steps, including the establishment of the inclusive education working group, to provide some of the steps forward that will be necessary to address this important question.

**Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con):** New figures show that cybersex crime offending numbers have jumped by 50 per cent in the past three years, with the analysis showing the median age of victims to be 14. How will the respectme anti-bullying week incorporate the spreading of awareness about that subject?

**John Swinney:** That approach will be at the heart of the approach to anti-bullying week. A couple of weeks ago, in Glasgow, I had the opportunity to participate in a summit on education issues in relation to sexual crime. It was organised by the Solicitor General for Scotland and was an effective opportunity to bring together a number of interested parties. The most crucial point that was made during the day concerned the importance of education and prevention to equip young people with the knowledge that they need to avoid getting into the situation of either being the victims or the perpetrators of such sexual crimes, because, as we all know, that can lead to people becoming involved in the criminal justice system, with damaging outcomes.

At the heart of the professional advice that was given to the summit was the importance of education and prevention to our ability to ensure that people avoid those negative outcomes. I am happy to assure Annie Wells of the importance that the Government attaches to the issue, and I

am grateful to the Solicitor General for taking the initiative to establish that summit and for bringing together officials from various disciplines, not just those in the criminal justice system, to work collaboratively to try to address the issue.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** At my first state secondary school, the smallest boy in my class ran over to the tallest, jumped up and head-butted him without provocation, knocking him to the ground. Bullying can be inflicted on people, causing them great pain and distress, for a host of reasons—for how they look or behave, or because of a speech impediment, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation. However, in this Parliament, it seems that we seek to elevate the latter over all other sorts of bullying. I am pleased that the cabinet secretary agrees that all bullying is wrong. Does he also agree that schools should do more to deter and deal with bullying, regardless of who is being bullied and why?

**John Swinney:** One of the fundamental characteristics of our education system, which is essential if young people are to learn effectively, is that they must, at all times, feel safe in their schools. If we do not have that feeling of safety for young people in our schools, the prospects of their being able to learn will be diminished as a consequence.

Therefore I accept the fundamental premise of Mr Gibson's question—that it is important that bullying is tackled in any circumstance in which it prevails and for whatever cause—because it will undermine the personal esteem of the young people involved and will affect their learning capability. That has the potential to blight the life chances of young people, which our education system is focused on enhancing and fulfilling.

### **Schools for the Future Programme (Dumfries Learning Town)**

11. **Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to provide additional funding for the schools for the future programme to allow phase 2 of the Dumfries learning town project to go ahead. (S5O-01295)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** Through the £1.8 billion Scotland's schools for the future programme, Dumfries and Galloway Council has been awarded significant funding of £24.5 million for the north-west campus and St Joseph's college, which form part of the Dumfries learning town project, and Dalbeattie high school.

We recognise that there is more work to be done on the school estate, which is why we will

introduce new proposals to build on the success of the programme. Options are being developed and we will announce details later this year.

**Colin Smyth:** The projects that the cabinet secretary has mentioned—the new north-west campus and Dalbeattie high school—are part of phase 1 of that project. Phase 2 proposes a new Dumfries high school, the refurbishment of Dumfries academy and new Loreburn, Laurieknowe and Noblehill primaries, not to mention innovative work that will take place with partners in business and further and higher education to make Dumfries truly the learning town. Does the cabinet secretary agree that the project will transform education in Dumfries, and will he ensure that phase 2 becomes a reality by making it a priority for future Government funding?

**John Swinney:** I am very familiar with the issues. I visited Dumfries high school just the other week, and I saw, and was briefed on, the work that is being undertaken on the learning town project. I recognise the very good work that is being done at the local level to advance such a proposition.

As I indicated in my initial answer, we are considering options in relation to the development of the schools for the future programme, and further announcements will be made by the Government in due course, when the details are to hand. However, I hear the points that Mr Smyth makes about the Dumfries learning town proposal.

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** I share the Labour member's aspirations for learning. Does the cabinet secretary agree that there would be far more opportunity for such developments were we not saddled with the private finance debt that was left by the Labour Government, which now costs Scottish taxpayers more than £1 billion a year?

**John Swinney:** We certainly are saddled with a tremendous amount of private finance initiative debt, which the Government, along with our local authority partners, has to service. The investment that the Government is making is designed to create a sustainable school estate. The school estate would have been more sustainable had we not been burdened with the PFI obligations that were bequeathed to us by the Labour Party.

### **Support for Young People (Paisley)**

12. **George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it is investing in supporting young people in Paisley. (S5O-01296)

**The Minister for Employability and Training (Jamie Hepburn):** Improving the education and life chances of children and young people is the defining mission of the Government. The Scottish Government provides to young people in Paisley a range of support that is aimed at improving

educational outcomes and employment prospects. This year, the Scottish attainment challenge is providing almost £7.8 million of extra resources for schools in Renfrewshire through pupil equity funding and the challenge authorities programme, which provides support to schools that support children and young people who live in communities affected by high levels of deprivation.

In addition, Renfrewshire Council received £275,000 from the innovation fund in 2016-17, which was used in schools to continue to build on approaches that are already making a difference, such as family learning projects within schools. That was done in partnership with the local authority and external partners.

Since April 2017, there have been 140 modern apprenticeship starts and more than 90 starts under the employability fund in Renfrewshire. As of June 2017, there were almost 650 apprentices in training in the area. The community jobs Scotland programme has 32 employers in the Renfrewshire area and more than 160 young people have benefited from a job training opportunity.

**George Adam:** Does the minister agree that the invest in Renfrewshire programme—which recently relocated to Paisley’s historic Russell institute building in the town centre along with Skills Development Scotland and is part funded by the European social fund—is a perfect example of how training and the resulting skills can encourage employability, and that that approach can be sustained in towns such as Paisley?

**Jamie Hepburn:** I am aware of the invest in Renfrewshire initiative and its recent relocation and co-location with Skills Development Scotland. The best way to illustrate its success is to point out that, when the programme was launched in July 2012, Renfrewshire was 27th out of the 32 local authorities for youth unemployment, that it is currently fourth in Scotland and that it saw the biggest youth employment growth in Scotland for three years running. That says something about the programme’s success.

I am also hugely enthusiastic about the initiative’s recent co-location with Skills Development Scotland at the Russell institute. That is a good approach that builds on the success of the initiative and uses Skills Development Scotland’s skill set.

George Adam correctly identified that European Union funds had been used for the invest in Renfrewshire initiative. Of course, there is significant concern about the long-term funding prospects as a result of Brexit. We continue to look for clarity on that matter from the United Kingdom Government.

## Teachers’ Working Conditions

**13. Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government what consideration it has given to recent research from Bath Spa University suggesting that exposure to high levels of organisational change without listening to the views of teachers is contributing to extremely poor working conditions for teachers in Scotland. (S5O-01297)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** The Scottish Government welcomes all discussion on how to improve conditions for teachers in Scotland and will give the report full consideration. We want to create a world-class education system that helps all our children to succeed. Highly skilled, motivated and appropriately rewarded teaching professionals are, of course, an integral part of that. The Scottish Government has been working with teachers, teacher trade unions, local authorities and other partners to address concerns around workload levels, and that will continue to be a key theme of our education reforms.

**Ross Greer:** The report is not the only one to say what it said; in fact, it was not the only one in the week that it was published to say it. The Scottish Government’s own international education advisers, as well as academics who responded to its consultation, have indicated that there is no evidence that organisational reform links directly to improved education outcomes. If people in the education sector are so hostile to the Government’s reforms, and if academics say that there is no evidence for them, why is the Government not taking an evidence-led approach to education reform?

**John Swinney:** The Government is taking an evidence-led approach to education reform. We engage strongly in the pursuit of that objective. The evidence suggests that greater empowerment for schools will significantly enhance the performance of our education system. School empowerment is at the heart of the Government’s education reform agenda in order to ensure that more decisions that affect the learning of young people can be taken as close as possible to those young people.

I am also taking an evidence-led approach to the provision of professional and pedagogical support to the school community. The professional associations have been clear that the regional collaboration that the Government proposes will be of assistance in strengthening that support for professional practice.

The Government will continue to engage with all interested parties on that agenda. However, our objective is clear: to ensure that we strengthen the

effectiveness of the education system by putting in place greater professional support and by empowering the teaching profession.

### Medical School Places

14. **Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to expand the number of places at medical schools for Scottish-domiciled students. (S5O-01298)

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville):** We are committed to building a sustainable medical workforce for the future and welcome students from Scotland, the rest of the United Kingdom and the European Union who want to study and work here. We are taking action to increase the supply of Scottish medical school graduates and to retain those graduates working in NHS Scotland.

We have invested £23 million in a medical education package, which has increased medical undergraduate places by 50 over 2016. Scotland's first graduate medical entry programme—ScotGEM—will commence next year and will create an additional 40 places.

Part 1 of the national health and social care workforce plan, which was published in June, commits to a further increase in undergraduate numbers of 50 to 100

“throughout the course of this Parliamentary term”.

**Miles Briggs:** Does the minister accept that, under the SNP Government, the percentage of Scotland-domiciled students studying clinical medicine has fallen sharply, from almost two thirds to just 50 per cent, and that too many bright young Scots are being denied the chance to study medicine at Scottish universities? Given that ministers themselves now acknowledge that Scotland-domiciled medical students are more likely than others to choose to work in our national health service when they qualify, will the Scottish Government urgently look at the matter, to ensure that more Scottish students are able to study medicine in our universities?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** Although the Scottish Government sets the annual intake into medicine, in line with academic freedom the selection and recruitment of individual students admitted to study medicine is a matter for individual universities.

However, as I told Miles Briggs in my first answer, the work that has already been undertaken by this Government to encourage and ensure that we have further recruitment of Scotland-domiciled students includes the increase in medical undergraduate places, the introduction of a graduate entry medical programme, and the

introduction of a pre-medical entry programme that is focused on students from socially deprived backgrounds. Therefore, the Government is already taking action in this area.

## Air Quality

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is a statement by Roseanna Cunningham on air quality, delivering improvements for public health and the environment. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of her statement, so there should be no interventions.

14:42

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** Overall, Scotland's air quality is good, but we have a number of localised hotspots in some of our towns and cities where additional action is required. We are working closely with local authorities and other partners to tackle those. We are very clear on our vision for air quality in Scotland: we want Scotland's to be the best in Europe.

Air pollution remains a significant public health and social justice issue. Improving air quality is important for the contribution that it makes to everyone's quality of life. For some groups in society—the very young and old, and those with respiratory and cardiovascular conditions—it is even more fundamental. There is no doubt that improving air quality will result in improved health, while also delivering more attractive places for living, working and enjoying recreation.

The evidence on health impacts shows that poor air quality reduces average life expectancy in Scotland by three to four months. Although that may be lower than elsewhere in the United Kingdom, it is still unacceptable, so action is required. The cleaner air for Scotland strategy sets out an ambitious work programme to deliver further air quality improvements.

Earlier this year, the first national clean air day was successfully staged. During it, we published the first cleaner air for Scotland progress report, setting out actions that have already been delivered and the current status of other actions to enhance our air quality. In that strategy, we set out our ambition for low-emission zones to be in place by 2020. We have since stepped up that ambition significantly.

LEZs set minimum emission standards for vehicle access to a defined area. We want LEZs to help us achieve, and go beyond, statutory air quality requirements. In particular, we believe that LEZs should focus on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, which are two pollutants of special concern for human health. In last year's programme for government, we committed to put in place the first LEZ by 2018. In this year's programme, we have gone further and have

committed to establishing LEZs in each of our four biggest cities between 2018 and 2020. By 2023, that will be extended into other air quality management areas where the national low-emission framework demonstrates their value. Delivering multiple LEZs across Scotland is ambitious. It represents the largest-ever programme of transport-based air quality mitigation in Scotland.

We are also working to further improve air quality by reducing vehicle exhaust emissions. The programme for government sets a bold new ambition on ultra-low-emission vehicles, including electric cars and vans, with a target of phasing out the need for petrol and diesel vehicles by 2032.

We will expand the electric vehicle charging network, support innovative approaches and encourage the public sector to lead the way. The ambition is underpinned by our recently published action plan "Switched On Scotland Phase Two", and it builds on the range of incentives that we already provide to local authorities, businesses and individuals.

Delivery of those ambitions requires clear structures to maximise the benefits of this partnership. We have engaged with Glasgow and Edinburgh city councils to establish LEZ delivery groups. We have also contacted Aberdeen and Dundee city councils to discuss how similar groups could be established for their cities. The delivery groups will be supported by an independent senior scientific practitioner, who will offer a critical challenge function around the delivery of LEZs.

We will also create an LEZ leadership group across the four cities to ensure that knowledge sharing happens in a co-ordinated and constructive way, so that nationally consistent standards are applied and lessons shared. That will be a ministerially led group and, with the Minister for Transport and the Islands, I have written to invite those councils to join the group.

The decision on LEZ locations and design will be led by local authorities, in partnership with the Scottish Government and regional transport partnerships. I look forward to announcing shortly where the first LEZ will be. That will build on that council's assessment of the evidence base that has been developed in partnership with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Transport Scotland. I know that councils are supportive of that evidence—both in assessing needs and in supporting their assessment of community and business engagement in demonstrating benefits. That evidence will be critical in determining which types of vehicles should be restricted and when. Each area will have its own specific requirements.

On 6 September we launched the LEZ consultation; it is open until 28 November. The consultation gives us the opportunity to seek views and opinions from business, the general public and other interested parties on issues that will shape our LEZ guiding principles. Those principles will ultimately aid local authorities in the design, establishment and operation of Scottish LEZs in a consistent manner.

Initial media reports suggested that there would be an immediate banning of cars and buses in 2018. That was inaccurate and misleading, and it missed many of the key points that we need to get across about benefits and managing change.

We are proposing that local authorities identify specific vehicle types that would not be allowed to enter an LEZ. That would mean that such vehicles would be subject to a financial penalty if they illegally entered a zone. We want to avoid such breaches. That is quite different from the approach that is used in other parts of the UK, where a road charge can be paid to enter. The road pricing idea is not the approach that is being suggested for Scotland.

Stakeholder engagement during the consultation's development made it very clear that there is a need for robust lead-in periods. Lead-in times will allow commercial fleet operators and private vehicle owners time to prepare and manage the change as part of fleet management. The proposal is that a lead-in period will start once a local authority has declared an LEZ design and location, and it will run for a period after the LEZ is established. European LEZs have set variable time frames for lead-in periods, typically lasting from one to four years. We want to hear the views of a wide range of stakeholders on those very important and practical issues.

A phased introduction of vehicle types to be included in each LEZ is expected. Local authorities may decide to include private cars—as is their right—at some point if they believe that such emission sources are significant enough to warrant inclusion. The precise arrangements will be in city-specific design plans.

I would like to draw particular attention to our bus sector, which has been and will continue to be an integral partner in assisting the Government to improve air quality. Buses are a key solution to our air quality challenges, offering commuters an alternative to the private car. They are not villains—clean, low-emission buses are an opportunity. By encouraging behaviour change that moves people out of cars and into efficient and low-emission buses, we will help to reduce congestion and emissions at the same time. Those things must go hand in hand. The first LEZ will act as a case study in how the two issues can interact.

We will shortly announce the winners of the seventh round of the Scottish green bus fund, which will bring forward another 47 low-emission buses. Beyond that, the programme for government outlined our ambition to extend Government support to accelerate the industry's move towards buying the lowest-emitting buses. Those new buses mean a step change in emissions performance, with a better offer for passengers, thereby making buses an attractive mode of choice.

In the short term, to address the air quality challenge, we are exploring options to support the sector this financial year. Support will be targeted at bus retrofitting. We are engaging with the sector, so that we can better understand the technological opportunities and challenges that retrofitting will bring.

LEZs should interact with a host of other transport policies, including action to tackle congestion, to support modal shift towards more active travel and public transport, to deliver climate change mitigation, and to support planners in making our towns and cities more pleasant spaces in which to live, work and spend leisure time.

LEZs will be designed on the basis of clear evidence that identifies the air quality issues in a given location and the specific vehicle types that cause air pollution. That will enable the size of the zone and the delivery requirements to be determined and established.

We are conscious that, in designing LEZs, potential knock-on effects must be considered. We must be alive to the displacement of air pollution to other areas. We must ensure that LEZs are delivered in an equitable manner, with consideration being given to equality issues, particularly for communities who rely on public transport to move around our towns and cities.

On funding, investment will be considered in the forthcoming spending review. Costs that are associated with LEZs, such as enforcement costs and retrofitting grants, will depend on the type and scale of the LEZs, as decided by the local authorities.

We need the views of a wide range of people across Scotland. I ask members to highlight the opportunities that well-designed LEZs bring and to encourage their constituents to respond to "Building Scotland's Low Emission Zones: A Consultation". The public are a key partner in our work to promote air quality and will be the principal beneficiary.

**The Presiding Officer:** We have around 20 minutes for questions.

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con):** I thank the cabinet secretary for giving members prior sight of her statement.

The Scottish Conservatives broadly welcome many of the proposals in the programme for government on reducing air pollution, which present a positive and constructive step forward. However, we think that the plans fall short of expectations and need to go further.

The Scottish Conservatives take an ambitious and bold approach to reducing air pollution, for example by expanding the network of air quality monitors, in particular by introducing them in primary schools.

Last year, I met the Minister for Transport and the Islands to discuss the establishment of urban consolidation hubs, which are an essential component of low-emission zones in that they remove, in a commercially feasible way, the requirement for freight to enter city centres. Glasgow airport would be an ideal location for such a centre, and I urge the Government to consider the idea. What support is being provided to local authorities and businesses on the creation of urban consolidation hubs?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The member has raised urban consolidation hubs previously and, as he said, he is having meetings—constructive ones, I hope—with the transport minister on the matter.

Some of the issues are for local authorities to consider. We are trying to empower local authorities to move ahead with what they consider to be the most appropriate approach for their areas, and we are providing support—I indicated that support will become available through the budget process this year and next year. I imagine that there is bound to be consideration of transport hubs, where appropriate. Currently, the Government is not specifying where hubs might be appropriate; we expect there to be communication, which will allow us to develop a network of hubs, where they might be useful, if they are considered to be required. I am sure that the member and others will have a continuing conversation with the transport minister in that regard.

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I, too, thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of her statement.

The key issue across the chamber is how we improve air quality. Scotland has failed to meet European air quality targets in Glasgow, and across our cities and towns there are hotspots of air pollution that adversely affect the health of our children, the elderly and the ill. Can the cabinet secretary confirm that Scotland is on track to meet the initial 2018 low-emission zone target, and can she reassure the Parliament that the 2020 target,

which has just been announced, will be met as well? What is the budget for the air quality fund? Will LEZs have vehicle-recognition software such as is used in London to detect buses and heavy goods vehicles that breach the Euro 6 emissions standards?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The member's last point is important when it comes to the consideration of funding. When LEZs are brought into being, it is important that they are workable and manageable, and we must plan for them in advance in order to achieve them. Until we know where the LEZs are to be and what those local authorities are seeking to do in the short, medium and longer terms, it is difficult to give precise answers on the issue of funding. An LEZ in one city might look very different from an LEZ in another city. We have talked about a roll-out beyond the four major cities after 2020, and we expect a variety of different plans to be produced.

The discussions about the first LEZ are active and on-going. We are in active conversation with Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen, which are the four cities in which we are looking to have LEZs by 2020. Beyond that, a decision will have to be made about the air quality management areas and whether low-emission zones should be rolled out in those. We will have to consider precisely what is being asked for in each location before we will know the precise figures that will go with that.

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** I wonder what role the Scottish Government sees for green infrastructure in tackling poor air quality. Urban greenery not only helps to reduce the amount of atmospheric pollutants that people are exposed to but contributes to biodiversity. I recognise that placing an increased emphasis on that would require a shift in planning policy to the extent that "shoulds" would become "musts". Does the Government see a place for that in supplementing the measures that were noted in the cabinet secretary's statement?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** Everybody probably agrees that improving air quality in towns and cities offers many important advantages. Public health is our first priority in that area, but such measures can also make our towns and cities more attractive places to live.

When I was last in this job, we began progress on the central Scotland green network, and an explicit part of the work on the central Scotland green network was that it would, among other things, provide attractive places for businesses and employers, who look for a range of amenity when they seek to invest, to come to. It is incredibly important that we remind ourselves that there are other benefits to be had from improving air quality in Scotland, reducing the level of



pollutants and ensuring that our cities are greener and more pleasant places to live. Reducing the risk of flooding is also part and parcel of that. Those are all planning issues and perfectly valid issues that planners can take on board.

If members are not aware of the central Scotland green network, I urge them to make themselves aware of it. It is a big example of how important green infrastructure can be in tackling not just air quality but a whole range of things.

**Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Research by the British Lung Foundation has noted:

“Children growing up in areas of severe air pollution have been shown to be five times more likely to have poor lung development”.

Will the cabinet secretary commit to working in collaboration with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport in that area? What specific action will she take to ensure that the impact of air pollution on the health of Scotland’s children is reduced?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I have said that health is one of the key drivers when we are looking to improve air quality, although there are other benefits. I am grateful to the British Heart Foundation for endorsing our approach. There is recognition that what we are trying hard to produce benefits the health of all of our population regardless of age. The member is right to talk about young people but, of course, it is not just the young who are affected—the elderly and those who have pre-existing conditions can be badly hit by poor air quality, too. Those are the three most vulnerable groups that we expect local authorities to look at when considering how to take forward LEZs. Indeed, they must be a key part of their considerations.

The member’s reference to children could take me on to a discussion about air quality monitoring around schools. I am not sure whether the member wanted me to cover that topic, but I will say that our monitoring programme is sufficiently robust to pick up any issues around schools. We would expect the schools issue to be part of any consideration that a local authority might make on a LEZ.

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** My question is a bit similar to Donald Cameron’s question. Will the cabinet secretary expand on whether concerns about emissions of particulates and nitrogen dioxide, which cause irritation of the respiratory system and exacerbate existing conditions in vulnerable individuals, including kids, were part of the reasoning behind the plans to establish more low-emission zones?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I thank the member for her question—it is perfectly legitimate for people to want to emphasise the public health

aspects. In my previous response to Donald Cameron, I meant to say that I am working with those in the health portfolio, and the impact of air pollution on health has been flagged up to them as a very serious issue. I have had conversations with consultants and commended them to my colleagues in health in order to ensure that they are aware of some of the same things that we are conscious of.

Emma Harper asked about those who are suffering from existing cardiovascular problems. One of our slight difficulties is that, although there is information about health, the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants, which made the original estimation that particulate matter shortens a person’s life in Scotland by three to four months, has warned that there are uncertainties with the statistics, and it is concerned that they should not be used as the basis for public policy interventions. Of course, it is very difficult to ignore the information that we have from the committee.

I think we can conclude that any measures that improve air quality at a population level would have a positive impact on public health. That instinctively feels like the right place to be. However, we are unable to break down the information to a regional or local level and capture the public health impacts of individual measures, such as LEZs. That information is not available to us yet.

**Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab):** I am pleased that the cabinet secretary recognises that, if we want to improve air quality, we need to see a modal shift towards buses. The cabinet secretary will be aware that, since the Scottish National Party came to power in 2007, the number of bus passenger journeys has fallen by 78 million and that almost 70 million vehicle kilometres have been stripped out of the bus network. We are not going to get people on buses if there are no buses for them to get on, and we are not going to get people on buses if fares continue to rise.

Does the cabinet secretary accept that the Government should not take decisions that could lead to increases in bus fares? Does she see that we need bus regulation to provide the public transport system that the public need?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** As one of the members of Parliament who uses buses, I—along with everyone else who uses buses—am understandably of the view that I would always want to have the widest possible availability of bus routes while not being charged too much. We are in a situation where a lot of the decisions are being made by bus companies, and an active conversation about the situation is going on in many local places.

I am sure that Neil Bibby has raised the particular issues with buses with the Minister for Transport and the Islands. I know that we do not want LEZs to feed through to what might be seen as a negative impact on buses. We have committed quite a lot of funding to the various bus companies to ensure that they can make the shift that they need to make towards the use of more efficient vehicles. We do not want to end up in a situation where those costs are fed through to passengers. A lot of progress is being made.

Although that might not answer the bigger, more ideological question that the member asked, I am sure that he would expect us to be aware of the potential dangers and to have them at the forefront of our minds when we have those discussions at local authority level.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** On behalf of the Greens, I welcome the cabinet secretary's statement, but the fact that—as has been acknowledged—it can take up to four years to roll out an LEZ perhaps suggests that the statement is three years too late.

I want to ask the cabinet secretary about funding for the LEZ work. In the summer, the UK Government announced that an additional £200 million would be spent on tackling nitrous oxide at the roadside. The Scottish Government is putting only £2 million into council work on air quality. Will every last penny of the Barnett consequential that will come from that £200 million be spent on tackling nitrous oxide in Scotland and, as a result of that, saving lives?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I think that the Government has a good record in this area. I appreciate that Mark Ruskell might have wanted all the action that we are taking to have been taken not just three but 10 or 15 years ago, but the fact is that we are taking it now. We have better air quality than the rest of the UK does. There have been big achievements. Considerable funding has been put into areas that will affect air quality, and that will continue to be the case.

I indicated that there will be budget discussions about low-emission zones. I will not comment on Barnett consequential—as I am sure Mark Ruskell knows, it would be more relevant to put that issue to my colleague the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution. At the moment, we are considering LEZ funding in the context of the forthcoming spending review. We recognise that it is an additional cost pressure, but we will definitely consider it. The extent of the cost will be influenced by LEZ sizes. As far as the global amounts are concerned, I am sure that Derek Mackay would be happy to engage with Mr Ruskell on that more strategic issue of funding.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I thank the cabinet secretary for providing early sight of her statement and for much of its content, and for reiterating my call for not just the expansion of the electric vehicle network but efforts to improve its reliability, not least through better and more timely maintenance.

What assurances can the cabinet secretary provide that progress on LEZs in Scotland's four largest cities will not undermine investment, support and focus on initiatives in other parts of the country—our rural as well as our urban areas?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** That is a separate area of funding and a separate area of conversation. I am conscious that other announcements have been made about electric vehicles—I mentioned some of them in my statement—the effect of which will apply right across Scotland and will not be confined to those parts of the country with LEZs. There are a number of issues surrounding the move towards greater use of electric cars and vans.

I think that Orkney got a special mention with regard to electric buses—I am looking to Mr McArthur to confirm that that is correct. I am glad that he endorses my recollection. That is a good illustration of the fact that the issue is one for the whole of the country. We will see electric vehicles in rural as well as urban areas, despite people assuming that they are really a matter for cities rather than country areas.

**The Presiding Officer:** We are a little tighter for time than I originally envisaged that we would be, but if we are quick, we will get a few more questions in.

**Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** Following on from that last question, the cabinet secretary mentioned that there are localised emission hotspots in some of our towns and cities, some of which are in Falkirk district, and we know that the majority of such emissions that contribute to ill health come from cars and light vans. Notwithstanding her reply to Liam McArthur, can the cabinet secretary set out how the Government is encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles, thereby reducing vehicle exhaust emissions, and does she agree that that makes our cities more attractive places to live, work and visit, which is ultimately good for business and our economy?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** Indeed—the answer to the final point is yes. I am sure that other members noted the list of Scottish air quality monitoring sites that was published by Friends of the Earth back in January 2017, with what we might describe as its dirty top 10. It was actually eight for nitrogen dioxide and six for particulate matter, including some that might surprise those people who assume that it is an urban or big city

problem—it is not. Some of the places on the list, particularly for particulates, were not in big cities—I know that, because one of them is in my constituency—and that would probably come as a surprise to many people.

Localised emission hotspots come from a variety of vehicle sources. It is not always the case that the majority of those emissions come from cars and light vans, which is often the first assumption. That is why I mentioned some of the more surprising admissions to the list. There is no doubt that the uptake of electric vehicles and clean modern petrol and diesel will make our cities more attractive places to live, work and visit.

I have talked about the programme for government and the bold new ambition on ultra-low-emission vehicles, including electric cars and vans. We will support that approach with the expansion of the ChargePlace Scotland charging network and by encouraging the public sector to lead the way on electric vehicles. That is an important point to make—we in the public sector can be leaders on that. In a sense, it really is about us being in a place that says “Do as we do”, not “Do as we say.”

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** The cabinet secretary says that local authorities will ultimately be responsible for designing their own LEZs. That could lead to a situation in which we have a number of separate rules and regulations. It is businesses that operate many of the vehicles that might be affected by the restrictions and those businesses operate in multiple zones. Does the cabinet secretary recognise the potential confusion that might arise from a multiple regulatory environment? How will she find a balance between achieving the positive change in air quality that we all want and not causing any substantial detrimental effect to our cities' economies?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** When we are talking about different designs in different parts of the country, the key to Jamie Greene's legitimate concern is the consultation that is on-going and the development of the national low-emission framework, within which we will operate. That development will be supported by the work of the cleaner air for Scotland governance group—that is the first LEZ. It will be designed in a manner consistent with the national discussion on the NLEF, and we will use the experience of putting in place the first LEZ to inform that national low-emission framework. In a sense, we are already looking forward to how we can ensure that there is a broad framework within which LEZs will be created, which will still allow local authorities to make the more individuated decisions that they will require to make to deal with their local circumstances.

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you. I apologise to members who did not get their questions in. We must move to our next debate.

## City of Culture Bids (Paisley and Dundee)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-07862, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on recognising and supporting Paisley's 2021 United Kingdom city of culture and Dundee's 2023 European capital of culture bids. I call on Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, to speak to and move the motion. Cabinet secretary—you have 12 minutes or thereabouts, please.

15:14

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** Thank you, Presiding Officer.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us".

Those are the famous lines that open "A Tale of Two Cities" and which highlight one of the novel's most prominent motifs and structural figures: doubles. Throughout the novel, Dickens asserts his belief in the possibility of resurrection and transformation on both personal and societal levels. It is fitting, then, that we are here to debate two places—Paisley and Dundee—that have such ambitious, transformative and inspiring plans. Before a member intervenes to highlight the fact that Paisley is not a city, I suggest that although Scotland's largest town might not be a city, it has the ambitions of one.

The timing for the debate is opportune: Paisley's final bid to become the 2021 UK city of culture will be submitted on Friday, and Dundee's 2023 European capital of culture bid is due in on 27 October. Both bids could be outstanding successes for Scotland, the UK and Europe, and I am sure that the judging panels will appreciate the quality and substance of both.

A key strength of culture is that it invites us to reflect on who we are and gives us an understanding of what we can be and become as individuals, as communities, as towns, as cities and as a country. What excites me about Paisley's and Dundee's bids is that they are committed, bold and ambitious. Paisley and Dundee recognise the fundamental importance of culture to place, and the profound impact that it has on our quality of life. They understand, as we do, that culture is pivotal in our wellbeing, and their bids say so much about the type of town, city and country that they are and want us to be. Paisley's and

Dundee's bids have much in common with each other, with their focus on people, communities and connections.

I will begin with Paisley, whose bid journey has been inspiring. It began two years ago, with hundreds of people gathered in picturesque Paisley abbey for the official launch. The Paisley bid has been developed through extensive community engagement: the people of Paisley have helped to put together a strong bid for Paisley and for Scotland. More than 30,000 Paisley people—or buddies—have been engaged in the process of developing the bid, which has broad-based community support. It is part of a broader heritage and culture-led regeneration strategy to transform Paisley into a vibrant cultural and creative destination.

A year-long programme of events has been outlined, with themes that are authentic to Paisley and which have been co-produced with Paisley's communities. The themes have been inspired by the rich textile heritage of Paisley—the iconic Paisley pattern—and the character of the people. The programme is also designed to have wide appeal to a range of audiences and will be inclusive and accessible by all.

The bid has reached far and wide: from every Renfrewshire school pupil, to limited edition Paisley-branded bottles of Johnnie Walker, to the Paisley pattern being set to feature in luxury knitwear in Pringle of Scotland's upcoming autumn and winter collection. Paisley has it all.

However, what made a lasting impression on me as being perhaps the most imaginative part of the programme that I witnessed involves iconic Paisley landmarks and famous faces being reimaged in a stunning Lego animation film by local teenager Morgan Spence, in which the 17-year-old perfectly captures Paisley buddies in action, including actors David Tennant and Gerard Butler, and singer Paolo Nutini, which led me to reflect: why do all the cool folk come from Paisley? The film encapsulates the energy, enthusiasm and fresh approach of Paisley's bid.

Winning the competition will bring with it significant economic, social and cultural benefits, too. Renfrewshire Council has cited that the estimated economic boost over a 10-year period is in the region of 4,700 jobs and £172 million gross value added. I pay tribute to the vision and support of the previous and current leadership of Renfrewshire Council. I also thank Derek Mackay MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution, for his firm financial backing for the bid. I pay tribute, too, to the 2021 Paisley bid team, some of whom are in the gallery today, but I also acknowledge that it is the involvement of the communities of Paisley and the embracing of culture by the entire town—all the buddies—that

are what make Paisley's bid so special. I also acknowledge the enthusiastic championing of the Paisley bid by local MSPs of all parties.

We are not here to focus solely on Paisley: this is a tale of two places. I recall standing here almost four years ago offering my full support for Dundee's 2017 United Kingdom city of culture bid. Although Dundee narrowly missed out to Hull, it has been on an incredibly inspiring journey since then. In that time, tens of thousands of voices from across the city of discovery—from artists to festival directors, from musicians to librarians and from bakers to builders—have helped to take the city to the next level. Dundee led a successful bid to become the UK's first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization city of design. The city of discovery is on a pioneering journey with an illustrious network of cities of design, from Berlin to Saint-Étienne to Bilbao, all of which are outstanding contributors to areas of creativity and design.

Dundee is not standing still, however; it is building on its UNESCO status and learning from other European cities and approaches. With its rich cultural heritage and exciting future, Dundee can be a beacon of creativity to the world. It is a city that continuously seeks to create further opportunities to share and to celebrate. The V&A museum of design in Dundee, which will open next year and which has the Scottish Government as its major financial backer, is the flagship development of the city's waterfront regeneration. Securing the V&A has increased the national and international profile of the waterfront development and of the city. V&A Dundee will attract hundreds of thousands of visitors from across Scotland and the globe, and will redefine Dundee's offer as a place to visit, to live, to study and to work.

It is little wonder, then, that Dundonians are striving to ensure that their city becomes the next European capital of culture, following on from Glasgow's success as UK city of culture in 1990. To get Dundee to that place, local voices have been heard in schools, community centres, art galleries, museums, universities and libraries, and on buses and on the streets. The strapline is, "Be brilliant!" and I am sure that that brilliance will shine through as the bid develops. People are excited, engaged and enthused. A recent edition of the Dundee *Courier* carried the faces and voices of more than 600 local people with their thoughts about Dundee and Europe. It was an extraordinary endorsement of Dundee's support for being a European city—not just a city in Europe.

I cannot give much away before the bid is submitted, but Dundee's European capital of culture year will be like no other. It will be packed with cultural celebrations that will ignite the heart

and show the richness of the region to the rest of Europe. Local, national and international artists will be involved in a huge range of exciting events and festivals, with practitioners from Stirling to Stornoway to Seville. Gaming, digital and design are at the heart of the bid and will be key factors in helping to secure the win.

Dundee is theming the bid around the concept of connections and the exciting opportunity to strengthen Scotland's cultural ties with Europe and to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage. The bid is for the city, but it is also for the region, so Angus, Perth and Fife are all contributing creatively to it. It is a bid for Scotland. Local members of the Scottish Parliament Shona Robison and Joe FitzPatrick, who will close the debate for the Government, are passionate advocates for Dundee and the bid.

The designation has tangible benefits. Dundee cites that it would bring 1,600 jobs and 500,000 extra visitors, and that the Tay cities area's gross domestic product would grow by 4.5 per cent. The programme of events for the year would leave a lasting legacy. Dundee's bid will create new partnerships and ventures and will explore new ways to reach out and inspire new audiences at home and around the world, by promoting our cultural and creative talent and showcasing our inspiring buildings, design and places to our European partners.

Although Scotland is steeped in meaning and history, it is continually on the move as a country—celebrating its past while seeking new and innovative ways to engage with the world. We are proud of our diverse heritage and traditions, but we continually seek to create opportunities to share and to celebrate. To reflect on that perspective more nationally, working in partnership with Glasgow, our national agencies and other partners in the Glasgow commonwealth games delivered a hugely successful and vibrant year for Scotland. We demonstrated the richness of our cultural life and the depth of our talent, and we celebrated the very best of Scots creativity and cultural heritage. The world was watching. The Commonwealth Games Federation highlighted that it was the best games ever, and the accompanying cultural programme was a significant factor in that success.

We are looking forward to next year's European championships, which will highlight Scotland as a welcoming and culturally rich destination for visitors from around the world.

Such events and the cultural events that are connected to them can make a big difference to attracting people to visit Scotland. The bids from Paisley and Dundee would, if successful, result in a huge addition to what we can do in telling our cultural story and in using culture to bring people

to the country. They can have a huge impact on Scotland's visitor economy, in terms of the income that is generated, but more important is that they can enable more people to access, enjoy and participate in the wide range of benefits that they deliver to individuals, communities and the country. There are other benefits, including the confidence to be creative and imaginative, and to shape and direct the future on these shores and beyond. I am delighted about the potential that the bids offer for Paisley, Dundee, Scotland, the rest of the UK and Europe.

Culture has a vital role in promoting outward-looking, welcoming and progressive values, which are perhaps more important now than they have been in recent years. International engagement makes a crucial contribution to sustainable economic growth by bringing different perspectives, ideas and partnerships. I want a Scotland in which people are free to express their creativity—a nation that is confident in participating on the world stage, and in which we build cultural bridges with our European and international partners. Those connections, the relationships that we build on them and the value of our Scottish brand and heritage help to open doors across the world.

Paisley's and Dundee's bids are exciting prospects. They fit well with the Government's ambitions. We recognise the significant contribution that the cities make to Scotland's rich cultural life, and the local and national boosts that the bids' successes will bring.

In "A Tale of Two Cities", Dickens created and developed a theme of regeneration. Dundee and Paisley are two places that have innovative, inspiring and engaging plans to re-energise, reinvent and reimagine, so I am pleased to confirm the Government's support for Paisley's bid to be the 2021 UK city of culture and Dundee's bid to be the 2023 European capital of culture.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the significant contributions that the communities of Paisley and Dundee make to Scotland's rich tapestry of cultural life and the local, national and international boosts that Paisley's 2021 UK City of Culture and Dundee's 2023 European Capital of Culture bids will bring; fully supports both bids, which will promote Scotland's cultural and creative talent and showcase its inspiring building design and places to UK and European partners; notes that the Paisley bid will deliver a spectacular year-long cultural and events programme inspired by the rich textile heritage of the city and will be inclusive, accessible and appeal to a range of local, national and international audiences; recognises that the bid is part of broader heritage and culture-led regeneration plans seeking to transform Paisley into a vibrant cultural destination, growing the cultural, creative and visitor economy, and re-positioning Paisley as a place recognised for cultural excellence; further recognises that Dundee is on a pioneering journey with culture and creativity driving the continuing regeneration of the city and

its waterfront, which includes a world-class design museum in the V&A; supports Dundee's plans to build on its UNESCO City of Design status, learning from other European cities' approaches, and supports the valuable role that the bid will have in promoting Dundee's rich cultural heritage and exciting future.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Before I call the next speaker, I remind members that if they want to speak in the debate, there is a wee thing that they have to do: press their request-to-speak buttons.

I call Liam Kerr to open for the Conservatives.

15:27

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** I am delighted to be speaking in the debate, and I am grateful to Fiona Hyslop for giving Parliament the opportunity to signal our support for the Paisley 2021 UK city of culture bid and the Dundee 2023 European capital of culture bid. The Scottish Conservatives recognise the significant contributions that the communities of Paisley and Dundee have made and continue to make to Scotland's culture, and the enormous national and international benefits that the hopefully successful bids will bring. That is why we will be pleased to vote in favour of the motion today.

The inaugural UK city of culture was Derry-Londonderry in 2013. In 2017, Kingston upon Hull took the title. If successful, Paisley will become the third UK city of culture and the first Scottish holder of the title.

Those of a legal persuasion will know all about Paisley. It is the hallowed ground where in 1928 a Mrs Donoghue allegedly—that is a legal joke—found a dead snail in a bottle of ginger beer. She became ill, sued Mr Stevenson, the manufacturer, and created the modern concept of negligence and the general principle of duty of care. As a result, there was a pilgrimage to Paisley in 1990, and there are a memorial plaque and a bench at the cafe site.

Fiona Hyslop mentioned doubling of cities. Here is an irony: when St Mirren won the Scottish cup in 1987, it was against one of the Dundee teams. Other than for away trips to Love Street in the 1980s and 90s, visits to the annual boat jumble sale at St Mirren Park and trips as a result of a penchant in my adolescence for Paisley pattern shirts, Paisley is not somewhere I have spent much time.

The town has a rich cultural history. It came to prominence with the establishment of its 12th-century abbey, which has long been considered an important religious hub. It also boasts a number of Victorian buildings, including the town hall, an arts centre and a museum, as well as the famous Russell Institute. By the 19th century, Paisley had

established itself at the centre of the weaving industry, giving its name to the Paisley shawl and the Paisley pattern.

I am delighted to see Paisley in the running because there are game-changing results off the back of the award, and the impact on the town—which, as the cabinet secretary said, is legitimately bidding as a city—could be considerable. Paisley's bid focuses on improving the town by attracting more visitors, increasing media interest and bringing members of the community together. The town has predicted that a successful bid will create the equivalent of 4,700 jobs over the next decade and boost the economy by £172 million. It would also result in a programme of major events and world-class culture, which, by Paisley's own analysis, would bring 1.7 million attendances. Businesses, institutions and celebrities have supported Paisley's bid, and the town even sent a patch of Paisley pattern into space in July 2016.

That is surely the biggest cause of celebration. Paisley already has a unique culture and an abundance of heritage at its disposal, and the Scottish Government is right to focus on tourism as an economic driver. Just today, which is world tourism day, of course, VisitScotland reported that tourism is the third-largest export industry in the world.

Such awards also promote internal tourism, which would help to make the town a key destination of choice, generate income, create jobs and stimulate social change.

Few cities have done more in the past to achieve that than Dundee. The motion rightly calls for recognition of

“Dundee's rich cultural heritage and exciting future”.

As early as the 12th century, Dundee established itself as an important east coast trading port. Then came its profound success in the textile industry and the subsequent phasing out of the linen export trade, which led to a surge and dominance in jute production throughout the latter half of the 19th century. The rise of the textile industry brought an expansion of supporting industries—notably the whaling, maritime and shipbuilding industries—and the likes of James Keiller & Son, which was a pioneer in the production of commercial marmalade, and the founding of the D C Thomson publishing firm.

However, the city of jute, jam and journalism has been through some tough times. It has seen significant unemployment and has lost around a quarter of its population over the past 30 years. I well remember travelling through from St Andrews in the early 1990s and seeing the city then. How different it is now. The city not only has an exciting future; it has created the atmosphere of a city with a future.

Since I was elected, I have spent a great deal of time in Dundee and noted the culture everywhere. Other members will no doubt talk about the Victoria and Albert museum, HMS Discovery and the waterfront development, all of which are part of a £1 billion regeneration programme, but much more is going on. Culture manifests itself in the widest sense in Dundee. For example, there is Dundee botanic garden, which stretches over 9 hectares near the banks of the River Tay and is within walking distance of the V&A. It attracts 80,000 visitors a year. With its impressive gardens and new cafe facilities, it is not hard to see why.

I have spent time at Dundee museum of transport, which opened in 2014 to showcase the cultural transport heritage of Tayside and beyond and has since acquired the historic Maryfield tram depot, which it seeks to restore.

Last year, I was transfixed and psychologically challenged when I attended a production by Dundee Rep's youth theatre called “Experiment 01: Abandoned”, which was written and performed by the young people. It took place at the Mills observatory. If that is not Europe-leading culture and creativity, I do not know what is.

The motion mentions the “local, national and international” boost that would follow. It would. The opportunity proposes a £40 million roster of up to 80 events, including six major arts festivals and international events. That has been described as a “once in a generation ... showcase”

for

“Scotland's creative and cultural talent”.

Dundee has predicted that the title could create 1,600 full-time job opportunities and bring an additional £128 million to the local economy. That is vital when we consider that Dundee's unemployment rate is far in excess of the national average. As the cabinet secretary said, Dundee has also predicted a 4.5 per cent increase in regional GDP and a 50 per cent short-term increase in tourism along with a 17 per cent long-term increase in tourism.

Dundee does not contend for the accolade: it is merely claiming what it rightfully ought to have. To my mind, Dundee already is a European capital of culture.

If the bids by Paisley and Dundee are successful, they will promote the best that Scotland has to offer by showcasing our cultural and creative talent and further promoting Paisley and Dundee as vibrant destinations of choice. They will entice visitors from all over the UK and the world to see for themselves some of the best that Scotland has to offer. The Scottish Conservatives whole-heartedly support that and wish both Paisley and Dundee the very best with

their respective bids. We look forward to supporting the motion.

15:34

**Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab):** It is a pleasure to open the debate on behalf of the Labour Party and speak in support of Paisley's bid for UK city of culture 2021 and Dundee's bid for European capital of culture in 2023. Both are important titles and the process of bidding will, as the motion sets out, promote Scotland's cultural and creative talent and showcase its inspiring building design and places to UK and European partners.

I was born in Paisley, live in Paisley and I represent the town, so it will not surprise members to hear that my contribution today will focus mainly on Paisley's 2021 bid.

Paisley is a proud town with a proud past. A small market town, it was transformed by the industrial revolution and it became a world-leading producer of textiles. The weavers and thread mills, and the world-renowned Paisley pattern shaped our history, economy, culture and heritage. It is part of the town's social tapestry.

Anyone who visits Paisley will see that its built heritage represents one of the most impressive townscapes in Scotland. The town centre has more than 100 listed buildings, which is second only to Edinburgh. The 850-year-old abbey that stands in the centre of the town links modern Paisley with pre-industrial Paisley. It is not just a historic building; it is a living and active building, with tours, concerts and services all year round. It is the jewel in the crown in our townscape.

We in Paisley are proud of our buildings and our people. Paisley has given the world great actors, poets, artists, musicians and sportspeople: David Tennant, Gerard Butler, Robert Tannahill, John Byrne, Archie Gemmill and Gerry Rafferty to name but a few. Paolo Nutini himself will be backing the bid at a special one-off concert at Paisley abbey in October as part of the Spree festival. I encourage members to come along and enjoy the Spree festival.

We should also recognise the organisations in Paisley that have supported and nurtured young Paisley talent for many years. There are organisations such as Loud 'n' Proud and the PACE theatre company, which is the UK's largest independent theatre company. If anyone has not seen the stop-motion video by another young talent, Morgan Spence, I recommend it highly. Many faces that have already been mentioned, and others such as the broadcaster Andrew Neil, feature in a Lego celebration of Paisley 2021.

The bid is not just about celebrating Paisley; it is about making a difference. Winning the city of culture title would provide a major economic boost to Paisley and Renfrewshire. It is estimated that 1.7 million people will visit in 2021 and that more than 4,500 jobs could be created over a 10-year period. As city of culture, we could host more highlights from Britain's cultural calendar such as art and music festivals, performances, concerts, awards and shows.

A successful bid would help every child in Renfrewshire to access new activities as we break down barriers to inclusion and make arts and culture more accessible. The bid could transform Paisley. We are already seeing it as an opportunity to build a new sense of civic pride in Paisley and a real appreciation of where the town has come from and where it is going.

I congratulate all those who have made Paisley's 2021 city of culture bid a reality. I pay tribute to the local partnership that has been driving the bid, the bid team, the council and the wider community, all of whom are working together. It is also important to recognise that we would not be debating the bid at all if it were not for the leadership of Mark Macmillan, the former leader of Renfrewshire Council, as well as a number of other elected members who have been supportive, the bid director, Jean Cameron, and every team member who is working on the bid.

I pay tribute to all the people and organisations in the community that are right behind the bid. Many of them joined us at a reception that I co-hosted in the Parliament last year and I can tell members that their enthusiasm was—and still is—infectious. There is a real sense that the momentum is with Paisley and is growing.

Just to be shortlisted for the UK city of culture is a huge achievement, but Paisley is in it to win it. That means that we have to impress a judging panel that is considering the merits of not just Paisley's case, but the cases of four other candidate cities across the UK. Paisley's bid is Scotland's bid, of course, but to win, it has to be much more than that. It has to be recognised UK-wide as the best bid in Britain and win out over Coventry, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland and Swansea. I think that it is the best bid across the UK.

All supporters of the bid, including the Scottish Government, need to get behind Paisley 2021 to make Paisley's case across the UK over the coming months. With that in mind, I was extremely encouraged to see the members of the All For One Choir from the current host city, Hull, come to Paisley to perform, build links with the town and show their support. One of the most interesting of the contributions that have been inspired by the bid was that of Warrington man, Dan Warren. After



his hometown failed to make the shortlist, he designed a London tube-style map of Renfrewshire to try to get Paisley noticed.

Cross-party support for the bid has been remarkable. I am delighted that there is a consensus in the Parliament today and I welcome the Government funding commitment that was announced by the cabinet secretary the other day. I also want to thank Kezia Dugdale for the support that she has shown for Paisley. Even when another candidate city from Scotland was still in the competition, she recognised that Paisley 2021 was important to the renewal of the town and gave us her backing, becoming the first political leader to do so. I also welcome the cross-party support of Scotland's MPs, who have now met the bid team in London. Locally, there is cross-party support, too. As the cabinet secretary said, the bid was conceived under the previous Labour administration, and it is now up to the SNP administration to take the bid forward, and it has the full support of Labour in doing so. It is important that Renfrewshire Council continues to provide leadership, practical support and resources to keep the momentum going and take the case for Paisley far and wide.

The reasons for backing Paisley's bid are similar to the reasons why I believe that we should back Dundee's bid for European capital of culture, as they involve using culture and heritage to transform a place and provide more opportunities for those who live there. In some ways, that transformation has already begun in Dundee. The city is not just known for jute, jam and journalism any more; it is now the UK's first UNESCO city of design and is recognised globally for its contribution to medical research, comics and video games. The V&A will open next year—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I understand why Paisley got the biggest hit in your speech, but I am afraid that you have run out of time for Dundee. I will not hold it against you.

**Neil Bibby:** I wish Dundee and Paisley every success in their bids over the coming months.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am sure that you do.

We now move to the open debate, and we will have speeches of six minutes.

15:42

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** Scotland is incredibly fortunate to have a rich cultural heritage—one that is known, respected and enjoyed across the world. To see that recognised through two successful city of culture bids—for Paisley in 2021 and Dundee in 2023—would be a fitting recognition of our rich cultural

heritage and the vibrant contemporary scenes in both cities.

The whole world has been contributing to the bids. Just last week, we had the Singing Children of Africa choir in Paisley town hall joining local schoolchildren, a local gospel choir and dance troupes to put on an amazing performance.

In the members' business debate on Paisley's bid, a number of us highlighted the radical history of the city's industrial working class, which is centred around weaving and the world-famous Paisley pattern. The history of the workers' struggles and their effects on wider society is embedded in the culture of Paisley, as it is across Scotland and the world. That radicalism has shaped Paisley's culture for centuries. Paisley was an epicentre of the radical war in 1820. A memorial march was held there following the Peterloo massacre, and that march also led to heavy-handed suppression by the authorities, including cavalry charges. Those actions led to radical activity across Scotland, particularly around the west coast, in support of more representative Government.

The radical war ended with charges of treason, executions and exile to penal colonies, but its effects were felt later, not least through the Reform Act that was eventually passed in 1832, which began to expand the right to vote beyond just the most powerful sections of society. Paisley's working class played a driving role in that.

Paisley also has the distinction of being the only Scottish city to be named in Marx's "Das Kapital"—I am missing Richard Leonard's presence for this debate, as he was very enthusiastic the last time I mentioned that fact. In that tome, Marx referred to

"the brave Scots of Paisley"

and the labour that they poured into their production of textiles. He highlighted Carlile, Sons & Co as one of the oldest and most respected companies producing cotton and linen in the west of Scotland, having been in operation as far back as 1752. Of course, as we might expect, Marx took a dim view of the Carlile family and a more positive one of the workers in their mills.

Paisley's radical history extends into the 20th century. Britain's last communist MP, Willie Gallacher, was born there. Although Gallacher was eventually elected to the West Fife constituency, a lot of his political activism was focused around the west coast during the red Clydeside era. For example, he was heavily involved in the campaign for a 40-hour working week after the end of the first world war. He was also one of the strike leaders who negotiated with the authorities in Glasgow city chambers when the battle of George Square began, leading to the

British Government's deployment of troops across the city. He died, back in Paisley, in 1965—almost 100 years after Marx wrote about

“the brave Scots of Paisley”.

Gallacher most certainly carried that tradition throughout his life.

Unfortunately, Carlile, Sons & Co does not produce textiles in Paisley any more. The industrial nature of the city is long gone—and so are the jobs and relative prosperity that came with it. Textile production essentially ceased in the 1990s. The rich cultural heritage of Paisley's past is still visible, though—whether that is in the town hall that was paid for by one old mill owner or the museum that was paid for by another, or in the multitude of streets that are named after the industry, such as Dyers Wynd, Cotton Street and Thread Street. However, the decline of the weaving industry—along with the shipbuilding industry and the broader process of deindustrialisation—has left Paisley with huge challenges and high levels of deprivation. Ferguslie Park is one of the most deprived areas of the country, and Paisley jobcentre has the highest number of sanctions in the west of Scotland.

We know that Paisley is a brilliant city of fantastic communities. It is already a city of culture. The bid is about so much more than that: it is about ensuring that Paisley's rich cultural heritage is strengthened, the city's profile is raised and the problems that it faces are addressed. Whether or not Paisley wins the city of culture 2021 bid, the very process of the bid is doing so much good. Renfrewshire Council and the Scottish Government have already set out to invest in supporting local arts and cultural initiatives. By winning the award, much more can be done to raise the profile of that historic town, to encourage the tourism and investment that it so very much needs and to give the community itself better access to better cultural experiences.

Although I am a member of the Scottish Parliament for the west of Scotland, it would be impolite of me not to also mention Dundee's bid for European city of culture. Dundee and Paisley share a remarkably similar history, with textiles and shipbuilding being staples of the historical industrial economy. Dundee's economy has been a bit more varied. It has been said that it was built on the three Js of jute, jam and journalism. It is certainly deserving of the European capital of culture title, having focused on a culture-led regeneration strategy since the 1990s. Dundee has also embraced cutting-edge technology, becoming a centre for the creation of video games—and, in the process, making Scotland an international hub for that ever-growing industry. The classic Lemmings and the record-breaking, if

controversial, Grand Theft Auto were created by Dundee-based DMA Design—now known as Rockstar North and our neighbour in Edinburgh. I can say, with absolute honesty, that I have enjoyed every visit that I have ever made to Dundee, and I wish it well in its bid.

Over the centuries, both cities have contributed so much to the culture that we enjoy today. While they deserve the titles that they are bidding for, I am grateful for the benefits that are being reaped simply by their engagement in the process. I look forward to our returning to Parliament following announcements that both Paisley and Dundee have been recognised as deserving cities of culture in the years to come. Before that, I invite all members who are available to join us in Paisley on Friday morning at 10.30, to send off the bid.

15:48

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western)**

**(LD):** I grew up in a small farming village outside St Andrews in the 1980s and 1990s, so Dundee was a metropolis to me. Lying 14 miles to the north, it always held a certain kind of magnetism. It was where we went for Christmas shopping, to see pantomimes at the Rep or to go ice skating. My comics were authored in its bustling streets, and its swimming pool had the finest flumes on the eastern seaboard. It basked in seemingly endless sunshine, on the side of a river that we crossed more times than I can remember. Each time that we passed a tree hung with Jif lemon bottles to the side of the bridge, my sister and I would lisp out lines of McGonagall about the Tay below us and the whale that once got stuck there. We would talk about the ancient rail tragedy that endured in the city's consciousness and local song. We would relive our memories of the day in 1986 when the RSS Discovery, one of the most significant vessels of scientific exploration ever built, returned home—to the captivated rapture of this eight-year-old boy.

In later years, I would return with equal regularity—but for very different reasons. I learned to drive there. The sticky carpets of the Mardi Gras represented the nearest nightclub to the bars of St Andrews where I learned to drink. It was at that time that I also learned to appreciate the very Dundonian sound of Michael Marra—uncle to Jenny Marra of this parish.

I would also work there, at Fairbridge, in Kemback Street, delivering independent living skills and exploring cultural identity through youth work with the hardest-to-reach young people in Dundee's inner city. I reflect, in particular, on the Fairbridge totem pole, which was carved by young people affected by substance use and installed in Dudhope park as a lasting monument to the triumph of culture and art over the very worst of

Dundee's social challenges. I do not get there as much as I would like these days, and I regret that.

Dundee embodies Scotland's transition from heavy industry to world-leading software development and from crushing deprivation to cultural enlightenment, as is evident in the work of the community arts centre and in the excitement about the opening of the V&A. It has always been a city of culture to me. It has shaped my future, as it has done Scotland's future. As such, it deserves recognition as a city of culture on the international stage.

I turn my attention now to culture in the west. Good culture is always found in the west—I declare an interest: I have tickets to see Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds at the Hydro tonight—and I lend my voice the unanimous support offered in the chamber to Paisley in its bid to become UK city of culture.

To my shame, I know far less about Paisley than I do about Dundee. However, since I was first inducted into the Parliament, I have enjoyed the passion of George Adam's soliloquies about the many assets and strengths of the community that he represents. He has done a grand job of persuading me of the town's history, many attributes and ability to overcome and renew. The town has reared some of my closest friends and hosts a university that educated my party's leader. It is a resilient and proud community that has left its mark on global fashion. It has certainly come a long way since 1697 and the last mass execution of witches in western Europe.

In the history of Paisley, culture and industry have walked hand in hand through the burgeoning textile and weaving trade of the 19th century and in patterns of Kashmiri origin, patronised by Queen Victoria, which subsequently catapulted the town's name and produce into global demand and repute. That recognition and sense of identity stood in defiance of the Luftwaffe's bombers in the blitz and economic malaise down the decades. However, it is important to recognise that those still took their toll. As we have heard from Ross Greer, Ferguslie Park was named as one of the most deprived areas of Scotland last year.

Those ingredients unquestionably qualify Paisley as UK city of culture, not just for the raw and natural creativity that it has exhibited through the ages, but for the resilience that it displays and the benefits that such a status could afford. We know the value that such recognition can bring to a community, with the promise of more than 4,000 jobs and a £172 million boost the local economy.

As a constituency member, it feels alien for me to wax lyrical about the virtues of communities outside Edinburgh Western, but today it has been an effortless task. I am struck by the warmth that

exists in the chamber across all the parties for Paisley and Dundee. Such debates are welcome in the conduct of the Parliament's affairs. They challenge us to think about the virtues of, and challenges that face, communities beyond our own and to embrace a national pride that often becomes a pawn in a wider discourse about the constitutional future of our nation. Therefore, I am very proud to support the Government motion and offer the full-throated support of the Liberal Democrat members to both cities in their bids.

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

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP)** rose—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I have not called you yet, Mr Adam. I know that you are dead keen.

I call George Adam.

15:53

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. My calves were not coping too well, but I was poised to stand up. I am, of course, extremely pleased to take part in the debate. A whole afternoon of positive Paisleyness will do me nicely. I welcome Jean Cameron and some of the members of her team Paisley, who are in the public gallery.

The cabinet secretary is, of course, correct when she says that this is a tale of two cities—and my friend and colleague Joe FitzPatrick says that I must mention Dundee and its quest for the European city of culture title in 2023. The Scotland's Towns partnership has a facility on its website that allows users to get all the statistical data for Scotland's towns. On checking that website yesterday, I found that Paisley is very much like Dundee. The demography of both is similar. Historically, both towns had to deal with post-industrial decline but, instead of complaining about it, we have decided to do something completely different.

I know that Dundee has been on that journey of discovery longer than we have, but both towns are trying to show the world who they really are. When I was elected in 2011, I said that I would take a team Paisley approach to absolutely everything that I did as Paisley's MSP. Now, team Paisley is becoming team Scotland—the whole of our historic town is taking that approach.

What is important is what we can achieve. That is the exciting part. The bid can be a catalyst that will make a difference in people's lives and, I hope, show the world what 21st century Paisley has to offer. Paisley buddies are now looking to what we can do—looking at the many challenges and seeing how we can find solutions. There is an

air in the town that the impossible can happen. There are no problems, only solutions.

Paisley has challenges, like many other towns in Scotland, but it also has a big heart. It is a heart that beats louder by the day. Buddies are very emotional about our town, but who would not be? It is such a great place. Archie Gemmill from Glenburn, scorer of that goal in the 1978 world cup, was my dad's apprentice at Balfour Kilpatrick. Paisley has great venues. The Thomas Coats Memorial church recently announced a multimillion pound re-imagining of the building for the 21st century. There are plans from Paisley Community Trust for a £40 million cinema-theatre space in the very heart of the town. Paisley abbey is the last resting place of Marjory Bruce, the mother of the Stuart dynasty in Scotland and daughter of one of our country's greatest heroes, Robert the Bruce.

Jim Mitchell, a former Scottish National Party councillor, who sadly is no longer with us, would never have forgiven me if I too did not mention Paisley's connection with the 1820 insurrection. Paisley is a place where the cottage weavers of the 19th century became radical in their political ideals. Of course, the Paisley weavers were to the forefront of the insurrection of 1820, although to say that is inaccurate, as the people of Paisley decided that the insurrection was happening in 1819. A mass rally was organised in Paisley on Saturday 11 September, and radicals came from all over the west of Scotland. A crowd of 18,000 gathered at a meeting place outside the town, as a band from Neilston played "Scots Wha Hae".

There were many speakers that day, and as the crowd dispersed some decided that they were going to march down the High Street. By 10 pm, the riot act had been read and the cavalry were charging down the streets of Paisley, pursuing peaceful protesters, but this was Paisley: the crowds were not deterred and pitched battles occurred for several days. It was not until a week later, on 18 September, that an uneasy quiet returned to the town. One year later, they would all be part of the Scottish insurrection of 1820 and would march under the banner "Scotland free or a desert".

Paisley is not just a town of political radicals. We have given the world so much culturally as well. Ferguslie Park is where my own family comes from. If someone types "Ferguslie" into an internet search engine, they will find statistics on deprivation, but deprivation has never defined Ferguslie. It is a part of the town that has given us singer-songwriter Gerry Rafferty and playwright-artist John Byrne. Mr Byrne recently told *The Herald*:

"Paisley is a remarkable place. I hope to be involved and I support the bid. I support it wholeheartedly. I thank Ferguslie Park every day of my life for providing me all the

information I ever needed about life, it was the best place I have ever been."

Those are words that we should all take to heart in this debate.

Paisley is also a town that helped to reclaim the stone of destiny on Christmas day 1950, in the guise of Ian Hamilton, another Paisley buddy. At a time when the SNP vote barely registered, Mr Hamilton and his friends decided to take matters into their own hands and reclaim their national identity. It appears that anything of any value that has happened in Scotland has a Paisley connection.

Robert Tannahill was a poet and one of the founding members of Paisley's Burns club, which is the oldest constituted Burns club in the world. He was a weaver-poet whose life was less than happy. The love of his life married his best friend, his father died at a young age and he had to support the family. A small collection of his poems and songs sold out in 1807, but by 1810, after the rejection of his work for publication, he burned all his manuscripts and drowned himself in Paisley canal. Unfortunately for Robert Tannahill, he was not aware that his work would be celebrated in his home town in the 21st century.

Our bid is about telling the world the fantastic story of our town, its history and its achievements; most important, it is about the story of its people, the Paisley buddies. For me, it is my town, my home and my place in the world. It is the place where my family have been since 1759. It is the home of my beloved football team, St Mirren Football Club. Some people have said to me that, if the bid is successful, being the city of culture will put Paisley back on the map. I say that that is wrong. How can it be put back on the map when my home is already the centre of the universe?

In 1990, during Glasgow's year as European city of culture, one of the highlights was a concert by Francis Albert Sinatra at Ibrox. The 74-year-old began the show with "You Make Me Feel So Young". As the rain poured, he continued with "Come Rain or Come Shine"—and they say that Americans do not get irony. I want those kinds of memories for both our cities. To paraphrase Mr Sinatra, Paisley is and always will be "My Kind of Town".

15:59

**Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con):** Gosh, Maurice Corry—follow that. In the footsteps of George Adam, I say well done.

I was extremely pleased that Dundee was to go ahead with the events that were planned for its city of culture bid, despite narrowly missing out on that bid a few years ago. That decision emulates the great spirit of the city of Dundee, and those events

will bring fantastic economic and social benefits to the city.

My connection with Dundee goes back quite a long way and is twofold. I served with the Black Watch, which is the city's highland regiment, based at Oliver barracks, and I currently serve with the Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association in Perth Road. I was therefore elated to see that the city will run for the European capital of culture in 2023. We should all be proud of the aims of Dundee's bid, which are to connect people, to inspire young people to reach their possibilities, to encourage everyone to live better and to celebrate the city's green space. A successful bid would bring huge benefits to the city and those who live there, as well as to the wider country. I wish the city of Dundee every success.

I offer my congratulations to Paisley, which is dear to my heart, on its nomination for the title of UK city of culture 2021. I am truly delighted that Paisley has been recognised in such a way. It is a testament to the beauty of our cities, the activities and events that go on in them and our nation's rich cultural heritage that so many cities have been shortlisted for UK city of culture in recent years. That goes to show the truly wonderful country in which we live.

Paisley is in my West Scotland region, so I would love its bid to be successful. I am glad that the Scottish Government gave the bid financial backing, and for that I thank the cabinet secretary. Such backing recognises the contribution that Paisley makes to Scotland's culture and, as a whole, demonstrates that the Government supports and seeks to deliver Paisley's bid. Sadly, there has never been a Scottish winner of the UK city of culture. It would make me immensely proud, as a representative of the region, were Paisley to be the first.

It is important to note that Paisley winning that title would bring immeasurable benefits to the town. It would create 5,000 jobs over a decade and bolster the local economy by £172 million, which we know would provide a lasting legacy for the Renfrewshire area.

That is not to mention all the events that are planned for the area should the bid be successful. It is predicted that the events would be attended by up to 1.7 million people. That hugely increased footfall should enable plans to go into motion for a brand new town centre, which would show off Paisley's culture and heritage and put tourism at its heart. In turn, all of that would only increase people's knowledge of Paisley's international story and wonderful heritage, which would give new life to its image in Scotland and further afield.

I was fortunate to be employed as a general apprentice for J & P Coats Ltd—that fine textile company—when I left school, and I am fully aware of Paisley's international legacy. I worked in the Ferguslie mills, the Ferguslie dye works and the Anchor mills. I experienced the buzz of spinning threads in Paisley. We know, with new technology now in our grasp, that that buzz could easily return, as it has reached Lancashire already. Coats was the first UK company to have an employee pension scheme and its own employee hospital. The hospital, which was situated on the Gleniffer braes, specialised in curing tuberculosis patients; the idea was that the fresh air up there would cure TB, despite the weather. The legacy of J & P Coats is all around Paisley, in such buildings—as George Adam mentioned—as the Coats memorial church, which is undergoing a fantastic renovation.

If Paisley won the title, it would be a great moment for the history of the town and its people. What is more, the award would benefit those who are most vulnerable in our society, as well as those whose voices often go unheard—older people who are now more isolated, those on lower incomes and young people are all set to benefit from it. The wide-ranging events would bring people from the community together to enjoy music, arts, performance, dance and, of course, friendship. There would be inclusion for all.

I especially thank George Adam, Neil Bibby and the Renfrewshire Council team for their great efforts on the bid. Above all, George Adam's abundant enthusiasm for Paisley is completely legend.

Paisley is a fantastic place to live and work in. Its warm people and rich and interesting cultural heritage deserve to be honoured in this way. I truly hope that Paisley becomes the UK city of culture in 2021. I wish it all the best for the future, and I look forward to attending many of the planned events when the time comes. Indeed, I am very proud to be an honorary Paisley buddie.

16:04

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** I will at least attempt to make as strong a case for the city of discovery as George Adam made for Paisley.

First, I offer a degree of context for my support for Dundee's bid to become the European capital of culture in 2023. I first visited Dundee in December 1979. That sticks in my memory because I had to overcome a national bus strike so that I could see my favourite band, the Jam, perform at the Caird hall. As a 17-year-old, my impression was of a grey and rather grim place.

Let us fast forward to 1985, when I moved to Dundee to live and work in the city. The six years

that followed were a mixed experience. I had come from affluent and bustling Aberdeen to a place that lacked the vibrancy and positivity of the granite city.

I would never have imagined then that, in 2017, Dundee would be bidding to become a European capital of culture. However, well it might do so, because the transformation of Dundee since my first visit and my time living in the city has in many regards been utterly astonishing. My constituency, Angus South, borders what is now a vibrant and confident city that is on the up and is looking to the future.

As the debate demands, let us consider Dundee's cultural offering, starting with Dundee Repertory theatre. I should begin with a proud-dad declaration: my actress daughter was a graduate trainee at Dundee Rep. The Rep is unique in Scotland in having a permanent acting ensemble; it is also home to the Scottish dance theatre. The ensemble remains a crucible of talent in which the artists of tomorrow are created, through its graduate scheme, which offers drama school graduates the opportunity to join the Rep for up to a year.

The Rep believes that the highest-quality theatre should be available to all, which is important. It has taken some of its productions out beyond its own four walls and into the community, across the city and elsewhere—it has reached places such as Eassie and Carnoustie in my constituency. Earlier this year, the Rep won three prizes—best production, best ensemble and best male performance—at the critics' awards for theatre in Scotland for its production of "Death of a Salesman".

As members know, a huge amount of regeneration is taking place in Dundee, with activity centred on the waterfront and the V&A as the centrepiece. That is an example of an area realising the need to think long term. The Dundee central waterfront masterplan was published back in 2001 and looked forward right through to 2031.

The V&A will provide Scotland with an international design museum. It is due to open next year, and it is taking shape in a variety of ways. The galleries will host international touring exhibitions from the V&A, which will make Dundee the only location in the UK outside London with such globally significant offerings. Visitor forecasts suggest that up to 350,000 people could be attracted to the V&A every year. That is brilliant news for not just Dundee but Angus and the wider region.

It is great that, long before it is due to open, the V&A has been engaging with schools. The first project was a schools design challenge, which was open to all secondary 1 pupils in Dundee and

Angus. Arbroath academy and Webster's high school, in my constituency, were two of the 10 schools that were chosen to attend the design jam.

A few yards away from the V&A we have Slessor Gardens. Thousands of people have already congregated there to watch acts such as Little Mix and Olly Murs—they are hardly a patch on bands such as the Jam, I suggest, which graced the nearby Caird hall, but they are nonetheless extremely popular. The cabinet secretary should not worry; I am not looking for her to concur with my opinion—I do not know whether she is a fellow Jam fan. Dundee's reputation for popular music was enhanced in August when Mark Ronson was among the headline acts at the new Carnival 56 festival.

Alongside all that, Dundee has excellent educational institutions, which each boast great cultural links. I think that I heard on the radio the other day that 60 nationalities are represented on the staff of the University of Dundee, which encompasses the excellent Duncan of Jordanstone college of art and design. That college has been ranked in the top 1 per cent in the world for art and design. Turner prize winner Susan Philipsz and nominees David Mach, Louise Wilson and Luke Fowler all studied at Duncan of Jordanstone.

Culture takes many forms, and not just the traditional ones. We need to remember Dundee's thriving computer games sector, at the heart of which is Abertay University, which this year celebrates 20 years since it became the first university in the world to offer degrees in computer games. In March, the prestigious *Princeton Review* ranked Abertay best in Europe for its undergraduate courses and in the top 20 in the world for its postgraduate courses. The university has become a melting pot for international games talent. Students access links to the likes of Sony, Disney and Ubisoft while learning from a host of seasoned academic staff. The Dare ProtoPlay games festival and THIS festival act as excellent focal points for celebrating the industry in Dundee.

I should also mention Dundee and Angus College, which is ably led by its principal, Grant Ritchie, who has identified the welcoming of students and staff from across the EU as well as the regular exchanges that take place between the college and other European institutions as helping to develop a modern and inclusive view of the world in that establishment.

Why is an Angus MSP prepared to wax lyrical about the nearby city? All of us are benefiting and will continue to benefit from the transformation of Dundee. I hope and believe that, with the proper marketing, the securing of the city of culture title and the general increase in tourism that is

expected in Dundee because of the V&A and the waterfront project, my constituency will reap further spin-offs.

Whether people come for cultural events such as Bonfest or those that are put on by Hospitalfield house in Arbroath, for excellent historical attractions such as Glamis castle and Arbroath abbey or for the glorious beaches, glens and golf courses, Angus South has much to offer visitors and we must capitalise on the opportunity. The cross-local authority work that is being done as part of the Tay cities deal exemplifies what is achievable throughout the region by working together.

I will conclude with the words of the leader of Dundee City Council, Councillor John Alexander, who said:

“Dundee is putting itself on the map with its ambitious and bold cultural strategy. However, our work is not just about putting the city on the map, but in making sure that all maps lead to Dundee. This city is and has been going through a cultural renaissance over the last few years and our journey towards 2023 is a hugely exciting opportunity. ... Be bold, be ambitious, be Dundee.”

16:11

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** I congratulate Paisley on making the shortlist for the UK city of culture. The fact that it has progressed this far is testament to the strength of the bid, and I know that Paisley has got what it takes to win the title. I commend the bid team for all their hard work to date and wish them every success in the months to come.

I also commend Dundee's bid to be the European capital of culture. In particular, I recognise its appeal for the public to come forward with ideas and to be part of developing the city's proposal. However, I hope that the chamber will understand that, as a West Scotland MSP and a Renfrewshire resident, my remarks this afternoon will focus on Paisley.

Paisley has some genuinely interesting stories to tell—stories that add to the bid. They are stories of its people, its women, its quirks and its unique history. There is a cairn at the junction of Renfrew Road and Dundonald Road, not far from where I live, that marks the spot where, in 1316, Marjory Bruce fell from her horse in a tragic accident. As members across the chamber will know, Marjory was the eldest daughter of Robert the Bruce, and she was, as the story goes, heavily pregnant when she fell. People from round about tried to save her but could not. Marjory Bruce died aged just 19 and was buried at Paisley abbey. Her son, however, was saved and would go on to become Robert II, the first king of the Stewart dynasty. Behind that cairn that people pass every day, on one of the busiest roads in Paisley, is a story that is tragic

but, nonetheless, important in the textured history of Paisley and the rich history of Scotland. It is a story that surely adds something to Paisley's claim to the city of culture title.

Recent events have brought a very different story from Paisley's past back into the news. I refer to the gruesome story of the Bargarran witches, who were hanged and burned at the Gallow green in the west end of Paisley in 1697, only five years after the start of the infamous Salem witch trials in Massachusetts. It could even be said that Paisley was Scotland's Salem. One of the so-called Bargarran witches was Agnes Naismith. Before she died, she cursed everyone present at the trial and all their descendents. In the years that followed, it seemed that every tragedy and misfortune to befall the people of Paisley was attributed to Agnes Naismith and the witch's curse.

The ashes of those who died on that day were interred at the nearby Maxwellton cross, where there is a memorial to this day. Part of the memorial is a famous horseshoe, which is said to keep the town safe from misfortune and the witch's curse. I am sorry to inform the chamber that the horseshoe has been dislodged and absolutely nothing is protecting Paisley from the curse. As the *Paisley Daily Express* said earlier this month, “We're all doomed.” Two community stalwarts and Paisley legends, Piero Pieraccini and Tony Lawler, and the Paisley Development Trust are racing to restore the memorial and reinstall the famous horseshoe. I know that the chamber will wish them well in their endeavour to keep the town safe while safeguarding Paisley's heritage.

If the city of culture competition is about using heritage to shape the renewal of a community, the story of Paisley's weavers and its textiles must be heard. Paisley was a market town before the rise of the textile industry and was transformed by the industrial revolution. As the bid team has said:

“Paisley made textiles and textiles made Paisley.”

As we know, the Paisley pattern is world renowned. The textile industry provided employment not just for men but for women who came from the Highlands and rural communities seeking job opportunities in Paisley. During that period, we saw the rise of what we might recognise today as trade unionism, as men and women got organised and demanded better rights for those working in the mills.

The Dooslan stane, once used as a soapbox for the Weavers Union, now stands in Brodie park and is used as a meeting point for the annual sma shot parade. It is another local monument, with another story behind it, which is every bit as much part of the town as the mills are part of it. It is not just a monument, but a cultural asset.

The Paisley bid is all about using cultural and heritage assets to drive forward regeneration and transform the town. As I have tried to demonstrate, Paisley has no shortage of such assets, which is why its bid is so strong. I hope—I expect—that the bid will be supported across the chamber; I hope that the bid is successful; and I hope that the stories of Paisley, its layers of history and the people who made the place are told for a long time to come.

16:17

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** Today, we are debating the fine cultural achievements of Paisley and Dundee—and quite right, too. First, I want to reference another great city, Glasgow, the European city of culture in 1990, which, in many ways, led the way in showing Scotland how culture can transform a city and change its identity not only through national and international branding, but through self-perception and self-confidence.

It is worth reflecting that when Glasgow began its transformative journey in the 1980s, the proposal that culture could help to replace jobs lost through deindustrialisation was controversial. Indeed, in some quarters, it was considered to be eccentric and even dangerous. In 1990, when Glasgow was the European city of culture, there were fearsome debates about whether the year-long festival was a waste of time and money.

Glasgow pressed ahead because it had firm economic underpinnings for its bid. It enlisted the help of John Myerscough, an academic who led the way in measuring the economic impact of cultural spend. His 1988 report “The Economic Importance of the Arts in Glasgow” influenced generations of cultural economists and policymakers around the world. Myerscough, 30 years, one concert hall and thousands of festivals later, has been vindicated. In 2011, a follow-up report found that the market for culture in Glasgow had increased by 45 per cent between 1989 and 2008-09 and was 20 per cent higher than it had been at its peak in 1990. Those figures did not include clubbing, cinema and libraries.

Glasgow 1990 led directly to the two bids that we are debating today. Cities do not become a city of culture through a big-bang approach, although most festival goers enjoy the fireworks at some point. It is the investment in creativity over time that counts, and both Paisley and Dundee have excellent track records in that respect.

Paisley’s rich heritage in textiles, radical literature and music makes it more than a worthy contender for the title of the UK city of culture. Others have mentioned the deindustrialisation of Paisley, but the link between Paisley’s long-gone

industry and culture is very tangible. Without the mill workers who were praised by Karl Marx, we would not have had the poet weavers such as Tannahill or the slab boys who worked in the carpet factories, who were the subject of the play by John Byrne that we all know and love; and—dare I say it—would we have had the great Prince without the Paisley pattern? Paisley has given so much to the world that it absolutely deserves to be a front-runner in the bidding process for UK city of culture.

Dundee has the new V&A museum of design, which complements long-established centres of creative excellence such as Dundee Contemporary Arts and the Dundee Rep Theatre. Mention has also been made of the art school, and Calum Colvin’s excellent Jacobite exhibition down in the foyer of the Parliament is a great example, close to home, of the work that it does. I encourage all members to have a look at it.

Independent analysis has suggested that if Dundee wins the title of European capital of culture, it will generate £128 million for the Dundee economy and create 1,600 new jobs. It is estimated that Paisley winning the title of UK city of culture would boost the economy by £172 million and create 4,700 new jobs, directly or indirectly. I am not quite sure why the figures for Paisley are so much more optimistic than those for the larger city of Dundee—perhaps George Adam got his hands on them first.

**Fiona Hyslop:** I think that one set of figures looks at the legacy from a 10-year perspective, while the other takes a shorter-term view. Both sets of figures show the importance of successful bids for the economy and the generation of jobs, but they use different timeframes.

**Joan McAlpine:** I thank the minister for that clarification and for confirming that there is no massaging of the figures going on. Whatever the figures are, it is well established that creativity creates jobs.

In 2012, Creative Scotland and Scottish Enterprise commissioned a report on the economic contribution of the arts and the creative industries to Scotland as a whole. It found that the direct and indirect impacts of the arts and the creative industries amounted to 130,000 jobs, £6.3 billion in gross value added and £12.4 billion in turnover.

The argument that Myerscough made all those years ago that culture creates jobs is now uncontroversial and taken as read, but we also know that creativity can do so much more than simply boost GVA. Increasingly, we are understanding that participation in cultural activity can improve health and wellbeing. It is very important for older people in tackling social



isolation and it can improve confidence in young people. It can also improve educational attainment, not just in subjects that are linked to the arts but right across the curriculum. For example, it is well known that there is a close link between attainment in music and attainment in mathematics.

Cultural practitioners are no longer confined to marginalised roles. In places such as Dundee and Edinburgh, and even in the tiny village of Moniaive in Dumfriesshire, which I represent, we see artists working alongside planners and economists to repopulate empty streets and regenerate town and village centres.

I realise that I am short of time, so I will conclude by wishing Paisley and Dundee all the very best. Along with all their other merits, the bids remind us of culture's importance in building bridges to the rest of the world and making us more outward looking, more generous and more tolerant. For that reason, I am happy to support the motion.

16:23

**Bill Bowman (North East Scotland) (Con):** I thank Fiona Hyslop for bringing the debate to the chamber. It gives us an opportunity to show our support for two remarkable areas of Scotland and our appreciation for all that they contribute to our cultural fabric. Like my fellow Scottish Conservatives, I give my full backing to the Paisley 2021 bid, and I wish the team behind it and the people of Paisley every success.

Today, though, I would like to focus on Dundee's bid to become European capital of culture 2023. I know Dundee and I have the great good fortune to be able to represent that wonderful city as a regional MSP for North East Scotland. That is a good starting point, because it is important that we recognise the challenges that the North East Scotland region has faced over the past few years, and Dundee is no exception to that. The city has recently had to contend with both the wider regional downturn and several high-profile job losses.

All that is against the backdrop of the decline of traditional industries across much of the country over past decades. Changing times have seen industries and jobs of the past disappear and, like many other places, Dundee has found itself in need of a new direction. That is why the Dundee bid is so important. Dundee is not just aiming for the title of European capital of culture; it is aiming for a new future, and it is a city that has the ambition and drive to achieve that.

For evidence of that—and to see recognition of that future given by a global audience—we need only look to the fact that UNESCO named Dundee

the first city of design in the UK. Within the city itself, the new V&A museum of design not only heralds the regeneration of the waterfront but is a symbol of the regeneration and transformation of the city as a whole.

We see Dundee's ambition in the plans as laid out. Should its bid be successful, we will see a renaissance of culture, with a £40 million programme of up to 80 events, including six major arts festivals, being staged across the city. That ambition is backed up by the talent to deliver it, including Sir Jonathan Mills, a former director of the Edinburgh International Festival. No one should be in any doubt about Dundee's determination to deliver.

The potential economic benefits of success are many. As has been mentioned, up to 1,600 full-time jobs could be created and as much as £128 million could be injected into the local economy. It is estimated that tourism will shoot up by as much as 50 per cent in the short term and by almost a fifth over the long term. The wider north-east could also benefit. Regional GDP is in line to receive a very welcome and much needed boost of up to 4.5 per cent.

All of that is important, welcome and achievable, but it is not the full story. Beyond the numbers, Dundee stands to gain something else—a new role in Scotland's story.

The motion that we are debating today notes the importance of Dundee's existing contribution to Scottish culture, and I whole-heartedly agree with that. Dundee has given us so much: from D C Thomson's beloved comics and newspapers—not to confuse the titles within those descriptions; to the world's first radio broadcast in 1832 by a James Bowman Lindsay—not someone I know to be a relative; to an important centre for the video games industry, as we have heard; to its world-class education and life sciences capability. Dundee has many famous sons and daughters, such as women's rights advocate and missionary Mary Slessor; it can even count William Wallace among their ranks—he was educated in Dundee in the 1290s and apparently killed his first man there.

Dundee has a rich history, but being named European capital of culture would open the door to an equally rich future. Only two other British cities have ever been named European capital of culture—Glasgow and Liverpool. That underscores just how significant a win for Dundee would be. In fact, as has been mentioned, we need only look to Glasgow to see the impact that winning the title can have. Glasgow has gone from being a city founded on heavy industry to a renowned centre of culture, learning and the arts, and tourists, conferences and events flood into the city. Glasgow has made that transformational leap

and continues to reap the rewards. Now it is Dundee's turn.

In closing, I have a request for each of you: come to Dundee; come and see its galleries and museums; come and eat in its cafes and restaurants; and come and visit its concerts and gigs. Most of all, come and see why Dundee deserves to win. I am very happy to support the motion.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** For a moment I thought you were offering to pay. I call Tom Arthur, the last speaker in the open debate.

16:29

**Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP):** As someone who was born in Paisley, was brought up in nearby Barrhead and is one of Renfrewshire's three constituency MSPs, I am delighted to have the opportunity today to join colleagues from across the chamber in supporting the Government's motion wishing the best for Paisley in 2021 and Dundee in 2023.

My colleague George Adam is fond of saying, as he did earlier, that Paisley is "My Kind of Town", and I do not think that anyone would disagree with him. However, I, too, can say that it is my kind of town. Alex Cole-Hamilton spoke earlier very eloquently of his relationship with Dundee when he was growing up, and I can relate to that, because when I was growing up in Barrhead, Paisley was the town of dazzling lights, compared to Barrhead; and Paisley was where we went Christmas shopping, while Glasgow was a dark and distant place where we would go only on very rare occasions.

Just like the communities in my constituency of Renfrewshire South, Paisley is a great place to live, work and invest in. It is a town that is rich in heritage, from the legacy of its mills, when Paisley literally had the world on a string, to its magnificent architecture, which can be enjoyed all year round, night and day, come rain or come shine.

Paisley has a proud past, but it also has a dynamic and exciting future. Like its MSP, although Paisley might look old on the outside, in reality it is young at heart. With an expanding array of great bars and restaurants, and a developing music scene, it is clear that for Paisley the best is yet to come.

Paisley also has a fantastic community spirit that is not only demonstrated in the way that the town has come together to back the bid, but is brilliantly exemplified by the football-fan ownership story of the St Mirren Independent Supporters Association. Although George Adam is not chairman of the board, I know that he has been heavily involved in the association. Dundee had

the honour of being the first Scottish city to be shortlisted for UK city of culture, but I have high hopes that Paisley will be successful for Scotland the second time round. I also believe that Dundee, after the disappointment of losing out previously for UK city of culture, can now become a European capital of culture.

I am not a Dundee native, but it is a great city with which I have a long-standing relationship. Ten years ago, when I had friends at the University of Dundee, I had many great nights out—what I can remember of them—in Dundee.

I also know how internationally renowned Dundee is becoming as a centre of creative and digital excellence. When I was in Japan four years ago, I was struck, when at the world-renowned Shibuya crossing in Tokyo, to see a huge billboard advertising something that came all the way from Dundee to the heart of Tokyo: "Grand Theft Auto V" from Rockstar North Games. It is an incredible story. Just as 1990 was a very good year for Glasgow as European capital of culture, so 2021 and 2023 can be great years for Paisley and Dundee.

I last spoke in Parliament on Paisley 2021 in December last year, when I said that becoming UK city of culture would be a boon not just for Paisley, but for the whole of Renfrewshire and, indeed, the west of Scotland. I reiterate that point today, because there is the potential to create the equivalent of 4,700 jobs, which would bring new employment opportunities to many people, including my constituents in Renfrewshire South. The predicted boost to the local economy of £172 million could be shared by organisations in Renfrewshire South such as the community-run Bank cafe in Neilston, the superb Papamacs Gourmet kitchen in Johnstone or the award-winning Uplawmoor hotel, not to mention the range of restaurants and bars at the Phoenix retail park in Linwood. Those who wish to explore beyond Paisley could enjoy the great attractions, with as many as 1.7 million attendees, of the Dams to Darnley country park that borders Barrhead, the Weaver's cottage in Kilbarchan or the gateway to Scotland's largest regional park—Clyde Muirshiel—in Lochwinnoch.

Paisley's success in being shortlisted is indicative of the growing confidence of not only that great town but of many of Scotland's post-industrial communities. No longer in the west of Scotland do we say "It's no for us" and put our dreams away. Although we now walk a little taller, we take nothing for granted. We are all aware of the hard work that has been put in to get Paisley to this stage. It has certainly not been nice and easy.

Now, though, we are on the final lap and I am delighted that the Scottish Government is going to

be backing Paisley day in, day out and all the way. Although high-stakes prestigious awards like city of culture can feel like a zero-sum game—all or nothing at all—it is clear that Paisley and Renfrewshire have already benefited from the civic reinvigoration that has been brought about by the bid process. As marvellous as that process has been to watch, for Paisley to win would be too marvellous for words. As we approach the announcement in December of UK city of culture 2021, let us start spreading the news across Scotland and beyond that it is Paisley that should win, and let us work together to make it happen.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Who was counting the Sinatra quotes? Lewis Macdonald will wind up for Labour and has seven minutes, and Maurice Golden will have eight minutes for his speech.

16:34

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** Often in this place, we have to agree to differ—after all, that is the essence of parliamentary debate. Taking issue is an essential part of a modern democracy, and we Scots have excelled at it over many generations. Sometimes, however, we have to agree to agree, because there is no issue between us—as is clearly the case when it comes to supporting the bids that we have been discussing today. Bids for recognition as centres of cultural life are, by definition, competitive, and the race between Paisley and Perth to challenge for the title of UK city of culture in 2021 was no different. We have heard today all the qualities that make Paisley's bid so strong, as it goes forward to the final stage with unanimous support from the Parliament and enthusiastic backing from across Scotland.

Likewise, the city of Dundee has attracted broad support for its bid to be European capital of culture in 2023, and it goes forward with a fair and, indeed, strong wind behind it. The award goes back over 30 years, to when Melina Mercouri in Greece and Jack Lang in France came up with the idea of recognising individual cities as cultural capitals—not of individual countries, but of Europe as a whole. Over that time, the title of capital of culture, like that of UK city of culture, has stimulated artistic creativity and economic growth in a series of cities, great and small. As Bill Bowman mentioned, Glasgow and Liverpool are the only previous British holders of the European title, and their years as European capital of culture were memorable and significant in the regeneration and reinvention of both those great cities, as Joan McAlpine and others have reminded us.

Dundee now has the chance to join that august company, and is clearly well placed to do so. The

celebration of contemporary arts and repertory theatre, the V&A museum of design and the redevelopment of the waterfront all contribute already to the cultural life of the city and the country, and there is clearly more to come.

At the same time—as my colleague Jenny Marra reminded us in supporting the city's bid to be UK city of culture four years ago—Dundee also has too many communities in which cultural life and access to health, jobs and hope for the future are still in too-short supply. The city is well placed to be creative, but it is also well placed to turn cultural opportunity into economic and social benefit and so to make the most of the title, if it is awarded to it, in 2023. That would build on the transformation over the past 30 years, which Graeme Dey highlighted.

The capital of culture is a European Union competition, but the competition for 2023 is to represent Britain in Europe, which is an interesting and momentous challenge. The successful candidate will be chosen by a panel of 12 judges, 10 of whom are from other European countries, but the cities or regions that are competing with Dundee for the title are all from elsewhere in the United Kingdom. That is because EU member states take it in turn to put forward candidates to be recognised as the capital of culture and, for the 2023 competition, that honour will fall on the United Kingdom and on Hungary. Therefore, as with the UK city of culture competition, Dundee has to win its bid in competition with other cities and centres from around these islands. The difference is that the judges come from across the EU.

The judging panel will shortlist bids in the next few weeks and make a final decision next year. Getting through the first stage will depend on the quality of the cities' submissions, and eventual success will depend on which one is best able to work up its submission into a really convincing proposal. We have heard about the sheer range and variety of cultural strengths of Dundee—I think that we will hear more on that from the minister in a moment—which will help in the task, as will the crucial involvement of so many Dundonians in developing the bid, as Mary Fee mentioned.

As a member for North East Scotland, I often reflect, as Graeme Dey did, on the relationship between the two cities that I am fortunate enough to represent. Although they are in a single parliamentary region, Aberdeen and Dundee are regional centres in their own rights. Part of what makes a city region is the strength of cultural identity and how much there is in common, and is seen to be in common, between town and country and between a city and its region. People in Inverurie and Inverurie take pride in the name and reputation of Aberdeen, while Dundee attracts the

same loyalty from people in Kirriemuir and beyond. As the cabinet secretary said, that regional solidarity is a critical strength of Dundee's bid for 2023.

Of course, Aberdeen and Dundee compete mightily in all manner of fields, from academic research to sporting prowess, and both cities aspired to the title of UK city of culture in 2017. Just as Dundee has used that experience as a springboard to bid to be European capital of culture in 2023, so Aberdeen has taken the first steps towards a bid to be UK city of culture in 2025.

My friend and former colleague Frank Doran, who came from Dundee to represent Aberdeen at Westminster 30 years ago, has always described competition between our two great north-east cities as a source of creative tension. The on-going bids for cultural recognition prove that he is right about that. After all, creative tension is what the process is all about.

We are demonstrating to people across Scotland, Britain and Europe that Paisley and Dundee have so many strengths and attributes that the cities can carry forward to the international stage. Those attributes add to the excellence that they have to offer and make the bids—which represent us all—so strong. Paisley and Dundee are standard bearers for all of Scotland in the competitions, and they have the full support of members around the chamber, as we have heard today, and of all concerned.

We look forward to many more opportunities for Scotland's great cities and towns to fly the flag as UK cities of culture and European capitals of culture in the years ahead.

16:41

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con):** I thank Fiona Hyslop for her motion. My Scottish Conservative colleagues and I are grateful for the opportunity to show our party's support for Paisley and Dundee. It is important that MSPs show that support, because the bids are about more than just securing titles: they are a sign to the world that Scotland is ambitious and is determined to succeed in the 21st century.

Some members are fortunate to have a connection to either Paisley or Dundee; I am fortunate to have a strong connection to both. I was educated in Dundee, as was William Wallace, which my colleague Bill Bowman noted. In fact, I went to the same school as Wallace, albeit a mere 700 years after him. Our similarity ends there, although "Braveheart" is one of my favourite films.

Today, we have heard support from across the chamber for Paisley and Dundee. In her opening

remarks, Fiona Hyslop outlined a tale of two cities, describing the bids as "committed, bold and ambitious". My colleagues and other members have made eloquent cases for Dundee to be named European capital of culture. In a thoughtful and interesting speech, Alex Cole-Hamilton described Dundee as a "metropolis" where he went to shop and experience nightlife in the form of the sticky carpets of the Mardi Gras nightclub. I may have bumped into him there—but the less said about that, the better.

Graeme Dey's first visit to Dundee took place in the year before I was born. He certainly showed his age, there. He spoke about the positive transformation of the city and urged us all to

"Be bold, be ambitious, be Dundee."

Suffice it to say that the world would be poorer without Dundee's cultural contributions, and there is a lot more to come. Dundee deserves to win, and I am more than happy to offer it any support that I can.

As an MSP for the West Scotland region, it is a great honour to be able to represent Paisley. When previously I spoke in the chamber about the Paisley 2021 bid, I said:

"Paisley deserves it ... Paisley needs it; and ... Scotland stands to benefit from it."—[*Official Report*, 7 December 2016; c 78.]

I am more convinced of that now than ever. Take a stroll through Paisley's streets and one will find architecture that would be at home in any European capital. Paisley is the home of the world-renowned Paisley pattern textile design—which I am sporting today on my tie, as members can see—and is the location of the formulation of the duty of care, which my colleague Liam Kerr mentioned. The legal joke did not go down so well in the chamber, but the point that Paisley has much to be proud of resonated. Neil Bibby spoke about his pride about having been born in and living in Paisley, as well as the economic benefits of the bid.

Ross Greer spoke about the radical movement and communism as well as rich cultural heritage. I was not sure whether the two were linked.

George Adam, who could hardly contain himself in his seat, looked forward to an "afternoon of positive Paisleyness". He has had that. He acknowledged the challenges, but also the cultural heritage of the town, and he claimed that Paisley is

"the centre of the universe".

Maurice Corry highlighted his links to Dundee and Paisley from serving in the Army in Dundee and his experience in the textile industry in Paisley.

Tom Arthur spoke about the benefits to the wider Renfrewshire area and urged us all to “start spreading the news”.

Paisley’s own Paolo Nutini has spoken of seeing “the romance of the town”

and the real beauty of it. I could not agree with him more.

Dundee can be proud of its musical heritage, too. It was the launch pad for groups including the Average White Band and Snow Patrol, and is the home town of Ricky Ross and folk singers including the bard of Dundee, Michael Marra. I am sure that Jenny Marra would have mentioned her uncle, had she been able to be in the chamber today.

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** Given Maurice Golden’s earlier comments about Mr Dey, does he actually remember the Average White Band?

**Maurice Golden:** When I was doing my standard grade music short course, that was the answer to one of the questions. I was taught about the Average White Band, but did not live the experience. I would be happy to listen to the Average White Band with Clare Adamson, if that was an invitation. That would be nice.

“A City Beautiful”, which is Simon Kempston’s ode to Dundee, is also well worth a listen. It gives a bit of history of the city and previous issues with it.

While Paisley has Gerard Butler, Dundee has Brian Taylor. Brian Taylor and I share at least three things in common: we both attended Dundee high school, we are Dundee United fans, and we spent much of our formative years on the 12th floor of the Gowriehill multi in the Menzieshill area of Dundee. I can expand on that at a later date.

Paisley has a lot going for it but, like Dundee, it faces challenges. Sadly, it suffers from appalling rates of poverty; for example, a third of the town’s children live in severe deprivation. Winning the title might not seem to be a solution to those problems, but it can help to drive economic benefits. Joan McAlpine made the point that culture creates jobs. I agree with that.

Dundee has much to offer, as does Paisley, and success with the bids should benefit everyone, especially the most vulnerable people. I am delighted to see that the organisers of both committees recognise that and are committed to ensuring that no one is left out.

I believe that the long-term community-minded approach is serving to raise support for both bids. That is a welcome reminder that there is more that unites us than divides us. On that note, I welcome the £10 million funding that the Scottish

Government has committed to the Paisley bid. I know that any information on further funding would be appreciated locally.

The next decade has the potential to begin with two of Scotland’s most vibrant centres leading the UK and Europe in culture and the arts. I am pleased to offer my support to the motion.

16:49

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Joe FitzPatrick):** I thank business managers across the chamber for agreeing not only that we should schedule this business but that we should have a motion to which we could all agree supporting these two very important bids. That is important, and both bid teams will be grateful for the contributions from across the chamber.

The debate has been very good. I think that Alex Cole-Hamilton said earlier that it shows the Parliament at its best when we come together in the way we have today. It is clear that there is a shared appreciation and passion for the bids of Paisley and Dundee, and the ambitions that they represent. It is great to hear the consensus around the chamber for the range of cultural, economic and social benefits that the bids will bring not just to Paisley, Dundee and their surrounding areas, but to individuals, communities and organisations across Scotland, the UK and Europe. I thank members for the quality and depth of today’s debate. For anyone who did not manage to sit through all today’s debate, the passion and enthusiasm were such that it is worth going back and having a look. I am not just talking about George Adam’s passion for Dundee.

I did not actually have to pay George Adam to agree to mention Dundee in his speech. We had a discussion and I promised that I would mention Paisley in my speech. The important thing is that the bids are not competing; they are complementary and the two bid teams are looking to learn from each other. Dundee has some experience from its bid to be UK city of culture in 2017. It was narrowly pipped at the post, unfortunately, but it learned a lot of lessons from the bid that it has been sharing that with Paisley.

Liam Kerr talked a bit about the connection between culture and history and about their importance to tourism. However, I say to him that—and I will be as gentle as I can—when we are talking about football, perhaps some history is best forgotten.

Neil Bibby talked about his pride in the work that has been done in bringing the Paisley bid together. The tributes that he paid to the bid team were well made, and the Dundee bid team has also put in a huge amount of work. Paisley is further down the line and the effort that has been

put in there is immense. I know that the bid teams in Paisley and Dundee will be grateful to hear that recognised in the Scottish Parliament.

Ross Greer somehow managed to weave in Karl Marx and radical politics to highlight the rich tapestry of Paisley's culture and he also mentioned the importance of winning the bid and the process of making the bid. In Dundee, we did not just learn a lot about the process of applying to be the UK city of culture 2017, we gained a lot as we went on that journey. I am sure that that will also be the case for Paisley, although, as Neil Bibby said, Paisley is in it to win it.

Alex Cole-Hamilton talked about crossing the Tay in his youth. He might have noticed in his recent journeys that the lemons are back. They were certainly an important part of any journey that I made from Dundee to Fife. The lemons represent, to some extent, the circle of how history and culture move forward and remind us just how far Dundee has come in its cultural revival. It is remarkable what has happened there. It was remarkable to hear from their speeches that Alex Cole-Hamilton and Maurice Golden were hitting the same clubs in Dundee. They were not the clubs that I attended—I did not attend any sticky-carpet clubs with them.

As expected, George Adam waxed lyrical about Paisley but he also talked about how similar Paisley and Dundee are. It has been said by a few members that Paisley is not an official city but it is about the size of most cities. Although Dundee has always been recognised to be a city, Paisley and Dundee are two of Scotland's biggest villages, in that everybody kens everybody. That is one of the biggest benefits of these two places. The connections that that allows are important for taking forward the bids. Paisley's bid is strengthened by the fact that people can work across the community and across party-political lines. Neil Bibby made the point that the bid was originally started by a Labour council administration with the support of an SNP opposition and is now being carried forward by an SNP council administration with the support of a Labour opposition.

We have seen something similar in Dundee as well: every time we have talked about Dundee's culture, we have had support from right across the political spectrum. That goes right back to the development of the waterfront plan, which Graeme Dey mentioned. In 2001, when I was a councillor in opposition in Dundee, everyone in the council came together to draw up that fantastic waterfront plan with the aim of taking Dundee forward. It is because we were able to set aside the party politics that, through all the changes in the administration—starting with a Labour administration, moving to a Labour-Conservative

alliance and then moving to an SNP administration—we have all been able to ensure that we are doing the best for Dundee.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution (Derek Mackay):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Joe FitzPatrick:** Of course.

**Derek Mackay:** I thank the minister for taking this intervention, which allows me to have a word in the debate. Does the minister agree that the city of Dundee, the town of Paisley and all the neighbouring communities will benefit from the bids and, we hope, the victory of those bids, and that, for that matter, Scotland as a whole will benefit if either or both bids are ultimately successful?

**Joe FitzPatrick:** The cabinet secretary makes a strong point, which is one that was also made by Graeme Dey and Tom Arthur, who, like the cabinet secretary, represent constituencies that neighbour either Paisley or Dundee. The reach of culture involves much more than the direct input of cash and resources in the cities where that cultural activity is happening. I fully expect that the bids of Paisley and Dundee—both of which I hope will be successful—will have a benefit that will be felt beyond those places, out into the city regions and across the whole of Scotland, and will help to maintain connections across the UK and Europe.

In addition to the points that I have already mentioned, Maurice Corry mentioned his history with the Black Watch. Clearly, the Black Watch is very much a part of Dundee's cultural past and its cultural future.

One of the points that Graeme Dey made when he gave away his age—I was not going to mention that but Maurice Golden already has—involved the transformation that has happened to Dundee over the years since the waterfront plan was first envisaged in 2001. Anyone who has not been to Dundee in the past two or three years really should go and see the difference that has been made. One of the biggest differences that people might not be able to see is the confidence that is felt in our city. The Dundee 2017 bid was very much part of the rejuvenation of our city and the development of that feeling of confidence. No longer did we just have to accept our lot. Through that bid, Dundee gained confidence in itself and felt that it had the right to—in the words of what is, effectively, our unofficial slogan—be bold, be ambitious and be Dundee.

Mary Fee reminded us of the importance of stories, from Robert Stewart to witches, weavers and this new chapter in Paisley's story. They are very important.

At the start of her speech, Joan McAlpine talked about something that I thought was very important. Anyone who asks why we should spend money on culture and says that we should instead be spending money on this, that or the next thing just needs to look back at what winning the title of European city of culture did for Glasgow in 1990. It was transformative for that city, and gave it a boost to his confidence. Joan McAlpine was right to say that it is difficult to envisage all the things that happened thereafter happening if whoever it was in the council at that time had not had the courage to say that launching that bid had to be the priority for the city.

Bill Bowman outlined the Dundee bid programme but, crucially, he also talked about the economic potential of the whole programme—the bid process and, as we hope will happen, the winning of the bid. I will echo his closing words—come to Dundee.

Presiding Officer, my time is coming to an end, so I will go right to the end of my speech. I finish by thanking all members who contributed. I am sure that the motion will be passed unanimously at decision time, which will be an endorsement of the bids by both Dundee and Paisley for which I am sure the bid teams will be very grateful.

## Business Motions

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of two business motions: motion S5M-07912, setting out a business programme; and motion S5M-07913, on an extension to a stage 1 timetable.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 3 October 2017

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Roll-out of Universal Credit

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 4 October 2017

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Health and Sport

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Delivering Employment Support for Scotland

*followed by* Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee Debate: Gender Pay Gap

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 5 October 2017

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Ministerial Statement: Scottish City Region Deals, Next Steps

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

4.30 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 24 October 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 25 October 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 26 October 2017

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 11.40 am General Questions  
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 2.30 pm Scottish Government Business  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on 5 October, in rule 13.6.2, insert at end "and may provide an opportunity for Party Leaders to question the First Minister", and

(c) to the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 28 September 2017—

after

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Domestic Abuse  
 (Scotland) Bill

insert

*followed by* Financial Resolution: Domestic Abuse  
 (Scotland) Bill

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be extended to 22 December 2017.—[Joe FitzPatrick]

*Motions agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S5M-07914, on acting conveners.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that, under rule 12.1A.6(b), in relation to the Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee, the period set out in motion S5M-04945 be extended to 22 December 2017.—[Joe FitzPatrick]

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



## Decision Time

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** There are two questions today.

The first question is, that motion S5M-07862, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on recognising and supporting Paisley's 2021 UK city of culture and Dundee's 2023 European capital of culture bids, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament recognises the significant contributions that the communities of Paisley and Dundee make to Scotland's rich tapestry of cultural life and the local, national and international boosts that Paisley's 2021 UK City of Culture and Dundee's 2023 European Capital of Culture bids will bring; fully supports both bids, which will promote Scotland's cultural and creative talent and showcase its inspiring building design and places to UK and European partners; notes that the Paisley bid will deliver a spectacular year-long cultural and events programme inspired by the rich textile heritage of the city and will be inclusive, accessible and appeal to a range of local, national and international audiences; recognises that the bid is part of broader heritage and culture-led regeneration plans seeking to transform Paisley into a vibrant cultural destination, growing the cultural, creative and visitor economy, and re-positioning Paisley as a place recognised for cultural excellence; further recognises that Dundee is on a pioneering journey with culture and creativity driving the continuing regeneration of the city and its waterfront, which includes a world-class design museum in the V&A; supports Dundee's plans to build on its UNESCO City of Design status, learning from other European cities' approaches, and supports the valuable role that the bid will have in promoting Dundee's rich cultural heritage and exciting future.

**The Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S5M-07914, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on acting conveners, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that, under rule 12.1A.6(b), in relation to the Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee, the period set out in motion S5M-04945 be extended to 22 December 2017.

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

## Levenmouth Rail Link

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-05941, in the name of Jenny Gilruth, on Levenmouth rail link. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament notes what it sees as the strong support that the Levenmouth Rail Campaign has achieved; believes that this has been demonstrated by it organising a petition that has been signed by over 12,500 residents from Thornton to Leven; welcomes the Fife Council report, *Levenmouth Sustainable Transport Study – Final Stag Report*, which was published in January 2017; understands that this study included a strongly positive cost-benefit analysis for the link and suggested that its reopening would lead to major economic benefits; believes that, although the Levenmouth area faces high levels of economic deprivation and problems with connectivity, it has substantial opportunities for employment and economic development; considers that this project could help deliver this; understands that passenger numbers on other reopened services, including the Borders Railway and the Airdrie-Bathgate line have exceeded predictions, and notes the view that a strong case has been made for ministers to give serious consideration to the re-opening of the Levenmouth line for passenger and freight services.

17:03

**Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP):** I begin by welcoming to Holyrood this evening members of the Levenmouth rail link campaign group and colleagues from Fife Council. I thank my fellow members from across the political spectrum for their support on the re-establishment of the Levenmouth rail link.

What is it that makes Leven different? Levenmouth is the largest conurbation in Scotland that is not directly served by rail. The track in question is 5 miles in length and was still in use as a freight line until 2001.

Let us compare our line with the situation in the Borders, which has 30 miles of new railway. In February 2013, the final business case for the Borders railway showed a benefit cost ratio of just 0.5:1. The Institute of Economic Affairs branded the decision to build the Borders railway

“exceedingly poor value for money”.

Yet, during its first month, 125,971 passengers travelled on the Borders line. Demand far outstripped expectation, with the line carrying 19.4 per cent of its predicted annual footfall in just one month and visitor numbers surging at the nearby National Mining Museum in Newtongrange.

The method that is used to prioritise transport schemes is the Scottish transport appraisal guidance—or STAG—method. We had one STAG report in 2008 and another in 2015, but the

Network Rail Scotland route study that was published in July 2016 made no reference to the Levenmouth rail link. In December 2016, Fife Council submitted the revised STAG report to Transport Scotland, which responded to Fife Council's technical review on 18 July this year. I say to the Minister for Transport and the Islands that, quite aside from any rail link application, the process involved is tiresome, lacks transparency and, I believe, is an antiquated approach to public engagement.

The issues that Transport Scotland raised included a forecast of low passenger numbers for the Levenmouth to Edinburgh route. I gently suggest to Transport Scotland that it is rather difficult to estimate footfall on a rail line that has not existed since the 1960s. To be blunt, there is no culture of travelling to the capital for work because there is no rail line. Let us compare Leven with Dunbar. In Levenmouth, 3 per cent of the population work in Edinburgh, compared with 22 per cent in Dunbar. The towns are a similar distance from Edinburgh, and there are no prizes for guessing which has the rail link.

Transport Scotland also raised concerns about the apparently limited number of personal and business responses to the public survey. That is a quantitative look at the data. I like to do my homework, so here is some qualitative feedback that I gathered prior to the debate. Donaldson Timber says that it is

"sure that rail connectivity to the central belt and further afield would help with employment opportunities".

Pfudler, the engineering firm, says:

"We are in support of the proposed rail link. It would give us access to a wider pool of employees and the option of bringing materials and by rail".

Transport Scotland claimed:

"Diageo and their logistics provider WH Malcolm are the largest identified opportunity for rail freight. No evidence has been provided with regard to their current views and their likelihood to use such a facility".

However, W H Malcolm told my office today that it has a rail division. It says that it is

"not averse to switching from road to rail".

Similarly, Diageo says that it would

"give serious consideration to the option of transporting materials via freight train".

The biggest employer in Leven would naturally consider using freight. That sounds like pretty compelling evidence to me.

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):**

On employment opportunities, does Jenny Gilruth recognise that there is a shortage of good-quality employment opportunities for young people in particular in the Leven area, and that, as a result,

too many have to leave the area? Does she agree that creating the rail link might help to address that situation and encourage more young people to stay in the area?

**Jenny Gilruth:** I absolutely agree with what Murdo Fraser says. I will come to that issue later in my speech.

Much as in the Borders, opening up the Leven rail link would not only be about driving investment and job creation. It is about more than that; it is about tourism. When the rail line first opened in the 1960s, it helped Leven to become a tourist destination. My granddad, who is from Springburn, used to come on holiday to Leven with his family from Glasgow.

To the east of Leven sits Lundin Links, which is the home of the oldest women's golf course in the world. Of course, Murdo Fraser's boss comes from that area as well. Beyond it is Lower Largo, the birthplace of Alexander Selkirk, the real inspiration behind Robinson Crusoe. Scotland's answer to Nelson, Sir Andrew Wood, a Scottish sea captain who went on to become the Lord High Admiral of Scotland, came from Upper Largo.

What now of Fife's proud history? What of our vital contribution to the coal industry? Transported from the Methil docks, not far from where the line would run, that unclean fuel helped to build the British empire but the hollow gap that the industry's implosion left continues to scar Levenmouth today.

Since I was elected last May, we have lost jobs in the High Street at the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Clydesdale Bank and—just last weekend—W H Smith. On Saturday, I took a wander down the High Street. There were nine closed shops, three charity shops, two bookies and an arcade.

One child in three in Levenmouth lives in poverty. For children growing up in my constituency, the opportunities are geographically curtailed. As they are isolated from transport links, their aspirations can take them only so far.

I am extremely proud that the Scottish Government backed the new Levenmouth academy with £25 million of investment. The school, which opened last year, is a state-of-the-art building and a partnership with Fife College. Here is what the headteacher, Ronnie Ross, had to say:

"I firmly believe, as do most of my staff and pupils, that the rail link is an essential ingredient to reviving the fortunes of Levenmouth and also for enabling people to travel in and out of the area for work purposes."

As the constituency member for Leven, I was extremely disappointed that the Edinburgh city region deal made no provision for the Levenmouth rail link. That was an opportunity for all levels of

Government to grasp. Instead, the deal has focused on the capital to the detriment of the originally intended region. As Edinburgh booms, Levenmouth is beginning to contract.

However, there is an opportunity. In his most recent correspondence to me on the Levenmouth rail link, the Minister for Transport and the Islands states that

“a new pipeline system is now being proposed for rail enhancement projects”.

Levenmouth is not like other rail links. We have a well-established campaign group, cross-party support and a length of track that is just sitting there, ripe for development. We have already been through two STAG appraisals. Therefore, if there is to be a new approach—I will now shamelessly steal an idea given to me by Ross Bennett from the campaign group—let us try it. That is my first ask of the minister.

My second ask is that the minister commits Network Rail to a governance for railway investment projects 4—or GRIP 4—study of the Leven rail link. That is the only way that we can arrive at a definitive business case. It will also help to develop a single option for the line. My final ask is that the transport minister comes to Leven to walk the line—I might even cook him his tea if he is lucky.

At the top of Leven High Street, above what is today Leven library, is the symbol of the co-operative movement, a beehive. The image for the movement suggests united co-operation. One bee cannot survive on its own, but with others it can. To quote the great Jimmy Reid,

“whoever takes the important economic decisions in society ipso facto determines the social priorities of that society.”

The Leven rail link has the potential to change lives in my constituency and beyond: it will bring jobs; it will bring investment; and it will widen the horizons of the next generation. It just needs the green light from Government.

I take the opportunity to personally thank Eugene Clarke, Allen Armstrong, Ken Haig, Ross Bennett, Mary Reilly, Elizabeth McGuire and everyone who has been involved in the Levenmouth campaign group. Their resolute, professional determination has kept the Levenmouth rail link alive to us politicians. I think that it is high time that we rewarded their tenacity and committed to getting Leven back on track. *[Applause.]*

17:11

**Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** I thank Jenny Gilruth for securing the debate. I particularly thank her because it is important that we have forceful all-party support, but I also caution her: I

do not think that Ruth Davidson has ever been Murdo Fraser’s boss. I also thank the Levenmouth railway campaigners for their energetic campaign to reinstate that very short line from Leven to Glenrothes with Thornton.

I apologise to the chamber, to the minister and to the people in the gallery, because I have to leave early, before the conclusion of the debate, as I have a speech to make at 6 o’clock at the university. I offer my apologies for that, but the project is so important to Fife and to my constituency that I wanted to mark my support with a small contribution.

We have heard all the arguments. Leven is the largest town without a railway, and Levenmouth is a significant area of deprivation and post-industrial decline. There are big businesses with a lot of heavy goods vehicle traffic on narrow access roads. The environmental, social and economic benefits of the rail link are pretty obvious. The studies have been carried out, local support has been secured—as we have heard from Jenny Gilruth—and local people proactively raise the issue as an important priority. We do not have to encourage them to support the campaign; they are already there. Fife Council regards it as a priority, and it has put its money behind the project.

The railway still exists. It is a short line and none of it has been built on. The cost is not insignificant, but in comparison with other major projects it is still quite small. The environmental, economic and social returns will be significant, but there is frustration with the process—with the fact that it takes too long and that the answer to any question is to commission a further report, study or investigation. It is almost as if the decision is being put off for convenience. What we need is a bit of speed in the process to deliver a project that everybody is behind.

I hope that, through the debate, the minister will get an understanding of the strength of feeling in the community and from all parties. I appreciate that he has hard choices to make, but to govern is to choose. I hope that he chooses to confirm in the not-too-distant future that the Levenmouth rail link will happen and that trains will be running on that line within the next few years. That would be a sound investment and it has my support. I hope that it has the minister’s too. *[Applause.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** I appreciate that there is warm support for the debate in the gallery, but I urge members of the public not to clap. You may show your support at the very end of the debate by applauding when we close.

17:14

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** I will not be offended if people do not clap after my

speech. I congratulate Jenny Gilruth and thank her for bringing the debate to the chamber this evening. I also pay tribute to the rail campaigners for the work that they are doing to bring a local issue to the forefront of debate in the Scottish Parliament. I am also aware, as I have been reliably informed, that my local Fife Conservatives group is in favour of the reinstatement of the line.

As we look forward to consider how to improve Scotland's national railways, much of the discussion in the chamber is around the big-ticket items and connectivity between our main cities. It is very important that we consider the positive impact that small railway lines can have on communities. It is important that we always remember that at the heart of the debate is the fact that railways are not just modes of transport, but are key parts of local, regional and national economic development. They enhance trade, encourage investment and create jobs and prosperity. Better connectivity in Scotland will spur growth and help to facilitate a collaborative economic environment among our cities, regions and towns. That is why I believe that there is a strong case for what is suggested in the motion.

I admit that I naturally approach calls for new railway lines and links quite cautiously. They are substantially expensive infrastructure investments and, as we all know, all Governments are tightening their purses.

**John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):** Does Jamie Greene believe that the same restraint should be shown in calls for road-building projects?

**Jamie Greene:** I think that any major infrastructure spend—on a road, a railway line, an airport or a bridge—has to be looked at based on its merits and on the advantages that that investment will bring to the communities that it serves at both ends. A road is no different to a rail line. There is a very obvious business case for the line that would merit the substantial investment that it clearly requires—although I say “substantial”, we could argue that, in the grand scheme of things, it is not substantial.

As I said, I naturally approach such things quite cautiously, but campaigns for projects are often led by local people, and I am very taken by the energy that has come from the local campaign for the line, so I am pleased to participate in this debate.

The estimated cost of about £80 million would not just connect Leven, Buckhaven and Methil locally but would improve access from those towns to the wider area including Glenrothes, the rest of Fife and even the capital. About 50,000 people who live in the catchment area would benefit from the line. It would also present significant transport

and connectivity improvements that would benefit any new house building or business expansion in the area.

For example, I have heard that access for freight to key industrial sites would be provided. We are all keen to get as much freight off the road and on to rail as we can, and this is a perfect opportunity to do so.

The Scottish transport appraisal guidance report that I think was published last year recommended the project. I will quote from it, because one thing struck me specifically. It said:

“The scheme has the potential to provide a step change in the economic performance of a large population area. As well as helping to regenerate economic activity this will provide a gateway to significantly boost tourism.”

It is very important that we bear it in mind that it is not just about commuters, but about encouraging people from other parts of Scotland to come to Jenny Gilruth's area.

The report also noted the potential to attract inward investment and support increased business activity in the area. The net cost to benefit ratio was estimated to be around 1:3, which sounds good to me, from a business point of view.

I am aware that the line would also have some environmental repercussions. It could reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Fife area and decrease levels of road congestion, which I think is something that we all want.

So, there is a business case for reinstating the link, but in order to move things forward we need to have an open conversation about the funding—who will pay for it and how will it be paid for. Also, as with all such projects, it is very important that the scope is set out properly from day 1. Such projects have a tendency to go over budget due to poor scoping in the first place, so any cost analysis that we do on the total cost of the project should be quite succinct so that the minister is able to take a view on the project with all the facts in hand. I am intrigued to find out whether he will, in his speech, give us more rationale on why it was not included in the Edinburgh city deal. I think that there is general disappointment across the chamber with that decision, and it has also been noted in the local press. Any comments that he can make on that would be welcome.

I wish Jenny Gilruth well in her pursuit of the link. Conservative members are happy to be a constructive part of the dialogue, and I look forward to seeing some results.

17:19

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** I congratulate Jenny Gilruth on securing this debate on one of the most pressing issues that affect our

two constituencies. I welcome members of the Levenmouth rail campaign and local councillors to our Parliament.

Transport links have served as a symbol of modernisation since the beginning of human civilisation, and rail has been an important means of transport for people and materials for decades. No other industry has promoted change of the scale and scope that has been brought about by the invention and adoption of the railway. Transport has always affected economic and social development, and continues to do so.

That is why it is unacceptable that Levenmouth is the largest urban area in Scotland that is not directly served by rail. As influential policy makers, it is our job to raise awareness of the 37,600 residents of Levenmouth who continue to be disconnected from key areas of Scotland.

The Levenmouth rail campaign has brought to our attention issues of economic, social and environmental inequality. It is, fundamentally, a campaign for justice for the community. The most recent statistics show that Levenmouth is in the top 20 per cent most-deprived communities in Scotland. Several areas in the region are in the top 5 per cent. Levenmouth's transport links have been neglected for years, yet the area continues to show great potential for regeneration, investment in business and tourism development.

I have been involved with the Levenmouth rail campaign for six years. Its members must be congratulated on their enthusiasm and dedication and on taking every opportunity to highlight the issue. There has not been a summer fête or gala in the area that the campaign has not attended. In addition, the campaign has run many street stalls in the area, which have resulted in more than 12,500 residents signing a petition in support of reopening the rail link from Thornton to Leven. Jenny Gilruth and I recently presented the petition to the Minister for Transport and the Islands, Humza Yousaf.

It is evident that communities with transport connections prosper. Transport investment creates a web of links and relationships between producers and consumers, which promotes efficiency and provides the means to expand, through economies of scale and scope.

As Fife Council's report "Levenmouth Sustainable Transport Study—STAG Report" showed, reducing the costs of, and time taken by, passenger and freight movement greatly contributes to economic growth. In an area that has one of the highest concentrations of deprivation in Fife, it is crucial that we revive the rail link to enhance employment opportunities for the struggling workforce, given that alternative modes of transport are costly and inefficient.

Alongside the economic benefits, there are environmental benefits of rail, as opposed to road transport, and the reopening of the railway would be in line with Scotland's leading environmental role. Modern railways, when they are managed strategically, offer significant environmental and land-use benefits because they are usually more energy efficient than road transport and generate lower emissions per traffic unit than any other mode.

It is obvious that there is significant support for reinstatement of the Levenmouth rail link. During my long time in politics, it is one of the few issues that has received cross-party support. The two main political parties in Fife Council fully support reinstatement of the link and have made that their number 1 transport priority.

For that reason, I found Willie Rennie's comments in the local papers over the past few days, in which he attacked both SNP and Labour Administrations of Fife Council, extremely disappointing and unhelpful. It was cheap political point scoring, which did nothing positive to advance the case for reinstating the Levenmouth rail link.

**Willie Rennie:** Does David Torrance find it rather odd that I received a letter from the minister that directly contradicted what the council leader had said about the city region deal? Does he think that rather than argue among themselves, people should come together to take the project forward? Does he find the minister's comments rather confusing and think that the issue needs clarity and unity?

**David Torrance:** If Willie Rennie had attended many of the meetings that I have attended over the past six years, he would have found that MPs, MSPs, councillors and council leaders have come together to support the Levenmouth rail campaign. His comments in the paper were not at all helpful to our case.

Our next step is to develop a detailed reform programme. "Levenmouth Sustainable Transport Study" is an excellent start to the process.

If we disregard the campaign, we disregard economic progress in a country that is leading on reducing carbon emissions, and we disregard our duty to serve the most deprived communities in Scotland. Levenmouth and the wider community are suffering, and we need to raise awareness and help individuals and communities who have been denied access to public space.

Reinstatement of the Levenmouth rail link will address the problem of poor transport links in the area and will bring economic benefits. It also has the potential to make a significant contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of businesses in the area.

I thank everyone who is involved with the Levenmouth rail campaign for all their hard work. Without them, we would not be debating the motion today. I look forward to working with the campaigners in the future, so that one day we can all travel on a train to Leven.

17:24

**Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** It is a pleasure to speak in this evening's debate on the Leven rail link. I congratulate Jenny Gilruth on securing the debate and giving us the opportunity to put the case before the minister.

It is nine years since I first spoke in a members' business debate on the Leven to Thornton Vale rail link. Looking back on it, I see that I am the only MSP who spoke in the open debate who is still here to support the campaign further. I recognise the tenacity of the Levenmouth rail campaign group, which is promoting its cause with rigour, good nature and energy. It has held conferences, gathered signatures and produced sound evidence to support the campaign. I will highlight some of its arguments.

Nine years ago, there was unanimous support around the chamber for the project, but there was a fairly mild response from the then minister. I hope that the minister this evening can give a stronger and more positive response to the debate. The campaign has political support in Fife.

Since I was first elected to the Scottish Parliament, Fife has had first an SNP-led council administration, then a Labour administration, and now a coalition of the two. All have been consistent in their support for the project. The timeline that has been provided by Fife Council to MSPs demonstrates the work that it has undertaken to promote the reopening of the line. The reopening of the line was also in the Scottish Labour and Scottish Green Party manifestos for the 2016 election, and I recognise the commitment of Fife MSPs of all the other parties. Nevertheless, it is not within the powers or the finances of the local authority or Fife MSPs to deliver the project.

The economic, environmental and social benefits that the rail link can deliver are clear. It would expand employment, educational and economic opportunities for an area that would benefit very much from the investment. Reopening the line would also offer opportunities for freight, thereby adding further benefit to the proposal.

I know the Levenmouth area well, and it has seen investment with the Fife energy park, the hydrogen office project, the new Levenmouth academy and the commitment of Fife College. There are many dedicated support organisations, and the area still has the community spirit that was fostered in its history as a mining community.

However, it is an area that lives with high deprivation levels, higher than average unemployment, health challenges and a low car-ownership figure. The positive signal of intent that reopening the rail line would give to the area is difficult to overstate.

It is a fairly straightforward proposal. I accept that there is a process to go through and that there must be clear evidence of benefits and affordability, as well as a robust business case. Nevertheless, as other members have said, there is frustration around that process. We have had two STAG reports, the most recent of which was commissioned by Fife Council in 2015. I know that Transport Scotland has a job to do, but there is growing concern that it is not making the STAG process smooth or being clear in its expectations.

There is now a need for a GRIP 4 study, which is recognised as a complex and relatively expensive study. Is it proportionate for Fife Council to pay for that when we know the pressure that local authorities are under? Although the council has invested in the STAG process and has budgeted for expenditure, it is now being expected to fund a GRIP 4 study with no indication that the project is likely to be considered favourably or that it is a worthwhile undertaking.

Political commitment from the Scottish Government is crucial to making the project a reality. The success of the Borders rail line, for which passenger numbers are considerably higher than predicted, should inspire confidence in future projects. There will always be an element of risk with such infrastructure projects, and we can never fully guarantee the outcome, but the Levenmouth rail project is as good a project as the Scottish Government could wish for to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits to an area that needs them.

Today, the minister must demonstrate commitment to the project. He could start by committing to real support for the GRIP 4 study, which is the crucial next stage in making the project a reality.

17:28

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** I thank Jenny Gilruth for lodging the motion that we are debating tonight. It is very welcome and has attracted a lot of cross-party support. I am delighted to be able to speak in the debate.

I highlighted the case for reopening the Levenmouth rail link in my members' business debate back in 2007—I think that Tavish Scott responded to the debate for the Government—and it has been satisfying to see how the argument for reopening the line has evolved into a compelling

case over the past decade. The quality of that case is reflected in Jenny Gilruth's motion, which is supported by all parties. The Levenmouth rail campaign deserves our thanks and congratulations for their professional and passionate work which, in recent years, has also been supported by Fife Council.

When the Methil power station finally disappeared from the skyline and the big demonstration wind turbine went up, a picture was painted of a strong economic future for Levenmouth communities, in which the skills of the past would be built on to deliver the world that we need for the future, but missing from that picture was a rail link connecting Levenmouth with the rest of Scotland.

For decades, the Levenmouth rail line has languished under weeds, yet it is vital for the area's regeneration. We have heard members' contributions about the challenges and the grinding exclusion that young people face, and we have all heard constituents' stories about how difficult it has been to access the job market, education opportunities and even, in some cases, healthcare.

In the remaining time, I will focus on the way forward and the process for getting the line reopened. First, it is important to remember that the line exists. It may lie mothballed, but a commitment falls on Network Rail to maintain it. If Diageo's freight operator were to request that it be used again, Network Rail would have to open it within 12 months. That would obviously make a significant contribution to the full upgrading required for passenger services, so the Scottish Government needs to back dialogue with Diageo and the Malcolm Group on the freight question.

Secondly, the completed STAG appraisal did not count up the wider economic benefits that would flow from reopening the line. If it had, the cost benefit ratio would have come in well ahead of that of the Borders railway line. The regeneration potential of the Levenmouth rail project is real and it needs to be understood and factored into what will be a political decision for the Scottish Government on passenger services rather than a decision for Network Rail.

Thirdly, the new pipeline approach to bringing forward rail projects and a move away from the five-year control periods will bring flexibility for the Government to back winning projects, but I remain concerned about blockages in that pipeline. If Levenmouth is to move from the business case stage of the STAG process to the technical feasibility stage under GRIP, that will require investment, including for the physical clearance work on the line that will be required for the technical assessment to take place.

Other members have reflected on where the investment will come from if it is not written into the Edinburgh city region deal or it is not within the budget capacity of Fife Council to deliver on its own. There must be a role for the Scottish Government to marshal the resources that are needed to help move the project down the pipe.

Lastly, I appreciate that co-ordination between the proposals to reopen rail lines and stations and the wider rail network needs is required. Furthermore, Levenmouth is not the only reopening that Fife needs, and the completion of the Queensferry crossing should signal increased investment in public transport in Fife rather than less investment.

There are questions about the timescale of the proposed projects in Fife, but there is the opportunity for synergy between them and for a much-needed rail renaissance in Fife and across Scotland, if the Government prioritises capital budgets for infrastructure.

The prize for the communities, the economy and environment is great, but political will and vision will be needed to turn it into a reality. We look to the minister to provide that.

17:33

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I am delighted to have the opportunity this evening to participate in the debate, and I pay tribute to Jenny Gilruth for bringing it to the chamber.

As has been mentioned, Levenmouth is Scotland's largest urban area not directly served by rail, despite the presence of the mothballed original line between Thornton on the east coast main line and the historic stations of Cameron Bridge and Leven—a distance of only 5 miles as the crow flies.

The Levenmouth rail campaign is running a strong campaign that seeks to raise awareness and to apply pressure from the local community for change. I pay tribute to that local community for its strength of feeling, commitment, dedication and enthusiasm, which have ensured that the issue has moved further up the agenda.

Although I have been a member only since last May, I was aware of the campaign prior to coming here. It is paramount that this neglected community is reconnected—there is a commercial need, it makes common sense logistically and, ultimately, justice requires it. It will help the economy, it will help with investment, it will secure jobs and it will give youngsters the opportunity to move freely around the area. The area desperately needs a robust reinforcement of its rail services so that advantage can be taken of the

opportunities that are there. At the moment, the people of the area have poor connections, as a result of which they suffer on a daily basis. Better freight links by rail would aid motorists by removing from the roads the present heavy goods traffic. There would also be an opportunity to carry passengers.

If we turn back the clock, we find that there was a similar situation in the area 170 years ago. In 1847, the Edinburgh and Northern Railway opened part of its main line with a station at Markinch. In 1848, a station was opened at Thornton, which immediately emphasised to the people of Leven the magnitude of the railway connections that were taking place in the community.

Today, it is acknowledged that there are poor road connections. If the heavy goods vehicles that move back and forth from the Diageo plant and others in the area were taken off the road, that would create opportunities for much better logistical connections.

It is time for the Scottish Government to sit up and listen to the locals. It cannot just ignore the depth of feeling. I have been sincerely impressed by the reports that have been produced and the events that I have attended over the past year and a bit, which demonstrate the community's commitment. The strong commercial case for the reopening of the line, not to mention the common sense of the proposal, the locals' determination and the business sense that it would make, must prevail. The Levenmouth rail link campaigners deserve to succeed, given the amount of effort that they have put into their campaign.

If we believe that the connections are poor, it is vital that the Government puts its money where its mouth is and supports the business community and local residents. The campaign has been going on for years and a great deal of effort has been put into it. Lots of reports have been produced, but there has not been much progress. That is not because MSPs have not participated in the campaign; I can see that they have. The project simply has not materialised.

Therefore, I ask the Government to support the proposal, which would unlock the area's potential and give real opportunities to communities across Fife. I am happy to fight the corner of the people of Levenmouth and to stand shoulder to shoulder with MSPs across the chamber to ensure that they are given the opportunities that they deserve. They have fought long and hard for the reopening of the line, and I am immensely impressed by the work that they have done, but it is up to Network Rail, Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government to stand together, too, to ensure that the community is respected and given the opportunities that it rightfully deserves.

I wish the campaign well, and I hope that, during my time in Parliament, we can work together to ensure that this dream becomes a reality for the communities that deserve it.

17:38

**The Minister for Transport and the Islands (Humza Yousaf):** I commend Jenny Gilruth for securing the debate, and I thank members for their contributions. I will try to address some of the issues and concerns that have been raised, and if I miss anything out, I would welcome interventions.

As many members have done, I thank the Levenmouth rail campaigners, many of whom are in the public gallery. Not all 12,500 of those who signed the petition are here, but we have been joined by a fair number of those who have driven the campaign, whom I have met on a number of occasions, most recently when I collected the petition from Jenny Gilruth, David Torrance and a number of other MSPs. I am sure that all of us will have collected petitions on many different issues, but to gather 12,500 signatures is a mightily impressive achievement, particularly given the population of the Levenmouth area—we are talking about a third of its entire population. The gathering of so many signatures is an extremely impressive achievement, and I thank, congratulate and commend the Levenmouth rail campaigners. I know from personal experience that whoever does their Twitter account is persistent and I salute their indefatigability—somehow, they always manage to bring anything that I tweet about back to the Levenmouth rail campaign.

I can advise Jenny Gilruth and others who have passionately articulated their case that the debate has been helpful and informative. It has been an opportunity for me to hear and reflect on the issues, observations and concerns that have been raised. After due reflection, I intend to float a proposition on how we might address some of the needs of the community at Levenmouth but, before I do that, let me set out some of my assessments of the issue.

First, nobody, be it the Government or Transport Scotland—and I think that perhaps I can even speak for Network Rail on this—has ever doubted the passion, commitment, desire and depth of feeling, as I think Alexander Stewart described it, of those who live in Levenmouth and the surrounding area to have the rail link up and running. That has never been in any doubt.

Members were right to say that there have been a number of studies, so I can understand their frustration. I can also understand the frustration around the STAG process in some respects. Jenny Gilruth and others are not the only people to



have raised that with me. I am speaking to my officials at Transport Scotland about looking at the STAG process in general, not just for rail projects but for a number of our infrastructure projects. That said, members will know from the Fife Council study report—of which I have a copy, of course—that from within the guidelines two potential transport options emerged: a bus option and the rail link option that is favoured by the majority.

There is also the context that Government will rightly be held to account for every single penny of taxpayers' money that it spends. That is really important and Jamie Greene reflected on it very well in his contribution. Therefore, there has to be an absolutely robust business case and rationale that has to be scrutinised to the nth degree. Finding the balance between not frustrating the process and yet going through the due diligence is sometimes difficult. I am not saying that we get it right every time, but I can certainly hear what members are saying on that.

When it comes to the cost benefit ratio, which Jamie Greene also mentioned, if we look at the rail link purely in terms of value for the pound invested, there is still some work for the study to do. On the flip side of that, a point that was made by all members and on which Jenny Gilruth was very strong was that, if we just look at the project from a business case point of view, we will be ignoring the regeneration and socioeconomic impacts and so on. Those points were very well made by all those who contributed to the debate.

That point is also made very well in the recent booklet that was produced by the Levenmouth rail link campaign, which I read yesterday and again this afternoon before coming to the debate. That latest booklet is a really helpful contribution and, if members have not seen it, they should look at it. It illustrates how improved connectivity can make a real difference to the lives and opportunities of people in Levenmouth. The booklet also raised points that need to be explored further relating to the level of costs and the identification of benefits that could be achieved.

It is for all those reasons, and the reasons that Claire Baker and one or two other speakers touched on about the GRIP 4 process—the financial burden as I think it was described by the local authority—that, subject to the agreement of Fife Council, I am minded to instruct my officials at Transport Scotland to take on responsibility for the study, in close collaboration with the council, of course. It will be imperative to have the evidential base when we start to spend taxpayers' money.

I am not going to prejudge the outcome of Transport Scotland's deliberations. I have told it to look above and beyond the basic cost benefit analysis to the wider socioeconomic and

regeneration impacts. It would also be helpful and useful if Jenny Gilruth could present me with some of the qualitative information that she articulated. That said, I still expect Transport Scotland to be absolutely robust in its scrutiny of the project.

With that in mind, I will re-engage with the members who have taken an interest, with the Levenmouth rail campaign and, which is important, with Fife Council.

One or two members asked about the city deal. As they will know, it would be for local authorities to come forward with their priorities for city deal projects. However, there is an opportunity, as Mark Ruskell touched on, with the pipeline approach for control period 6: the 2019 to 2024 control period. The opportunity is subject to funding from the United Kingdom Government, but we have not got that confirmed yet and it is going to and fro between us and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Notwithstanding that and taking on board Mark Russell's points about a possible blockage in the pipeline, the point of the pipeline—I hope—is for it to remain flexible to projects that have a robust business case and a robust case in terms of socioeconomic advantages so that they can make their way through the pipeline.

Incidentally, the tagline for the Levenmouth rail campaign is

"Much more than a transport project",

which I think is a great tagline for any transport investment, because we seek to make investments that strive to deliver economically vibrant, well-connected and inclusive communities across Scotland.

On that note, I thank the Levenmouth rail campaigners, thank Jenny Gilruth for initiating the debate and thank all members who spoke in it for their contributions. I think that we potentially have a way forward on this. I hear very clearly what members are saying very loudly and I promise to keep them updated on any further developments.

*Meeting closed at 17:46.*



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