



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 10 January 2018

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 10 January 2018

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

Portfolio Question Time

Justice and the Law Officers

Cornton Vale Prison

1. **Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the future of Cornton Vale prison. (S5O-01644)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): In 2015, I announced that Scotland would adopt a new approach to supporting women in custody. That approach includes plans for a new, small national prison for women to be located on the current site of HMP and YOI Cornton Vale.

On 11 July 2017, the demolition of Bruce house commenced, signalling the continued commitment to replace Cornton Vale with a smaller national facility for 80 women on the site. A separate assessment centre will also be included on the site to cater for up to 25 women. Initial preparatory work has already been completed with further work continuing in 2018 and beyond.

The first public consultation event was held as part of the proposal of application notice on 6 December 2017 and a second will be held on 16 January 2018. Following the conclusion of the planning process, it is anticipated that the procurement process to identify a contractor will conclude in August 2018, with construction commencing thereafter in winter 2018. Plans remain on track for the national facility to be operational by the end of 2020.

Bruce Crawford: Does the cabinet secretary agree that traditional prisons have not always achieved the outcomes for female prisoner offenders that we would want? Is it not, therefore, crucial that we continue to look at alternative custodial arrangements such as the community-based custodial units that he has mentioned? Can he provide any details of the likely implications for future staffing at Cornton Vale? If he cannot do that today, will he provide me with that information at the earliest possible juncture?

Michael Matheson: Yes, I agree. That is why the proposal that is being taken forward for Scotland's new female custodial estate includes the design of the initial two community custodial units. The first of the CCUs will be located in

Maryhill in Glasgow and at a site in Dundee. The purpose behind the units is to allow women to be held closer to their families and to provide them with the opportunity to engage with community-based services in those localities.

The CCUs will focus on helping women to develop the strategies that can support them in successfully reintegrating into the community and moving away from a lifestyle that involves offending.

On staffing, the approach that we are taking for the new facilities, especially the national facility, is still in the process of development, so I am not able at this stage to determine the exact staffing profile, because the model is still being fully defined.

I am happy to provide the member with more detailed information when it becomes available. Meantime, I assure him that the fullest consultation will take place with staff at Cornton Vale and their trade union representatives.

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland recently visited Cornton Vale prison. Its report highlighted concerns relating to the availability of mental health specialists and suitable medication and suggested an audit of prison officer training to improve mental health awareness. What assurances can the cabinet secretary give that the proposed restructuring of Cornton Vale prison will not affect the mental welfare of prisoners with complex mental health conditions?

Michael Matheson: One of the purposes behind moving to the new model is to ensure that there is better engagement with community-based services within the locality, particularly for women who might have an underlying mental health issue, so that when they leave the community custodial unit and go back into the community, the services that have been supporting them are still there—rather than having a situation whereby once women leave a single national facility, they have to engage with mental health services in another part of the country if they require them.

The recommendations and findings in the Mental Welfare Commission report are being considered by the Scottish Prison Service in partnership with NHS Forth Valley, which is responsible for providing healthcare services at Cornton Vale.

I assure the member that mental health issues, particularly support for women, are a key factor behind the new model for dealing with women who come into custody that we are moving to.

Sexual Offence Cases (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Working Practices)

2. Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government whether the Lord Advocate will provide an update regarding how the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service's reform of its working practices in dealing with sexual offence cases will help ensure that victims feel supported during the justice process. (S5O-01645)

The Lord Advocate (James Wolffe): Sexual offences now make up 75 per cent of the service's High Court case load, and the number of cases of sexual crime reported to the service continues to increase. That means that victims of crime are coming forward and that, when the evidence is available, the Crown can bring perpetrators to justice.

Sexual offence cases are dealt with by specialist prosecutors. The way in which that work is undertaken has been reorganised in response to the increased caseload, with a view to speeding up case preparation and reducing the time that it takes to bring cases to trial.

Since September 2017, the service's victim information and advice staff working on High Court sexual offence cases have had specific geographic responsibility. That means that the complainer should now, generally, have a single individual who will be responsible for providing her with information. All complainers in High Court sexual offence cases should be contacted within 24 hours of the accused first appearing in court, and the service has now introduced commitments to make further contact within a short period thereafter. In November, HM inspectorate of prisons for Scotland made 12 recommendations for further improving the way in which the service handles sexual offences. I accepted all those recommendations and work is in hand towards their implementation.

Elaine Smith: I thank the Lord Advocate for his response and welcome the commitment to make progress on the review recommendations, particularly since one area that was highlighted is the most recent conviction rate for rape and attempted rape, which is 48 per cent compared with 72 per cent for all sexual crimes.

Does the Lord Advocate agree that maintaining public confidence in the whole system for dealing with sexual offences is crucial? Will he outline the rationale for the decision not to take action against the two footballers, Goodwillie and Robertson, who were accused of rape by Denise Clair and subsequently found guilty of rape in a civil action? Will the Crown Office's decision not to prosecute be revisited in light of the successful civil action

and the failure of the appeal against it in November?

The Lord Advocate: I entirely agree that maintaining public confidence in the system of investigation and prosecution of crime is of the highest importance. It would not be appropriate for me to discuss the details of any individual prosecutorial decision.

The approach that requires to be taken when considering a prosecution is different from that which applies in a civil case. The standard of proof is, for good reason, different. The prosecutor has to prove the case beyond reasonable doubt and a series of evidential rules apply in criminal cases that do not apply in civil cases.

Through the work of the specialist prosecutors who undertake High Court sexual offences work, the Crown considers carefully all cases of this sort, and decisions are based on the evidence that is available and a careful analysis and application of the law to that evidence.

Fatal Accident Inquiries (Sheku Bayoh, Lamara Bell and John Yuill)

3. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): To ask the Scottish Government when fatal accident inquiries into the M9 crash and the death of Sheku Bayoh will be held. (S5O-01646)

The Lord Advocate (James Wolffe): The separate investigations by the Crown into each of the two incidents are continuing under the direction of a senior advocate depute. Although considerable progress has been made, further work requires to be completed before a fully informed decision can be made about potential criminal proceedings in each case. That decision has to be taken before the timing of a fatal accident inquiry can be considered. Officials continue to keep the families of the deceased advised. Indeed, meetings with those affected by the M9 incident took place as recently as December 2017.

Willie Rennie: It has been two and a half years since the deaths of Sheku Bayoh, John Yuill and Lamara Bell. That is two and a half years in which the families and the police officers have been waiting for an inquiry and answers, and I am genuinely concerned for their welfare. Has the Lord Advocate made an assessment of the impact on the families and the police officers of that wait? What can be done to speed up the process?

The Lord Advocate: I am acutely conscious of the impact that the passage of time has on all of those who are affected by these cases and, indeed, by any case. Each of these cases is the subject of a substantial investigation that involves complex factual and legal questions. Those who are involved are entitled to expect the investigation

to be undertaken with the utmost thoroughness. Although I recognise the effect that the passage of time has on those concerned, my fundamental commitment, in the public interest, is to ensure that investigations of this sort are undertaken thoroughly, fully and with a view to ensuring that the answers that are produced at the end of the day are soundly based.

As I said in my previous answer, the Crown is in contact with the families of the deceased and keeps them advised of the state of play. As I said, in the M9 case, there was a meeting with members of the family of the deceased as recently as December.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): Nicholas Randall was found dead in 2008, three years after he disappeared. Despite a whistleblower identifying multiple items of evidence that suggest that his death was suspicious, the police ruled otherwise. Will the Government ensure that Police Scotland properly explains that decision and, in the name of transparency, releases the case review report and any related documentation?

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I am not sure that that particular case directly relates to the question, which is about two specific fatal accident inquiries. The Lord Advocate may add a comment if he wishes.

I see that he does not.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): Families, victims and witnesses have waited five years for the fatal accident inquiry into the Clutha helicopter tragedy, which begins this autumn. What reassurances can the Government give that we will not wait five years for the incidents that have been mentioned in this question to be resolved? How frequently are the communications that he mentioned being held with the families in the M9 and Bayoh cases?

The Lord Advocate: Mr Johnson is absolutely right to note that in the Clutha case we have passed an important milestone, because a decision has been able to be taken that, on the evidence currently available, criminal proceedings are not anticipated, therefore we can proceed to a fatal accident inquiry.

In the two cases that Mr Rennie has raised, a decision on the question of whether or not—and I stress those words, “whether or not”—criminal proceedings should be brought still requires to be made. It requires to be made on the basis of the fullest and most thorough investigation of what are, in each case, circumstances that raise complex questions, both of fact and of law. Once that decision has been made, we will be able to move to the next stage of proceedings.

Emergency Services (Festive Period)

4. **David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how many calls the emergency services responded to over the festive period. (S5O-01647)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): Strictly comparable figures for emergency call volumes across the police, fire and ambulance services are not available.

However, I can advise that between 7 am on 15 December and 7 am on 3 January the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service received a total of 6,160 emergency calls. Police Scotland received a total of 27,876 calls via 999 between 15 December and 2 January, as well as 83,146 calls to the 101 non-emergency number. The Scottish Ambulance Service received a total of 73,049 calls in the same period.

David Torrance: Will the cabinet secretary join me in expressing sincere thanks to all the emergency services staff, who continue to work over the Christmas and new year period to keep us safe?

Michael Matheson: Yes. The festive period is always a very demanding time for our emergency services. However, due to the dedication and hard work of the people who work in those services, they again rose to the challenges that were presented by the Christmas and new year period. I know that I speak for all members when I say how much we value the enormous contribution that they make to keeping our people safe in their communities over the festive period and throughout the course of the year.

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): I would like to associate myself with the words of praise for the people on the front line, the people in our emergency control centres, the support staff and the volunteers who do such a great job.

What is the cabinet secretary going to do to support the staff in our emergency control centres in tackling the problem of hoax calls, following publication of figures that show that hoax calls have taken up 28,107 minutes—more than 20 days—of their time since 2012?

Michael Matheson: We have taken a range of actions over an extended period to tackle hoax calls to our emergency services—ambulance, fire and police. I visited Bilston Glen call centre just before Christmas to meet the staff there, and hoax calls continue to be a problem that they experience. There are not only hoax calls, but individuals calling 101, or even the 999 emergency number, for inappropriate reasons.

Part of the work that has been taken forward by Police Scotland and other emergency services is to educate people to make sure that when they

utilise the emergency and non-emergency numbers, they do so appropriately. The services are, alongside that, tackling issues that relate to hoax calls.

I do not think that there is any single solution to the problem of hoax calls, other than to continue to remind people of the potential adverse impact that they can have on services. When resources are diverted to a hoax incident, the services are deprived of their use for legitimate incidents to which they should be responding.

European Arrest Warrant

5. Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with the United Kingdom Government regarding the European arrest warrant. (S5O-01648)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): The European arrest warrant is a significant component of the extradition process. It is a part of the package of justice measures that work together to form the toolkit that supports collaboration on matters of internal security, law enforcement and criminal justice across the European Union. Those measures have proved to be vital to rapid information sharing and effective co-operation between the police and prosecutors across the EU, yet we stand to lose them as a result of Brexit.

Despite continued requests, to date there have been no substantive discussions with the UK Government on the European arrest warrant or any of the other measures that ensure the safety and security of our citizens.

Joan McAlpine: I thank the minister for that answer.

Just this week, prosecutors were granted a European arrest warrant to track the suspect in an armed robbery at the Gleneagles hotel to Spain, which illustrates the on-going importance of the system.

Julian King, the UK's European commissioner who is responsible for security, has stated that

"the jurisprudence relating to the European arrest warrant is"

European Court of Justice "jurisprudence". Does the minister agree that it is high time that the UK Government dropped its foolish red line that will prevent any future role for the European Court of Justice, and started to negotiate seriously with the EU27 to keep as many of the advantages of the European arrest warrant as possible?

Michael Matheson: Joan McAlpine has raised two important and separate but linked issues. The European arrest warrant is a vital tool to allow law

enforcement agencies to bring to justice perpetrators of serious crimes—for example, crimes of the very nature of that in Gleneagles, to which the member made reference.

The justice and home affairs cross-border measures, which include the European arrest warrant, are EU wide and fall under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, which is the ultimate interpreter of EU law. Member states are required to give its judgments primacy.

The UK Government's paper "Security, law enforcement and criminal justice—a future partnership" sets out a proposal for a new security treaty to maintain continued security, law enforcement and criminal justice co-operation after Brexit. However, it reiterates the UK Government's position that a new model will not involve the UK being subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. Therefore, any new treaty will have to be underpinned by a new legal agreement on an alternative means of dispute resolution.

The arrangements that are currently in place are essential to ensuring the security and safety of our people and to saving vital time. They need to be maintained. Although we support the aim of agreeing a deep and special relationship with the EU to ensure that co-operation can continue, we expect—and we would accept—the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice on those matters, because refusal to do so would significantly damage any chance of attaining access to important law enforcement and security measures.

Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

Creative Industries and the Arts

1. Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP): I am the parliamentary liaison officer for the culture portfolio.

To ask the Scottish Government what support it is giving to creative industries and the arts. (S5O-01654)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): This Government recognises the value of the creative industries and the arts. That is why the draft budget for 2018-19 includes an additional £6.6 million to allow Creative Scotland to maintain the level of its regular funding programme as well as doubling the investment in screen.

As we begin the year of young people, we are also protecting the £9 million for the youth music initiative, and we are increasing the funding for Sistema Scotland.

We continue to support the creative industries and the arts by providing opportunities for collaboration and partnership, including on-going

work with the creative industries advisory group, which I co-chair.

Ash Denham: In the light of the United Kingdom Government's failure to create a UK-wide lottery cuts handling plan, will the cabinet secretary outline what the Scottish Government's increase in funding will mean for the sector?

Fiona Hyslop: The serious concern for the culture sector was the projected reduction in lottery funding. Clearly, decisions by the UK Government on deregulation and other matters relating to the lottery have led to a reduced income.

We have managed to secure funding in the draft budget to help to mitigate that. The stability and the grant-in-aid that we are also providing for Creative Scotland mean that the final decisions about regularly funded organisations that it will make in January can be made with a much more positive outlook than was initially expected.

The budget is still a draft budget, however, and that funding will be provided only if the Parliament votes for it.

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): What work is being done by the Scottish Government to ensure that the screen sector has the correct infrastructure to strengthen Scotland's film and television sector?

Fiona Hyslop: The screen unit blueprint that was published by Creative Scotland at the end of December was put together with input from all the agencies. Clearly, additional investment is important not just for the infrastructure but for the ability to invest in the film and TV sector.

There are two aspects to that. Additional funding of £10 million will double the available funding and will make a big difference to what is available. There is also the opportunity to provide new relationships—for example, with the BBC. We provide opportunities to ensure that the investments that are available more broadly for film and TV can be maximised to grow the industry.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The cabinet secretary may be aware of the growing culture gap between the poorest and the richest in our society. Recent figures from the Scottish household survey show that there is now a 22 point gap when it comes to participation in cultural activity, which is 2 points more than in 2015. Although the investment that the cabinet secretary mentions is welcome, how will it specifically target inclusiveness and focus on closing the gap for all generations?

Fiona Hyslop: As the member may be aware, some of the most powerful research evidence that we have shows that people who participate in

musical activity or, indeed, wider arts activity when they are younger are more likely to be audiences in the future, regardless of parental income.

Our activity in providing funding for the youth music initiative and sustaining that funding in the face of Conservative UK Government austerity plays an important part. For example, the expansion of Sistema Scotland with £2.5 million of investment is benefiting targeted young people in a number of our cities, and free access to our museum and gallery collections is also important.

In my letters of guidance to all our organisations, I make it clear that I place particular importance on tackling inclusion issues and opportunities for young people in areas of deprivation. Everything that we do allows us to contribute to that, and protecting the culture budget will be an extremely important part of ensuring that we close the gap.

Dallas Dhu Historic Distillery

2. **Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its plans are for the Dallas Dhu Historic Distillery. (S5O-01655)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): As the property is in the care of the Scottish ministers, the conservation and management of the Dallas Dhu distillery are handled by Historic Environment Scotland under a scheme of delegation.

I have had meetings with Richard Lochhead and Historic Environment Scotland about bringing the distillery back into action, and Richard Lochhead raised with me in 2015 the potential to bring the distillery back into activity. The distillery is in the ownership of Diageo, which agreed a guardianship arrangement with Historic Scotland in 1998. Richard Lochhead will be aware that, as there are commercial sensitivities to the issue, there are limits to what can be discussed.

Richard Lochhead: As the cabinet secretary has noted, for a number of years I have been pushing for new ideas to develop the fantastic potential of the historic distillery for the local economy, for tourism and for bringing other benefits. In recent months, a number of individuals and organisations have brought creative and exciting ideas to me that could make a difference and bring new investment to the distillery. Is the cabinet secretary willing to speak to Historic Environment Scotland, with which I have shared those ideas, to push things forward so that, in 2018, we can open a new chapter in the fantastic story of this historic distillery and bring massive benefits to tourism and to the local community and economy?

Fiona Hyslop: I recognise Richard Lochhead's work as the constituency MSP in driving forward

that new and creative idea. There are limits to what I can say publicly, but I take an interest in the matter and there is an initiative to bring different parties together to make it happen. It is quite complex to balance some of the issues, but I agree to speak to Historic Environment Scotland to ascertain the latest progress and to see what we can do to facilitate that innovative way of ensuring that our heritage is demonstrated not just in the wider area of culture but in our industrial heritage, of which whisky is certainly one part.

China (Engagement Strategy)

3. Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the publication of its new strategy for engagement with China. (S5O-01656)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The refresh of Scotland's China engagement strategy is currently under development. We expect to publish the revised strategy in spring 2018.

Mary Fee: The Scottish China engagement strategy is a positive development, but its benefits are known only to the niche groups that are involved in the specifics of the strategy, whether those are small businesses, educational institutions, local government or the close-knit Scottish Chinese community. What work is the Scottish Government doing to encourage links between local Scottish community groups and Chinese groups to promote the strategy and Chinese culture and to ensure that wider society can maximise the benefits of the Scottish China engagement strategy?

With the new strategy to be published in spring 2018, I extend an invitation to the cabinet secretary to come to a meeting of the cross-party group on China to discuss the strategy with its members.

Fiona Hyslop: I thank the member. I have attended previous meetings of the cross-party group.

People-to-people engagement is vital. It is interesting that, in the China people-to-people engagement that took place recently in the United Kingdom, the cultural focus was on Scotland. A lot of that engagement is institutional and we facilitate the institutional relationships.

Mary Fee touched on some of the wider aspects of community-to-community engagement. The Confucius institutes, which are now extensive—I think that we have far more per head in Scotland than elsewhere in the United Kingdom—are a good way to engage, as they are about culture and not just language. That is their benefit.

Further, 18 out of 19 of Scotland's higher education institutions have academic and research links with China. Members might say that that is institutional rather than community to community, but we can use those links and local authority relationships to build more people-to-people relationships and have more dialogue.

Diary permitting, I will be happy to attend a cross-party group meeting.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I am aware of two businesses that are involved in Scottish culture and music that are keen to export their goods and services to China. Can the cabinet secretary provide any information to assist their efforts?

Fiona Hyslop: We are keen to support small and medium-sized enterprises to raise their international ambitions and overcome some of the barriers that they might face to international exporting. Scottish Development International is working to tackle some of those issues. If the member gives me the details of those businesses' particular interests, I will ensure that SDI makes some kind of contact to provide the relevant advice.

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): As the UK Government's Department for Transport has negotiated increases in the number of passenger flights between UK airports and China, has the cabinet secretary met representatives of Scottish airports to help them to bid and prepare for the increased number of tourists from China?

Fiona Hyslop: I have had a number of meetings with the industry to discuss the opportunities relating to Chinese tourists. I have personally been on delegations to China when the issue of direct flights has been raised with the Chinese Government, and the Minister for Transport and the Islands is actively involved in that area. I know that everybody is anxious about the issue and that there is a great deal of anticipation about the opportunities that can be provided, but at this stage I cannot give you any particular detail or make any announcements. However, I can say that our airports and Government are actively involved in the area.

Aberdeen International Youth Festival (Funding)

4. Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the potential withdrawal of funding by Aberdeen City Council to the Aberdeen international youth festival. (S5O-01657)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): I understand that Aberdeen City Council's urgent

business committee met on 21 December and made a final decision not to provide funding for the Aberdeen international youth festival. That outcome is incredibly disappointing, although I hope that it provides an opportunity for the organisers to pursue other options and find a new way forward for the festival in 2018, which is Scotland's year of young people. My officials stand ready to offer advice on alternative sources of funding and to help facilitate networking or new connections to support the festival, if approached.

Gillian Martin: The cabinet secretary of course acknowledges the fact that a majority of Aberdeen City Council's councillors—former Labour councillors and Conservative councillors—on the finance, policy and resources committee have voted to withdraw funding from the festival. Can the cabinet secretary give any indication to the organisers of the festival and to the disappointed young people and community organisations in the area who have benefited hugely from the festival's activities that, even if certain individuals in Aberdeen town house do not recognise the huge negative implications of their decision, the Scottish Government and other cultural agencies do? Will she commit to holding conversations with the organisers of the festival to give them assistance and advice that will allow them to find a way forward for the good of the young people of the north-east and our local economy?

Fiona Hyslop: As I said in my original answer, my officials and Scottish Government agencies stand ready to offer advice on possible alternative sources of funding to help Aberdeen international youth festival, should the organisers make such an approach. The impacts and benefits of the festival are well known throughout the north-east. We should acknowledge that Aberdeen City Council has established a £100,000 cultural award programme for 2018-19. We have yet to see the full details of that, but I hope that it will give an opportunity for youth-led cultural projects and events in Aberdeen to take place to celebrate the year of young people in 2018. It is incumbent on all of us, whether at local or national level, to ensure that we provide opportunities for young people to participate in arts in Aberdeen, particularly in this year of young people.

Tom Mason (North East Scotland) (Con): As members well know, I am a member of Aberdeen City Council and I was a party to the decision to withdraw the funding from the Aberdeen international youth festival. In recent years, the festival has experienced declining audiences and a lack of participation, along with lacklustre management and a governance structure that left much to be desired. I am very supportive of the general principles of the arts festival, so the most disappointing thing for me was that the forward plan was inadequate to address the matters that

should concern the festival. Does the cabinet secretary agree that it would be inappropriate to award funding to the youth festival at this stage, and does she look forward to an alternative business plan, possibly involving ad hoc funding from the city council, being presented by the youth festival?

Fiona Hyslop: It is inappropriate for any member to attack the management of local volunteers and those involved in trying to deliver festivals throughout our country. The member may or may not still be a councillor—I do not know whether he has resigned or not—but this is the national Parliament of Scotland and our job is to create the conditions and provide the strategic leadership, and to ensure that there is funding for our organisations to drive forward such projects. We have to respect the fact that there are many volunteers who are involved in our festivals, and providing a bit of leadership and support to them is important. I do not know the details of the papers that went to the council, because this is not a council chamber; this is a Parliament. It is important to support the people who support our local festivals, and I hope that, however the council and the local volunteers take the festival forward, they do so in a positive and constructive way and we do not use this chamber to attack the management and volunteers of local organisations.

Tourism (Galloway)

5. Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to promote Galloway's natural features to attract tourists. (S50-01658)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): In our programme for government, we committed to promoting the south of Scotland, including Galloway, as a destination for coastal and forest tourism activities. That will continue our work with partners in developing Galloway's existing tourism assets, including its heritage, culture and creative arts, wildlife, nature and green tourism, and local food and drink, and will build on the success of the Galloway dark sky park and the south-west Scotland biosphere.

To enhance VisitScotland's existing work in the area, the Scottish Government's draft budget proposes an extra £0.5 million in 2018-19 for additional marketing support specifically for the south of Scotland. That will help to highlight those natural features that make Galloway a hidden gem among Scotland's many world-class attractions. The draft budget also proposes a further £0.5 million for capital investment in forest tourism across the south of Scotland, including trail development and signage.

Finlay Carson: I certainly agree that Galloway is a hidden gem. I also welcome the airing of the new BBC documentary “The Forest”, which was filmed in the Galloway forest and which raises awareness of all aspects of life in and around the UK’s largest forest park, recognising the fantastic work of district forest manager Colin Hossack and his team. As well as producing more than 600,000 tonnes of timber, the Galloway forest contributes much to the environmental, cultural, tourism and recreational offering that the kingdom of Galloway has to offer. Does the cabinet secretary agree that that programme highlights and strengthens the argument in support of a Galloway national park?

Fiona Hyslop: I held a forest tourism summit recently precisely to look at the advantages of forest tourism. I also had the opportunity to watch “The Forest” at the start of this week. I was particularly impressed by the singing, but the education that it offered about the work of the forest and its importance economically and for tourists was evident in the first episode, and I look forward to watching the others. National parks are the responsibility of another cabinet secretary, but I recognise the opportunities that we have with the biosphere and all the different areas that we have in Galloway to ensure that our natural environment is key to what we are doing. I cannot give a commitment on national parks, and I understand that there are tensions and issues there, not least on cost, but I appreciate the sentiment that the member has expressed.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I agree that Bonnie Galloway is a hidden gem. Does the cabinet secretary agree that biospheres provide a sustainable model that encourages tourism and allows local communities use of and access to land while preserving important natural ecosystems?

Fiona Hyslop: I do. Scotland has two United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization biospheres, the other one being in Wester Ross. They are involved in programmes funded by the United Nations with Greenland, Canada and Europe. If we can take forward initiatives in collaboration internationally, it is important to learn from the best, and the sustainable model of tourism is something that, as the cabinet secretary with responsibility for tourism, I am delighted to take forward.

Tourist Information Centres (South Scotland)

6. Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what the reason was for the recent closures of tourist information centres across the South Scotland region, and what alternative arrangements it is considering putting in place. (S50-01659)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The deployment of VisitScotland’s resources is an operational issue for the organisation and its board, although we maintain regular contact on a wide range of matters.

VisitScotland’s new two-year strategy, which was announced last October, was developed following a 58 per cent reduction in footfall to information centres across Scotland in the past decade. It will provide greater choice by offering digital products and access to local knowledge through industry partners as well as 26 iCentres in its busiest locations. VisitScotland has already established 1,604 new local partnerships throughout the country, and 256 local partnerships are signed up across the Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway and the Ayrshires. Those partnerships will ensure that information provision is available in innovative and adaptable formats, which we know that visitors are looking for.

Claudia Beamish: I recognise the issue around the 58 per cent drop in footfall at the iCentres, despite the positive information about a rise in tourism that I received in VisitScotland’s reply to my letter highlighting the issue.

Will the cabinet secretary highlight a concern that I have? I appreciate that these are operational matters, but they link closely with the issue of access to information technology if we are going to move into the digital age with tourism. That will complement the VisitScotland information partner programme. The Galloway forest, which was raised in the previous question, provides an example. I know that there is poor broadband and mobile access in that area. How will tourism move forward if people cannot access their apps or websites?

Fiona Hyslop: That is precisely why, despite the very limited broadband roll-out by the United Kingdom Government, the Scottish Government has ensured that, through digital Scotland superfast broadband, instead of just 26 per cent, 85 per cent of premises in Dumfries and Galloway have access to speeds of 24 megabits per second and above. That is a challenge, but we know that the investment of the south pot for the reaching 100 per cent programme and the other investment that we are making will mean that Scotland, and rural Scotland in particular, is one of the best areas for access to mobile and fibre broadband—not just access in premises but outdoor access. The approach has to be joined up and co-ordinated. I am ensuring that the tourism officials and, indeed, VisitScotland are keeping co-ordinated with the roll-out of broadband to ensure that it is available for tourists when they visit.

Chief Constable (Leave of Absence)

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a statement from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on the chief constable's leave of absence.

14:42

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): On 8 September, the Scottish Police Authority agreed to a request from the chief constable for a leave of absence while allegations against him were independently investigated by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner. At that point, he issued a statement to deny the allegations and signalled his intention to return

"once the matter had been resolved".

The PIRC is currently carrying out three investigations into allegations that, after preliminary assessment, she considers will, if they are proved, amount to gross misconduct.

I will give Parliament as much information as I can this afternoon, but there is still a live investigation, and there are legal issues that I must respect and which constrain the information that can be provided. However, I welcome the opportunity to clarify the engagement that the Government has had with the SPA on the matter.

The SPA and other public bodies are often described as operating at arm's length from Government. That means that they have a significant degree of independence in their statutory functions, but operate within a policy framework that is set by ministers. As a public body, the SPA is accountable to ministers for the exercise of its functions, and even though ministers do not normally become involved in individual decisions, the way that the body carries out its functions must retain the confidence of ministers.

Throughout the matter, the Government has maintained the position that decisions are for the SPA—as the body that has the statutory duty to consider complaints of misconduct against senior officers—to make. At the same time it is, because the SPA is a public body that is accountable to ministers, legitimate to seek assurances that the SPA is carrying out its functions in a way that is proportionate, accountable, transparent and consistent with the principles of good governance, as required by legislation. All the Government's actions have been focused on ensuring due process and fairness to all parties.

The SPA is reviewing the chief constable's leave position on a four-weekly basis, with the first

review on 5 October 2017 having resulted in a continuation of the leave arrangements. The position was due for review again in early November, when there was no indication from the SPA that any change was likely. I am clear that the onus was very much on the SPA to inform the Scottish Government if a change in circumstances was considered to be likely.

On 9 November 2017, the then chair of the SPA, Andrew Flanagan, asked to meet me. At the meeting, he informed me that the SPA board had decided to invite the chief constable to resume his duties the following day. I understand that that decision was taken in a private session of the board on 7 November. There had been no indication that a return to duties was being considered at that point.

When I learned of the board's decision, I sought assurances that due process had been followed. Unfortunately, Andrew Flanagan was unable to give me such assurances. Key parties had not been consulted: in particular, the PIRC had not been asked for her view on whether the chief constable's return at that point could impact on her investigations. As the commissioner highlighted in her letter to the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee last week, the chief constable's leave of absence had allowed her to interview staff in a "safe space", which helped to minimise any concerns that they might have had about being involved in the investigation. I am sure that Parliament will agree that it is difficult to understand how the decision could be made to allow the chief constable to return without first confirming that doing so would not undermine the independent PIRC investigations or the confidence of staff who are engaged in that process.

Another area of concern was that there did not appear to be a robust plan in place to protect the wellbeing of officers and staff who had raised complaints or who had been asked to play a role in the investigation. A number of the officers and staff were based at the Tulliallan headquarters in close proximity to the chief constable, and were in positions in which they could expect to have to deal with him in the course of their work. The approach that was taken also raised questions about whether, and to what extent, those matters had formed part of the SPA's consideration of the issue. I also highlight that Police Scotland's senior command team had not been told about the decision, even at that late stage.

I took the view that those clear deficiencies in the process were completely unacceptable. I made it clear to the former chair that I could not have confidence in a decision that had been reached without such significant issues having been properly addressed. The former chair agreed that, before proceeding further, the SPA would

carry out more engagement with the relevant persons, which I welcomed. I also advised that the SPA should consider seeking advice from Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland on how it should proceed in terms of process. It is important to stress that throughout the period the Government was not informed that the former chief executive of the SPA had already written to Mr Gormley to invite him to return.

I say to those who wish to criticise my actions that if the chief constable had returned to work on 10 November and it had then transpired that no consultation had taken place with any of the relevant interests and, further, that I had failed to ask any questions about that, I suspect that the criticism would have been harsher and would, in those circumstances, have been justified.

The SPA subsequently reconsidered the issue on 10 November and decided to continue the chief constable's leave, and has continued to do so at subsequent reviews.

The new chair of the SPA has expressed concern about the decision-making process for the board's previous decision and has already taken steps to improve the board's decision-making process, including the setting up of a complaints and conduct committee. The SPA is now engaging with the PIRC and is committed to ensuring that issues relating to the welfare of officers and staff who are involved in the investigations are fully considered.

On 21 December, the chair said:

"I am committed to working tirelessly and at speed to address the shortcomings which have been identified and to ensure that in future the SPA's decision making processes and wider governance arrangements meet the standards which should be expected of a major public body."

The Police Investigations and Review Commissioner has confirmed that the investigations are progressing, although we do not have a firm timescale for their completion. It is in the interests of all parties that there is a thorough and effective investigation.

I understand Parliament's interest in the matter, which the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee raised with the relevant director general in the Scottish Government in an evidence session on unrelated matters on 21 December. The further information in my statement builds on the evidence that was provided in that session, and the Government will write to the committee later in the week.

However, members must remember that there is an on-going formal statutory complaints process, and I caution them against expecting the SPA—or, indeed, the Government—to give a blow-by-blow account while the investigation continues.

Public bodies need to be able to inspire not only our confidence as parliamentarians, but that of the wider public. The SPA is next due to review the chief constable's leave on 25 January. Whatever decision it makes at that point, it is vital that it is based on a robust process that commands trust. I welcome the assurance that the SPA has given that it recognises the importance of that, and I look forward to supporting it in whatever way we can.

The Presiding Officer: We move to questions.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): I thank the cabinet secretary for giving us advance sight of his statement.

At the outset, I make it clear that I make no comment on the substance of the complaints against the chief constable or on whether he should be permitted to return to work. The issue here is the cabinet secretary's interference and—it is difficult not to suggest this—hypocrisy. In response to problems that I have raised to do with the police service, he has repeatedly told the chamber, "It's an operational matter." It now seems that the test for whether Michael Matheson should get involved is not whether the issue is an operational matter but whether it is in the political interest of Michael Matheson to do so.

By way of reassurance, will the cabinet secretary tell the chamber whether he took any legal advice prior to intervening in the matter and, if so, when he will publish it, along with any correspondence between him and the SPA? Given that the investigation has been dragging on for months, will he say anything to the hard-working police officers and staff about when their force will again have certainty about the position of chief constable?

Michael Matheson: I am disappointed by the tone of the member's question on this particularly important issue. As I set out in my statement, the focus of my involvement in the matter was to ensure that a robust, defensible process was in place for the SPA's decision making in relation to the chief constable returning to his duties. It was very clear to me that, as the investigation being undertaken by the PIRC was live and the commissioner had not been consulted on the matter, we could not have confidence in the process.

Moreover, the very fact that the command team in Police Scotland knew nothing about the SPA's decision less than 24 hours before the chief constable was due to return to his duties and that the SPA board had given no consideration to the welfare of the officers and staff involved in the complaints process was, in my view, simply unacceptable. I also believe that it would not have been acceptable to have stood by and allowed the SPA to implement that decision without asking it to

revisit it and consider the matters in question before coming to a decision on the matter. That is why I asked the SPA to reconsider the matter, which it did.

This is about having a robust and defensible process, not about the outcome of the process. In my view and in my assessment, the process that the SPA had taken forward was simply unacceptable and could not be defended.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):

I thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of his statement.

Policing in Scotland is in crisis, and it is a crisis of governance and leadership involving investigations into senior officers. The cabinet secretary's actions have turned that crisis into nothing short of a shambles. His intervention has effectively overturned an operational decision about the chief constable's employment status and, in making it, he has not only embroiled himself in the shambles but authored its latest chapter.

This decision, in law, is for the independent SPA to make; indeed, it made it unanimously but then U-turned, following Michael Matheson's direct intervention. The intervention that the cabinet secretary should have made was to fix the governance, sort the strategy and get things moving in the right direction, and he should have done that months ago, at the start of last year when the issues became clear.

Is not the unavoidable conclusion that the cabinet secretary has prejudiced any future decision regarding Phil Gormley's employment status and his ability to return to work? What is his response to the claim by the chief constable's lawyer that his intervention was unlawful? Finally, what confidence can the Scottish public have in the SPA's independence if ministers can so simply and easily intervene in its decisions?

Michael Matheson: Let me deal first of all with the point about this being an operational matter. This is not about an operational decision-making matter, but about the SPA's process in making a decision, and clearly there is a Government interest in how that is taken forward.

The member then contradicted himself when he said that we should be addressing governance issues. That is exactly what the decision was about—it was about the governance process that the SPA had put in place in arriving at the decision. If the member is seriously saying to me that the welfare of those officers and staff who are involved in the complaints process should be ignored in the decision-making process, I think that he is being irresponsible.

I assure the member that this was about making sure that we had a robust, defensible position on how the SPA had assessed the matter and come to its decision. In my assessment, it was very clear that things had not happened. It is unacceptable not to have considered the implications of the decision for a live investigation and the welfare of staff and officers and not to have engaged with Police Scotland's senior command team less than 24 hours before the decision was to be implemented. From a ministerial point of view, it would also have been unacceptable to simply sit back and not ask the SPA to address those matters. That is exactly what I did, and the former chair agreed that the SPA would consider the matter. Once the SPA has a robust and defensible process for considering these issues, it is up to it to decide how it will move forward, but it was clear to me that that was not the case when it presented the matter to me on 9 November.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):

I thank the cabinet secretary for early sight of his statement.

I have zero confidence in the SPA's decision of 7 November and consider the cabinet secretary's comprehensive inquiries to be entirely appropriate. The commissioner used the phrase "a safe space", and in his statement the cabinet secretary went on to talk about the absence of

"a robust plan ... to protect the wellbeing of officers and staff who had raised complaints, or who may have been asked to play a role in the investigation".

It is very important that colleagues here understand the wider message that comes from all the recent events and the conflicting messages that have been sent. I ask the cabinet secretary—I want to ask him and not the PIRC or the SPA, because it is appropriate that, as cabinet secretary, he says this—what steps he will take to provide on-going protection for the officers and staff who have courageously come forward with complaints.

Michael Matheson: Given Mr Finnie's previous experience in policing, his question goes to the very heart of a key issue in how the decision was arrived at. This is about the welfare of staff in the organisation who might be working in close proximity to the chief constable, should he return. Through discussions with the new chair of the SPA, I have sought to ensure that the process that the SPA has in place in making decisions relating to the matter is defensible and robust. A key part of that is about the welfare of officers and staff. The new chair has already given that commitment and has already set out her concerns about the process that was followed in arriving at the decision of 7 November. Having discussed the matter with her, I can give Mr Finnie an assurance that the public statement that has been made by

the new chair is that issues relating to welfare will be a central consideration when decisions are made about the on-going leave arrangements for the chief constable.

The Presiding Officer: I am sure that the cabinet secretary will do so in his own remarks, but I ask members to be careful when phrasing questions not to pre-judge the outcome of any investigations.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I, too, thank the cabinet secretary for early sight of his statement.

The Scottish National Party Government created the centralised structure that we now have in Scotland, which puts a heavy onus on the relationships between the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, the chief constable and the SPA chair. Given that this sorry saga has dragged on for months and we now have lawyers exchanging blows, does the cabinet secretary believe that it would be possible for him to have a functioning working relationship were the chief constable to return in due course? In light of the cabinet secretary's earlier criticisms of the SPA board, which unanimously supported Mr Gormley's return to work back in November, does he still have confidence in the members of that board who remain in place?

Michael Matheson: I am very clear that it is not the outcome of the SPA's future decision on the chief constable's leave situation but the process that the SPA goes through in making it that needs to be robust and defensible. If the board makes a decision that the chief constable is to be reinstated and it has a clear, robust and defensible process for making such a decision, I will accept that.

I have had discussions with the new chair of the SPA on making sure that the governance process that it has in place for making decisions on such matters is one in which we can have confidence. I assure the member that she has given me a commitment that the SPA will ensure that that is the case. I have referred to the comments that she has made.

The member will also be aware that I commissioned work by Malcolm Burr and Nicola Marchant to look at aspects of governance of and support for the board. Their report is presently being considered by the chair of the SPA to see how the board can be further supported and aided in its work.

In my statement, I made it very clear that I do not believe that the process that the SPA had in place in arriving at the decision of 7 November was acceptable. The new chair has given me a commitment that the SPA will ensure that it has better governance arrangements in place for making such decisions in future.

Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): First of all, I say that the cabinet secretary had not only a right but a duty to make sure that the process was robust—not only as regards looking after the welfare of the complainants but in ensuring that the chief constable gets a fair hearing. He should not be tried in public by the media.

Secondly, following on from Liam McArthur's point, the competence of some of the non-executive directors of the Scottish Police Authority is called into question on not only this issue but other issues. We need only look at the evidence given to the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee to see the failings that have taken place in the SPA's governance procedures in recent times. Will the cabinet secretary now review the individual performance of non-executive directors to ensure that we do not have a repeat of recent incidents?

Thirdly, there are reports of some people allegedly delaying giving their evidence to the PIRC in relation to complaints against the chief constable. As I said, it is vital that the chief constable and the complainants are treated fairly and that the process is robust. However, bringing the process to a timeous conclusion requires all those involved in the investigation to co-operate fully and timeously with the investigation—

The Presiding Officer: Will Mr Neil please bring his question to a timeous conclusion?

Alex Neil: Will the cabinet secretary ensure that everybody co-operates?

Michael Matheson: The member raised a number of important points. First, he raised the issue of reviewing the individuals in the SPA who were involved in the decision on 7 November 2017. The chair of the SPA is considering how the SPA will continue to support its members in the process of making decisions on the matters concerned. Part of the process that she has now put in place to address some of the issues involves the complaints and conduct committee, which has a specific group of SPA board members on it, considering matters in much greater detail. It was clear from the discussions that I had with the SPA chair that she believes that that will give much greater focus to the process of considering the issues involved. I hope that the member will recognise that that is an important step in trying to strengthen the process and work with SPA board members on how they arrive at their decisions.

The member also raised issues around the PIRC investigation and the suggestion that there might be delay in taking evidence from individuals. He will recognise that the PIRC is conducting the investigation independently. The timeframe is within its gift, and that must be respected. I, like many members, wish the investigation to be

completed as early as possible, because I believe that that is in everyone's interest. However, the reality is that the investigation will take as long as is required, and I fully expect those who have a part to play in it to co-operate fully with it. I am sure that he will want to respect that process and that he recognises that the PIRC is taking it forward in a manner that allows it to investigate the issue thoroughly and fairly. The timeframe for that cannot be specified, as to do so could compromise aspects of the investigation.

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con): The SPA, not the Scottish Government, is the statutory body that alone has the power to determine the chief constable's operational deployment status. That is essential for protecting the independence of the chief constable. So, unless the cabinet secretary has chosen to use his formal powers under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, any intervention on his part resulting in a unanimous decision of the SPA board being overturned could be ultra vires. During topical question time on 14 November 2017—five days after 9 November—the cabinet secretary confirmed to me that he had never used those formal powers. Will the cabinet secretary therefore confirm whether he misled the chamber in his response to me and whether he has acted outwith his powers?

Michael Matheson: First, the answer to those questions is no. To use those formal powers of direction, an order would have to be placed before Parliament, so it would be publicly noted. Secondly, I made a request to the chair of the SPA, which he agreed to, given the range of concerns that I raised with him.

On Margaret Mitchell's comments on this matter, I heard her say on the radio this morning that I should take an absolute and active interest in the governance and leadership of Police Scotland. The issue was one of governance and having a robust, clear process in place. That is why I raised those concerns and questions with the chair of the SPA, who agreed to revisit the matter, and that was taken forward at the board on 10 November.

On that basis, the situation is very clear. It was not a direction under the statutory powers that ministers have; it was a request to the chair of the SPA. He agreed to take those concerns forward, and they were considered during the SPA's consideration of the issue on 10 November.

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): Will the cabinet secretary give an update on the current position regarding the chief constable's leave of absence?

Michael Matheson: As it stands, the chief constable's leave of absence is being considered

on a four-weekly basis by the Scottish Police Authority. It was last considered on 19 December, when the SPA agreed to continue his period of extended leave. It will be considered again on 25 January, and the SPA will give consideration to a range of factors in determining what further measures should be put in place and in relation to whether he should continue on a period of leave.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): Legislation is clear: operational policing decisions are a matter for the Scottish Police Authority, not the cabinet secretary. I cannot help but wonder whether the cabinet secretary should have taken the time over the past year to sort out the SPA, rather than sorting out individual decisions. The letter from the commissioner tells us that, had she been consulted, she would have been content with the chief constable's return. Can the cabinet secretary therefore tell me: did he or his officials speak to the commissioner about this, and, if so, when? Did he or his officials speak to the deputy chief constable, Iain Livingstone, or the senior management team at Police Scotland, and, if so, when? Has he or his officials spoken to the chief constable, Phil Gormley, since 7 November 2017?

Michael Matheson: May I, first of all, again deal with the issue about this being an operational matter? This is an issue of governance within the SPA. It is not an operational matter. The legislation is very clear in the divisions relating to these matters.

Jackie Baillie asked whether I consulted the PIRC, whether I consulted Police Scotland and whether I consulted any other parties including the chief constable on 9 November. The issue here is that it was for the SPA to undertake that consultation as part of the process in considering these matters. The reality is that, when I met the chair of the SPA on 9 November, he had not carried out that consultation. There had been no consultation with the PIRC, no engagement with Police Scotland on planning for this with the senior command team and no consideration of the welfare of officers and staff. That would be a matter for the SPA to take forward.

Given that that was on the afternoon of 9 November, and the chief constable was due to restart his duties on 10 November at 8 am, it was important that the SPA had the opportunity to go and look at the matter, and that is exactly what it did when it considered the issue at its board meeting on 10 November.

The Presiding Officer: I am conscious that I have five more members who wish to ask questions. However, we are already running out of time. This is going to have a slight knock-on effect on the subsequent debate and possibly on decision time but, given the level of interest, which has been indicated simply by the number of

members in the chamber, I am going to let this item of business run on.

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): Will the cabinet secretary expand on why there is a need for consultation with the PIRC regarding the chief constable returning to work?

Michael Matheson: As I mentioned in my statement, it is important that, while the PIRC is leading an investigation into a complaint that, if proven, has been assessed as potentially amounting to gross misconduct, the SPA gives due consideration to the investigation in any decisions that it makes in relation to individuals who are involved in it. That is why it is reasonable to expect any discussions about the chief constable returning to work to be informed by close liaison with the PIRC on the stage that the investigation has reached and any possible ramifications of a reinstatement for those investigations. This is about the SPA board having the fullest possible picture and understanding before it makes such an important decision.

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): Will the cabinet secretary confirm that the chief constable's leave of absence was at the chief constable's own request in order to allow him time and space to focus on his preparations to address the allegations against him?

Michael Matheson: The leave of absence was requested by the chief constable and it was agreed by the Scottish Police Authority.

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): Will the cabinet secretary give Parliament an assurance that the SPA will consult all those who it is necessary to consult prior to making future decisions regarding the chief constable's return to work?

Michael Matheson: As I said earlier, the new chair of the Scottish Police Authority, Susan Deacon, has given such a commitment: she will ensure that there is a more robust process around the assessment of these matters, which will involve looking at aspects relating to the welfare of officers and staff, engagement with the command team in Police Scotland and liaison with the PIRC. As the letter from the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner sets out, that engagement with the Scottish Police Authority has already started, and the chair has given a commitment that it will continue to happen.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): If the cabinet secretary was so concerned on 9 November about the protection of police employees who had made complaints against the chief constable, why did he not exercise his power of direction under section 5 of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012?

Michael Matheson: Because the former chair of the SPA agreed to reconsider these issues and they were reconsidered at the board meeting on 10 November.

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP): We heard during the cabinet secretary's statement that this is a difficult, complex situation for all those involved. With that in mind, does the cabinet secretary agree that this is not an issue that anyone should be playing politics with and that the focus must remain on ensuring that the correct procedures are followed to make sure that both those making the complaints and the chief constable are treated properly and fairly?

Michael Matheson: As I said in my statement, it is important that the process is robust and defensible. That is in the interests of all parties—the chief constable and the officers and staff in Police Scotland who are complainants. It is also important for the integrity of the process. It is in everyone's interests to ensure that the process is allowed to run its course and that an opportunity is given for the investigation to be carried out in a thorough and detailed fashion.

The Presiding Officer: I thank the cabinet secretary and all members, especially the last five for the brevity of their questions.

Glasgow 2018 European Championships

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): I am gauging whether everyone is in their places, because we are tight for time, now. If everyone on the front benches is ready, I will start.

The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-09789, in the name of Aileen Campbell, on the Glasgow 2018 European championships. I call Aileen Campbell to speak to and move the motion. Minister, you have a very tight 11 minutes.

15:18

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): I am pleased to open the debate on the inaugural European championships, which will take place in Scotland on 2 to 12 August this year. I do not know how often we will hear this during 2018, but I will start the new year on a note of consensus by saying that I agree with Anas Sarwar. We intend to support his amendment because it is important to recognise the achievements of the bid team and all relevant administrations in securing the Commonwealth games and this year's European championships. Those events have been the culmination of positive co-operation and collaboration between the Scottish Government, as the principal funder, and Glasgow City Council, with a shared focus on delivering excellence and establishing a formidable track record and expertise in hosting fantastic events.

On Brian Whittle's amendment, although we recognise the need to do more to get our population active and reap the significant health benefits that that brings, it is disingenuous to be so wholly negative about the transformative impact that the games in 2014 had. Hosting the European championships this year is both a legacy in its own right and an opportunity to develop and extend that legacy in all the areas in which it was delivered in 2014. That legacy went beyond sport; it brought cultural, societal and economic benefit to the whole country. I will expand on the issue of legacy later in my speech.

The Glasgow 2018 European championships are a major investment for the Scottish Government, and we are committed to ensuring that they are a great success for Glasgow and Scotland. The championships provide a perfect opportunity to build on the legacy of other recent events and to showcase our nation and culture to a substantial international audience. The new event will be an exciting addition to the sporting calendar. Attracting some of Europe's elite athletes, Glasgow 2018 will give Scots another chance to see world-class sport on their doorstep.

With a potential global television audience in excess of 1 billion, Glasgow 2018 is also a huge opportunity to demonstrate Scotland's best assets, including our events and tourism offering, to the world.

The European championships are a new format that will bring together the existing European championship events of six sports—aquatics, athletics, cycling, gymnastics, rowing and triathlon—and introduce a new European-level competition in golf. Six sports will take place in Scotland, with athletics in Berlin bringing an enhanced international flavour.

Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab): The minister will be aware that Scotland excels at cycling and that we have a brand new velodrome in Glasgow. She might not be aware that the velodrome is banked at 45 degrees, which means that it has a minimum speed and that, if a cyclist does not meet that speed, they will fall off. Does she accept that, if Scotland is to continue to excel at cycling, we will need another velodrome that is banked at 30 degrees to help disabled cyclists and young cyclists of the future?

Aileen Campbell: We will always look to enhance our facilities. I recognise that the Commonwealth games in 2014 allowed us to enhance facilities across the country and have performance athletes in all sports. I will go on to remark how cycling has experienced a growth in participation, and I am happy to engage with the member on her point.

The intention is that the championships will be held in a different host city every four years. Alongside the venues in Glasgow, competition will take place across Scotland, including in rowing and triathlon at Strathclyde country park, in golf at Gleneagles and in open-water swimming at Loch Lomond. Scotland is well placed to contribute to developing this new concept, as we are able to draw on the experience of the successful partnership working that delivered the 2014 Commonwealth games. Once again, the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council are working together to deliver a truly memorable event.

An early success was in securing the support of the European Broadcasting Union for Glasgow 2018, which has led to a healthy media interest. The high profile of the new combined brand provides a great opportunity for Scotland and the seven sports to attract new audiences and interest.

Scotland has a strong reputation as a host of world-class events. Our national events strategy, "Scotland the Perfect Stage", reaffirms our commitment to the delivery of a one-Scotland approach to building a strong and dynamic events

industry. We produce a portfolio of events and festivals that deliver sustainable economic benefit and an enhanced international profile for Scotland. Glasgow 2018 will further enhance our reputation, nationally and internationally, as a leader and innovator of best practice in event planning and delivery.

Staging the championships will provide Scotland with the opportunity to sustain and enhance the sporting, economic, social, environmental and cultural legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth games. Glasgow 2018 will do that by enhancing physical activity access across Scotland, building international relationships across sport, culture and business, supporting local businesses, creating local jobs and volunteering opportunities and establishing business and cultural links with Berlin.

The 2014 Commonwealth games economic legacy was substantial. The post-games analysis found that, over the eight years from winning the bid to hosting the event, the games contributed more than £740 million gross to Scotland's economy and supported, on average, 2,100 jobs each year from 2007 to 2014. Similarly, the 2018 championships are being delivered with the four Is of our economic strategy in mind: bringing significant investment, being innovative in delivery, supporting inclusive growth and, of course, having an international focus.

At the heart of that international focus will be the new Berlin innovation and investment hub. Appointments have now been made to the hub, and it will play a key role in promoting cultural and trade opportunities between Scotland and Germany.

The benefits of hosting an event of the scale of the European championships will be seen across a broad range of local and national businesses, particularly in the tourism sector, which brings in spending of almost £11 billion per annum and supports an estimated 217,000 jobs. VisitScotland will boost that by promoting our famous Scottish welcome and by working with partners to ensure that the spirit and the message of the championships—and of Scotland more widely—reach those who come to the event and those who enjoy the broadcast coverage at home or abroad.

It is clear that the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games provided a substantial active legacy for people in Scotland, creating opportunities and infrastructure to enable individuals to engage with and take part in physical activity and removing barriers to participation. That is evidenced by rises in participation levels reported by sports governing bodies. Scottish Athletics reported a 10 per cent increase in athletics club members in 2017, Scottish Swimming's membership has increased

by 25 per cent over the past decade and Scottish Cycling's membership was up 21 per cent last year.

Alongside that, we continue to invest to make sport and physical activity accessible to all, regardless of background. We provided sports governing bodies with an additional £2 million to target work on equalities in 2017, and we established the £300,000 sporting equality fund and the women and girls in sport advisory board to drive female sports participation. Further, we have protected the sportscotland budget and have provided an additional £3.4 million to mitigate reductions in income from the national lottery. It is important also to remember that 95 per cent of funding that is provided through sportscotland and local authorities goes to support grassroots sport.

Glasgow 2018 will build on that investment by aiming to inspire people who are inactive to be more active and by supporting wellbeing and resilience in communities through sport and physical activity.

The network of 181 community sports hubs across Scotland is a direct legacy of Glasgow 2014. The hubs play a crucial role in encouraging increased participation in sport and physical activity by people of all ages and backgrounds. Today, I met participants from the community sports hub based at Oriam who were taking part in walking netball. Through the innovation of the hub and the governing body, those people are being reunited with a sport that they once enjoyed and are benefiting from becoming more active and feeling an enhanced sense of wellbeing. That story is replicable across the other 180 hubs.

I am, therefore, pleased to announce £500,000 of funding for the community sports hub network—a competitive fund that is to be administered by sportscotland. Its aim will be to support additional activity, capitalise on the energy and enthusiasm of Glasgow 2018 and encourage the inactive to become more active, building on the positive work that is being done right across Scotland.

No major sporting event would be complete without the commitment and enthusiasm of volunteers, and volunteers will play an essential role in the experience that is offered to athletes, officials, media and spectators at Glasgow 2018. The huge number of applications to volunteer—close to 10,000—is testimony to people's passion and their enthusiasm to be involved in the championships. Applications were received from 89 countries as well as from every local authority area in Scotland. People from a wide range of backgrounds will volunteer at the European championships, committing time and energy and involving our communities in this exciting event.

Of course, 2018 is also the year of young people, and one of the key themes of the year is participation. The Scottish Government has been working with Young Scot to provide volunteering opportunities to some year of young people ambassadors. Volunteering will undoubtedly prove valuable in building up the skills portfolios of those young people.

The Scottish Government is also working closely with Glasgow 2018, VisitScotland, local businesses and other partners to ensure that the European championships are Scotland's most inclusive event yet, welcoming diverse communities from near and far. I am delighted to announce that, to achieve that aim, the Scottish Government is providing LEAP Sports Scotland with a funding contribution of £20,000 to further boost the engagement of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community in the European championships. That funding will support a programme of events and activities showcasing LGBTI life in Scotland, championing rights and welcoming LGBTI visitors from across the world.

We are on the countdown, with 203 days to go before the sporting action begins. I am confident that the 2018 European championships will be an exceptional sporting spectacle, but I am also determined to maximise the legacy from the championships so that communities across Scotland can share the benefits from the event and ensure that the inspiration that it provides is met with increased opportunity and support. The championships have the potential to demonstrate, once again, that Scotland is a dynamic, welcoming and outward-looking country that provides the perfect stage on which to hold events.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the important contribution that hosting world-class events makes to Scotland's international profile; welcomes the opportunity that the new flagship sporting event, the Glasgow 2018 European Championships, brings to Glasgow and Scotland in August; supports the aim that the championships will drive the ambition for Scotland to become an active nation by helping to inspire people to lead more active lifestyles; acknowledges that the championships will showcase all that Scotland has to offer and build on the legacy of the "best ever" Commonwealth Games in 2014; values the opportunity that the championships offer to engage with young people in Scotland's Year of Young People, and recognises that the championships will facilitate the development of strong relationships across Europe, including creating a unique partnership with Berlin and Germany.

15:29

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I am delighted to open the debate on behalf of the Scottish Conservatives.

It is a fantastic achievement for our small country to continue its history of hosting major international competitions from the hugely successful 2014 Commonwealth games to the Ryder cup, the open championship, the world badminton championships, the Champions League final, the 2012 Olympic football group matches and the world gymnastics championships, to name but a few.

I go back a little further than that, of course, having had the immense honour of competing in the 1986 Commonwealth games in Edinburgh and the European indoor championships in Glasgow in 1990. There is nothing like being a competitor in your home country. It is hard to describe the wall of noise that follows you and supports you around the track. Your heart could burst with pride. We Scots are a passionate lot and we love our sport, especially when it is one of our own in the arena.

Now, we have the European championships to whet our appetite in 2018, not to mention the Solheim cup and the world indoor athletics championships in 2019. That is a veritable smörgåsbord of international-class sport for our enjoyment and entertainment, and we can be guaranteed that every event will be full because, as I have said before, we Scots love our sport.

However, our support for and our passion for watching sporting excellence are not reflected in the state of the nation's health. Our issues with preventable health conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal conditions, chest, heart and stroke conditions and many types of cancers, not to mention poor mental health, are well documented, and the incidence of many of those conditions continues to rise. It is our relationship with physical activity and food that will determine whether we are successful in turning that unwanted trend around. The truth of the matter is that, if someone is physically active as part of their routine, they are less likely to smoke and more likely to have a healthier weight and a better relationship with food and alcohol. That regular participation in physical activity will also have a positive effect on their mental health, as we have been told by the Scottish Association for Mental Health, Mental Health Scotland and even the Samaritans.

We, in this place, must address how we can leverage a positive legacy for the nation's health from events such as the European championships. We need not just to look at activity levels, as was done in the Scottish health survey, but to ask the questions: "If you are not active, would you like to be?" "If you would like to be active, what are the barriers?"

One example of what the health survey did not show is the huge increase in the waiting lists at many sports clubs, such as those for athletics and

gymnastics, even though their participation figures rocketed up. Figures from sportscotland show that many Scottish sports have registered encouraging membership increases during the four-year Glasgow cycle, including a 58 per cent rise at Netball Scotland—which is particularly important given its demographic—a 49 per cent growth at Scottish Triathlon and a 37 per cent increase at Scottish Gymnastics. In total, there has been an 11 per cent increase in the membership of the 17 Commonwealth games sports governing bodies over the past four years. However, the Scottish health survey does not reflect that, and nor did the investigation by the Health and Sport Committee, in my opinion. Its focus was too narrow and its conclusions gave us only part of the picture, which makes it difficult to deliver long-lasting, effective solutions.

It is not just about measuring the status quo; it is about understanding why current patterns exist, looking at socioeconomic participation patterns and addressing barriers to participation. It is about looking at what activities are available and accessible in all areas. The best line that I heard in the evidence that was given to the Health and Sport Committee came from the chief executive of Scottish Athletics, Mark Munro, when he said that we have to prepare for legacy. In other words, the legacy from hosting major events does not just happen; we must put in place the opportunities to participate and make access as easy as possible.

What about aligning the school curriculum with upcoming sporting championships? What about offering extracurricular activities that are linked to that school curriculum, and what about joining up that extracurricular activity programme with local clubs, using governing body input? What about actively encouraging volunteers and driving coach education? That is as much about participation as the sports participants. We need to link physical education to physical activity and to sport.

We are talking about obesity strategies and mental health strategies while, in the real world, access to participation is being ripped out of our local communities. We have a fantastic, world-class sporting facility at Ravenscraig that was opened in October 2010 and funded by public funds. In June 2011, First Minister Alex Salmond praised the facility and admitted that it would deliver a real and lasting legacy for Scotland and North Lanarkshire. Now, we hear that they are ripping up the 135m track without consulting Scottish Athletics, the users of the facility or, it seems, the Scottish Government.

South Ayrshire Council is looking to close sports hubs in Troon and Ayr, where, incidentally, clubs such as the powerchair football team known as the Ayrshire Tigers train and play. That is being

repeated across the country, including in Ayrshire towns such as Maybole, Patna and Dalmellington.

We cannot keep ripping out access to opportunities by closing local facilities and centralising opportunities and then complain that activity levels are not rising. The inevitable consequence of those moves is that physical activity and sport will become the bastion of those who can afford and are able to travel, while those who cannot will be left behind, and that will drive health inequalities in Scotland. That is why the Scottish Conservatives will support the Labour amendment.

The answer is staring us in the face. Facilities need to be local, accessible and affordable. The school estate is all of those things, but it continues to be underutilised. The opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities can and should be expanded for a variety of reasons, improved participation and good physical and mental health being the main ones.

The European championships coming to Scotland is another great opportunity to showcase Scotland, to show how we welcome the world to our shores, to enthuse our people, to deliver that intangible feel-good factor—that national pride—and to celebrate the jobs that the event will create and the opportunities to get involved. For those reasons alone, it is worth continuing to bring such events to Scotland. However, so much more can be achieved, especially where national health is concerned. Legacy is a difficult concept to deliver when it comes to participation. Many countries have tried and have fallen short. That does not mean that it cannot be done, but we need to plan for it. Look at what Scottish Athletics did in the four years leading up to the Glasgow Commonwealth games and in the subsequent four years.

Through its club together programme, Scottish Athletics invested in the club system, recruiting coaches and administrators as well as athletes. The number of active participants across all the age groups in championships has rocketed. The huge successes of jogscotland numbers and the mums on the run and jogworks programmes should be noted. Do members think that it is a happy accident that Scottish athletes on the international stage are now more successful than they have been in decades? We need to learn from Scottish Athletics and other sports that have grasped the nettle and made it happen—not just in sport, but in accessible and affordable activity.

The European championships coming to Scotland is not the end game; it should be the start. I ask the Scottish Government to formulate a plan that actually delivers against healthy and active objectives, that gives opportunity to all irrespective of background and personal circumstance and that recognises how to link

events with activity levels and strategies such as the obesity and mental health strategies. To do any less would be, once again, to let a fantastic opportunity drift by.

I move amendment S5M-09789.2, to leave out from “and build on the legacy” to “in 2014” and insert:

“; notes the Health and Sport Committee’s concerns that the 2014 Commonwealth Games did not have the legacy impact desired; believes that substantial efforts should be taken to ensure that hosting the championships has a positive effect on Scotland’s low levels of physical activity”.

15:36

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): I thank the minister for bringing the debate to the chamber. It is an opportunity for us to speak with pride about what Scotland and Glasgow are achieving, so as a proud Glaswegian, I am delighted to speak in the debate.

Glasgow is one of the top 10 sporting cities in the world. It has credibility in the world of sport and is a true destination city—not just for world-class sporting events but for culture and business. It is a genuine success story about the transformation that can be achieved with the right vision and the drive to deliver the real change that the people of Scotland and Glasgow deserve.

It is only right that I—as the minister did—pay tribute to the work of successive Glasgow administrations, including individuals such as former Glasgow City Council leaders Gordon Matheson and Frank McAveety and, in particular, the deputy leader of the council at the time and the person who co-ordinated for Glasgow Life, Archie Graham, for their work in driving many of the successes that we see across the city. I also record my thanks and congratulations to the bid team as well as to the delivery team for their hard work and effort. I am sure that all that hard work will be rewarded when the championships finally kick off.

It feels as though just yesterday we were watching the greatest-ever Commonwealth games take place before our eyes—the greatest ever not just in terms of the fantastic sporting achievements, but in terms of the coming together of the city to deliver a huge logistical success.

People need only walk round the east end of Glasgow to see the transformation: a lasting and genuine legacy in sporting stadia, new housing transforming the landscape and improving the lives of many people at the same time, improved transport infrastructure, a new school, a new community centre, a new health centre and thousands of volunteers who are proud to have represented their city of Glasgow. The Commonwealth games was not just a great piece

of sporting excellence, but was a genuine vehicle for transformative social policy—and all before a world-wide audience that was counted in the billions. It was a great advert not just for Glasgow but for Scotland.

The foundation that was laid in 2014 is being built on with the European championships. Thousands of athletes and officials across six sports will arrive in Glasgow. Covering aquatics, golf, cycling, gymnastics, rowing, and triathlon, the championships will again deliver a feast of sporting excellence.

Despite a degree of negativity from some people about the value of hosting elite sporting events, the championships and other similar events are, in their own right, great for Glasgow and Scotland to host because they help to boost the confidence of our people in Glasgow and around the country. World-class sporting events taking place in our home city or home nation is a thing of joy and pride for us all.

Such events are also good opportunities to establish trade links, to profile the city across the world and to showcase all the great things that Glasgow has to offer.

It is right that the BBC will give the championships the status of a big event, which will mean that we will have more than 40 broadcasters there, as well as the BBC, in Scotland and in Glasgow, and that the championships will be seen by an audience that will be in the hundreds of millions of people. It is also an opportunity for the city to build closer trade links with Berlin specifically, and with Germany more widely.

All that is good, but I want to highlight issues that should be of concern to us all, about how to get a genuine and lasting legacy from the games and the championships. I mentioned infrastructure, housing and the boost to tourism and business, but how will we get a long-term effect on alleviation of poverty, on sport participation and on positive employment destinations? Although there is some evidence that there has been an increase in attendance at, and membership of, Glasgow sporting programmes, we need to crunch the numbers to see whether the increase in participation has happened among those from the poorest backgrounds, and whether the communities in Scotland that are in the most need of added participation are accessing facilities. We need some proper longer-term analysis on that.

Brian Whittle: Will the member take an intervention?

Anas Sarwar: I apologise, but I am short of time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I cannot let you make the time up, Mr Sarwar.

Anas Sarwar: No problem. I apologise for being unable to take the intervention.

Although I agree with many of the points in Brian Whittle's speech and his amendment, we cannot support his amendment, partly because we will not remove from the motion the reference to the "best ever" Commonwealth games" in my home city of Glasgow. The cynic in me cannot help but think that Mr Whittle does not think that they were the best-ever Commonwealth games because he did not compete in them.

I welcome a lot of what the minister said, but we need more analysis on employability, on poverty alleviation and on participation. We need to look at how we can get more people from, in particular, working-class backgrounds accessing the games. If I had more time, I would mention more about the cuts to local government and their impact on sport participation, which needs to be reflected in the budget.

In my final 20 seconds, I record my thanks to all those who have been involved from all levels of government—whether in Glasgow City Council or in the Scottish Government—the agencies, the bid team and the delivery team for putting the successful bid together and delivering what I am sure will be successful championships. It will be another moment of pride for Glasgow and for Scotland.

I move amendment S5M-09789.1, to insert at end:

“; congratulates the bid teams and successive Glasgow City Council administrations on their roles in securing both these championships and the Commonwealth Games in 2014, and believes that there should be medium to long-term analysis on the legacy impact of these events on poverty reduction, economic growth and new employment.”

15:43

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): One hundred years ago today, Glasgow and Berlin were on opposite sides in the first world war, and were on opposite sides of the second world war 75 years ago today. It is encouraging that, as we go into 2018, those two great cities are in such a friendly partnership in preparing to host jointly the first European championships, bringing together under one umbrella a range of sports that were previously completely stand alone. With the Olympic and Commonwealth games, we have found that so-called minority sports, that often do not get much support and publicity when they stand alone, benefit hugely from the increased coverage when they take place at the same time and are presented on TV as part of a package.

I am especially delighted that a number of events are due to take place in the constituency of Glasgow Shettleston, which I represent. The

events include swimming at Tollcross, cycling at the Chris Hoy velodrome, and cycling and cultural events at Glasgow Green. I understand that, on 3 August, all the finals that are being held in Scotland will be in the Glasgow Shettleston constituency.

I mentioned that events will be happening at Glasgow Green, which I welcome. It is a great space near the city centre and is readily accessible by public transport. However, I flag up in passing to Glasgow City Council that we should not use Glasgow Green for almost every event that we hold in the city. It is meant to be available as a public space for residents, but there has been a tendency in recent times for it to be closed off not just for events themselves, but for setting up beforehand and clearing up afterwards.

The motion refers to the Commonwealth games in 2014. Such high-profile sporting events have many benefits including, as has been mentioned, raising the profile of Glasgow and Scotland, which leads to a boost for tourism and even for business investment, to tremendous entertainment for all of us on our doorstep, to a boost for our self-confidence as a city and a nation, and to a lasting legacy and encouragement to get involved in sport.

The Conservative amendment focuses on legacy, on which I want to comment. I accept that the Commonwealth games taking place in the east end of Glasgow four years ago has not automatically turned everyone in my constituency into a super athlete. Some people have questioned what legacy there is. First, we now have some fabulous sports facilities right on our doorstep, including the Emirates arena, the velodrome, the Tollcross swimming pool and the national hockey centre, to name but a few. People have the opportunity to use those facilities and to continue to watch top-class sport there. We also have the Commonwealth games village, which provides excellent owner-occupied and socially rented housing, and which has drawn more building into the surrounding area, with a new school now being built in Dalmarnock.

Legacy is not only about bricks and mortar, although it certainly includes them. The legacy of achieving behavioural change is perhaps more of a challenge, but we always knew that that would be the case. I distinctly remember Bridget McConnell, who heads up Glasgow Life, saying to us before the Commonwealth games that no city had really cracked the issue of legacy. She referred to cities including Melbourne and Barcelona that had recently held major games. We always knew that that aspect would be difficult, and so it has proved. However, I say to Mr Whittle that a lot of effort went in around the

Commonwealth Games: he seemed to hint that it did not.

For hockey, for example, we now have a top-class international venue that regularly hosts top events of which we can be proud. Hockey perhaps has the reputation of being played more in private schools, and it takes time to change that, as with all perceptions and traditions. Often, it takes a teacher in a school who is really keen on a particular sport to take that forward. That is the legacy or vision to which Scottish Hockey is truly committed. As anyone who has met its staff and volunteers will know, one would be hard pressed to find a more dedicated and enthusiastic group.

I suggest that parts of the legacy, including for the coming championships, can be clearly seen, but other parts are harder to measure. Although effort certainly has gone in, I do not believe that we can ensure that hosting such events will always change levels of physical activity, but the Conservative amendment uses the word “ensure” in that context.

All in all, it is very exciting to look forward to a major event coming to Glasgow, and especially to the east end. We can all look forward to a tremendous summer.

15:47

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): What an honour it is for Glasgow that a new era of sport should begin right in the heart of the city this summer. The inaugural European championships are a key opportunity to once again showcase Glasgow’s infamous hospitality, the warmth of its people and a city whose spirit is renowned across the world.

Growing up in Glasgow, I by no means had sporting prowess, but I was involved in a number of sports including gymnastics, hockey and tap dancing, and when push came to shove, I chalked up the streets to create Springburn’s answer to Wimbledon. To me, sport did not necessarily represent the opportunity to be the next Nadia Comăneci or even the next Jocky Wilson; it was an opportunity to be with my friends, get outside when I needed to and energise myself with new challenges. Although I eagerly anticipate the wealth of new talent that the championships will no doubt inspire across the country, it is the renewal of grass-roots sports and community engagement, no matter how small, that I most look forward to as part of the longer-lasting legacy.

With about 4,500 athletes from across Europe taking part, and a potential television audience of more than a billion viewers, interest in the event is high, and I am extremely pleased that people across the city have already been showing their support. The championships have rightly continued in the same vein as the 2014

Commonwealth games by recognising the importance of involving local people and incorporating the sentiment that people really do make Glasgow. We will have festival 2018, which will be a cultural event showcasing local art, music, dance and theatre projects across the city, and applications for volunteering positions have been overwhelming. More than 10,000 people from across the world applied to volunteer at the championships, with a fifth of all applications coming from people within the city itself.

As well as being an opportunity once again to shine a global spotlight on a city that is known for its warmth and welcoming atmosphere, this is a real opportunity to reignite our love for sport and physical activity. As we all know, the positive effects of the 2014 Commonwealth games on Glasgow are undeniable. Across the city, we are peppered with reminders of a great sporting event—colourful graffiti murals still cover city walls, and in the east end in particular there has been real physical change, with the transformation of the former athletes’ village.

I have immense pride, as a Glaswegian, in what the city achieved during that time, but I want to take the opportunity to ask that lessons be learned from the past, as we look to improve Scotland’s health. The Glasgow games inspired local events and initiatives such as new walking routes, but as the Health and Sport Committee reported last November, there is no real evidence of an active legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth games.

As well as having one of the worst obesity rates among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, more than a third of adults in Scotland currently do not meet the guidelines for moderate physical activity, and for children aged between 13 and 15 the rate reaches nearly 40 per cent. I do not wish to sound overly negative, however. The championships is a positive event and we should be doing our utmost to ensure that rates of physical activity in adults and in children drastically improve in the long term.

Furthermore, although I am absolutely thrilled to see that the championships’ mascot, Bonnie the Seal, is female, I would also like to hear from the Scottish Government what specific action it will take to target social groups that we know are disproportionately inactive, including women, ethnic minorities and certain age groups.

Aileen Campbell: Does Annie Wells acknowledge that the Scottish household survey showed that participation in all physical activity and sport has increased from 72 per cent in 2007 to 79 per cent in 2016, which is a significant population-level shift? Does she also recognise the fact that this year we have established a £300,000 sporting equality fund and have

established a women's advisory group to advise us on what more we need to do to help women to participate in sport? Does she not recognise—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry, minister, but interventions must be short.

Aileen Campbell: Will Annie Wells acknowledge that that work is under way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will give you an extra 30 seconds because that was a long intervention.

Annie Wells: I acknowledge that work, of course, but we need to ensure that we do not just set things up for the creation of something, but that we are actively targeting other groups as well.

To finish, I would again like to show my heartfelt support for the championships and the opportunities that the event will present for Glasgow and surrounding areas. What has been shown time and again during the hosting of sporting events is that they are times when people can come together and celebrate a country's achievements as well as its cultural heritage. As well as the opportunity that they provide for inspiring a new raft of talent in Scotland, I sincerely hope that the championships will reignite Scotland's love for sport and physical activity. I look forward to attending the games and events and to seeing the spotlight shining once again on Glasgow.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry that I have to be curt about interventions, but time is absolutely tight.

15:53

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I am pleased to take part in this afternoon's debate, not just from a sport, cultural and tourism point of view, but also as a regional MSP whose area will be hosting one of the events.

Scotland's reputation for hosting world-class sporting events is not in doubt. From regularly holding the open championships at St Andrews and courses across Scotland to the Commonwealth games in 2014, we are a country that warmly welcomes fans and stars from across the world. In the past few years, we have seen the Ryder cup, the world gymnastics championships, the world badminton championships and many high-profile football matches.

As we prepare once again to welcome thousands to Glasgow and the rest of the country, we should be proud to have been chosen as the inaugural host of the European championships, alongside Berlin. That such an event is centred in, but not limited to, Glasgow is something that I also welcome, especially as golf will be taking place at

one of our most iconic courses, the Jack Nicklaus-designed centenary course in Gleneagles. I am sure that every golfer and every fan will enjoy the beautiful Perth and Kinross countryside, and I remember fondly the scenes of Europe's Ryder cup triumph over the United States of America in 2014. With a potential broadcast audience of more than 1 billion, we should look forward to highlighting the best that this country has to offer.

One of the striking memories of the 2014 Commonwealth games was of the Clyde-siders—the enthusiastic volunteers who helped not just at the various sporting events but throughout the city. Without them, many of the events that took place in George Square and Glasgow Green, for example, would not have been the success that they were. Those events and those volunteers showed the heart of Scotland just as much as the rugby at Ibrox, the athletics at Hampden or the cycling at the velodrome did. Through their interactions, Scotland was able to show what a friendly and welcoming nation it truly is. From a tourism point of view, the value of that cannot be underestimated.

According to the visitor impact study that was conducted after the 2014 games, almost 700,000 visitors spent approximately £282 million attending the games and the accompanying cultural events. A quarter of a million people stayed overnight, and 220,000 visitors came from outwith Scotland. On average, overnight visitors from the rest of the United Kingdom stayed for more than five days, and visitors from outside the UK stayed for 10 nights.

The boost to our tourism sector is clear. The industry average spend for day visitors was £48 and for overnight visitors was £68, but those who attended the games spent £57 and £125 respectively. Ninety-five per cent of hotel rooms in Glasgow and Clyde valley were occupied, and 94 per cent of bed-and-breakfast rooms were occupied. Those figures were increases of 12 per cent and 25 per cent on the figures for the same period the year before.

The impact was not just confined to the city and the surrounding area. Self-catering occupancy was up 30 per cent in Ayrshire, 17 per cent in Aberdeen and Grampian and 20 per cent in the Borders. That often provided an important boost to the rural tourism economy.

According to the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, over the course of 2014 there was an average increase of 6.5 per cent in visitor numbers to Scotland compared with the previous year. Kelvingrove art gallery, the Riverside museum, the gallery of modern art and the People's Palace all saw significant increases. The national museum of Scotland was the most-visited free attraction in Scotland and one of the most visited museums

outside London, and Edinburgh castle was the most-visited paid-for attraction outside London.

This year's championships will undoubtedly offer similar opportunities. George Square will once again be a thriving hub of activity and the centre of the games, showcasing our country, arts and creativity. I look forward to the festival 2018 cultural partnership and hope that it succeeds in broadening access and engagement in communities across Glasgow and Scotland.

Yesterday, in the chamber, members debated the impact of Brexit on the country. Festival 2018 is our opportunity to say that, no matter what happened in 2016 and what will happen with the final Brexit deal, we are still European. A cultural festival that highlights the creative scenes of both Glasgow and Berlin can highlight the best of Europe and the best of our talents.

In 2014, many people came for the sport and fell in love with the country, our culture and our arts. We must build on that and ensure that we create a lasting tourism legacy in Scotland. Scotland and Glasgow are fantastic visitor destinations and leading tourist destinations. Events such as the 2018 European championships only help to underline that and give us a chance to celebrate all that we have to offer.

15:58

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): As other members have done, I start by warmly welcoming the inaugural European championships, which are coming to Glasgow. That is a huge coup for the city and for Scotland at large, just as the 2014 Commonwealth games were for our city. As a Glasgow MSP, I take great pride in that.

My Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn constituency has significant health needs and has been greatly impacted by deprivation and health inequalities, so the legacy issue matters deeply to me. It is clear that there has been a legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth games, but we have to ask who has benefited most from it. That is a very reasonable question to ask.

I warmly welcome the 10 per cent increase in athletics participation, which Aileen Campbell mentioned in her opening speech, and the 25 per cent increase in swimming. I think that there has also been a 25 per cent increase in cycling. The increases in club membership and participation in those areas are to be applauded, as are the recent statistics on gym membership.

Some 22 local authority areas in Scotland have seen a significant increase in gym membership. Since the Commonwealth games, Glasgow Life membership has increased by 14 per cent, so

there are tangible signs of legacy, but we must still ask who is benefiting most. Who has been joining the sports clubs? Which social backgrounds do they come from? Are the sports clubs that they are members of the first that they have joined, or are they members of a swimming club or a badminton club, for example? Do people ever use their gym memberships, or do they, like me, subscribe but never use them and cancel them after a year or two? Is the increase in physical activity a result of those who are already physically active becoming more active or a result of people who have never been physically active starting activities?

Those are all reasonable questions to ask and asking them is not a criticism. Clearly, there has been a legacy, but we want to work out how to maximise it and how to get those who are least likely to be physically active started on the pathway towards sporting and physical activity.

The onus falls not on the large sports providers in cities and other parts of the country, because although Glasgow Life has the infrastructure in place, local credibility is important and, as good as Glasgow Life is, it does not have local credibility. Again, that is not a criticism, but we need to ask who does have credibility in our communities where people are least likely to be physically active. I absolutely accept that, sometimes, sports clubs and their inspirational volunteers have credibility, but often it is youth clubs that have that credibility.

In my constituency, North United Communities in Maryhill and Springburn, Royston Youth Action, Young Peoples Futures in Possil, and A&M Scotland, which is expanding not just in Glasgow, but across the west of Scotland, have credibility with young people and their families. Young people might watch sports on the television with their families—perhaps with their kebabs—and talk about how great it is, but those role model community organisations are calling on them to give it a go. They will get people who are not physically active to be physically active. Credibility is all-important when we offer opportunities.

I want to talk about another group: parent councils. They might just be able to offer local credibility. St Mary's primary school in Maryhill has no adequate sporting facilities in its playground. There is an old blaes pitch that is not fit for purpose, but the school's parent council is hoping to secure money from the local authority and sportscotland to bring the pitch back to life. There are a number of related issues, including the pitch not being big enough to be a 3G—third generation—pitch, and we are trying to find a workaround to link up with the council's play strategy and a pathway to formal sport via sportscotland. There might just be funding available from the local authority and

sportscotland, but there is a danger that it will fall between two stools, which would be disappointing. The parent council's vision is to have a new sports facility open in the evenings, which would be used by its community network of friends, colleagues, and youth groups. That is a special idea, and I would really love for the minister, Aileen Campbell, to come along to find out a little bit more about the plan.

I know that small funding amounts are starting to emerge, but we need funds to give leverage to delivering such ambitious projects. Therefore, I am very interested to know more about the £525,000 fund that was mentioned, as well as the £300,000 equality fund. The latter is for women and LGBTI, but it is also for those from deprived areas.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): You must close, please.

Bob Doris: The legacy of the championships must be to deliver for those who are least likely to be physically active in the first place.

16:03

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): I welcome today's debate on the 2018 European championships, which Scotland is rightly proud to be hosting in Glasgow. The opportunity to host international sport of the highest quality is always exciting, and it will create a magnificent buzz in the country and, indeed, the city. As this is the inaugural European championships, I am sure that the buzz and excitement will be heightened even further.

I am sure that we are all hoping that the championships create as many memorable moments and as much action-packed sporting excellence and engagement with the community as the Glasgow Commonwealth games did so brilliantly well. I certainly thoroughly enjoyed the many events that I went to.

On engagement, I am glad to see that 10,000 volunteers from 89 countries have applied to be part of Glasgow 2018, including 7,000 from across Scotland. It was heartening to read that a fifth of the applicants were from Glasgow, with 30 per cent under the age of 26. It is always good to see young people getting involved in events taking place in their area.

Additionally, I am sure that everyone is looking forward to cheering on team Great Britain on home ground as it competes in the aquatics, cycling, golf, gymnastics, rowing and triathlon events. We will also need to keep an eye on the continent as our athletes compete for track and field success in Berlin.

It is worth remembering that it is not just Glasgow that is looking forward to hosting events

this year. My West Scotland region looks forward to taking part as well. The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs national park is set to play host to the European open-water swimming championships, which will be a great opportunity for that part of Scotland to showcase itself to an audience of more than 1 billion across Europe. The event will quite possibly be unique in the championships in that not only will a world-class sport be hosted, but the competition will be set in some of the most stunning scenery in the world. In addition, it will be a non-ticketed event, which will mean that people in the local area and from further afield will have the chance to come to our part of the country to watch some of the world's finest athletes competing in their chosen sport without having to worry about covering the cost of tickets. We hope that visitors to the area will use the chance to explore the many other things to do and places to eat and the multitude of accommodation that is available, and thereby will extend their stay a little.

On the subject of ticket prices, although I appreciate that a number of cheaper tickets for some events are available, it seemed to me from looking at the Glasgow 2018 website that tickets for most of the finals are substantially more expensive than those for the earlier rounds of competition. I understand the need to ensure that events are not loss making, but it is incumbent on organisers to ensure that the barriers to attending sporting events are as low as possible. That goes for not just the organisers of the European championships but everyone who is involved in organising sporting events in Scotland.

Imagine being a parent who wanted to take their two children to an event to open their eyes to the wonders of a particular sport but who was denied that opportunity because of high costs. That would be a lost opportunity for not just those children but the sport in question. In the long term, high ticket prices will have the damaging effect of lowering the number of the next generation who follow and take part in sport.

As part of the process of ensuring our future sporting success and health, we must lower the amount that it costs to go and watch sportsmen and women competing at the highest level, so that more of our young people get the sporting bug from hearing their heroes cheered on by thousands of people and go on to seek to emulate their achievements. My colleague Brian Whittle spoke eloquently about his experience during his years of competition.

Although that is not the full solution, I believe that it will help us to fight the issues that we face with the health of our children and young people. When 29 per cent of Scottish children are at risk of being overweight and only 61 per cent of children between the ages of 13 and 15 are meeting the

targets in the physical activity guidelines, anything that helps to encourage those children into sport must be supported. I firmly believe that keeping down the price of tickets so that more people in Scotland can attend sporting events and watch sport should play a part in that.

16:07

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I remind the chamber that I am a director of Scottish Athletics.

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate and I thank Glasgow 2018 for its briefing, in which it points out that Glasgow 2018 will be not just a celebration of world-class sport but an opportunity to build on the cultural legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth games. I, too, thank everyone who helped to deliver those truly great games. Just a quick jog up the hill, Edinburgh delivered world-class diving, and it will have the opportunity to do so again in 2018.

It is clear that hosting world-class events boosts our international profile and provides an environment in which we can forge new relationships and strengthen existing ones among athletes, spectators, organisers and Governments. It is important—and particularly welcome at this time—that the forthcoming Glasgow European 2018 championships will enable Scotland to develop strong links with Berlin and Germany, and that groundbreaking cultural partnership will benefit from dedicated festival funding.

I now want to focus on the sport. As someone with a lifelong interest in sport, I do not need to be convinced of its many benefits, but the challenges that are experienced by major global sporting events in delivering a meaningful legacy prove that, for a complex variety of reasons, sport, as yet, is not for everyone. Despite the Commonwealth games, Scotland has yet to become as active a nation as we would all wish it to be. In its report on sport for everyone, the Health and Sport Committee found that, to date, there was a “mixed picture” on the attempts to achieve an active legacy from the Commonwealth games.

Our understanding of that active legacy must focus on long-term, sustainable increases in participation in sport and physical activity, and just over three years on from the Commonwealth games, we have every reason to build on the great work that has already been done and to ensure that new facilities and sporting infrastructure are all used to the greatest public benefit. These European championships provide an excellent opportunity to build on efforts in Glasgow and across Scotland to increase participation, showcasing as they do a wide range of sports

from swimming and diving to cycling and gymnastics.

Much of the evidence that the Health and Sport Committee heard reflected on the priority that should be given to elite sport in efforts to improve sport in Scotland. I believe that high-performance sport has an incredibly important place; after all, international competitions bring exceptional athletes and players to our cities, and they inspire, excite and enthuse thousands of players and supporters across the country. There has been a particularly significant increase in participation in athletics since the Commonwealth games, and the European championships are an ideal opportunity to build on that.

However, as others have said, it is vital that when we consider legacy, we look beyond headline attendance figures at sports facilities and on sports development programmes. We must consider who is attending and the benefits that they gain from taking part in sport and exercise. How many people never reach their potential, because they did not have the opportunity to try a sport that appealed to them or because their family income meant that they could not afford access to clothing, equipment or facilities? Members should try booking an indoor tennis court in Edinburgh for juniors for this evening—or even for next week. Even if they can find a vacant court, they will appreciate that, for too many families, the cost is prohibitive.

As has been discussed, the sport for everyone inquiry found many significant barriers to participation, from the cost of taking part in sport and difficulty in accessing suitable facilities to caring responsibilities. It is therefore crucial that further assessments of participation consider how sport and physical activity can be made more accessible to women, LGBT people, older people, minority groups and people living on low incomes. An accessible, low-maintenance velodrome at Hunters Hall would demonstrate such a commitment, and I would be grateful if the minister could respond to the request for that.

Moreover, in this year of young people, we cannot overlook the role of play in building physical literacy. Having challenging playgrounds and ensuring that outdoor wear is accessible to all so that indoor breaks become a thing of the past form part of a serious sporting legacy, too.

We know that there is a huge gap between the life expectancy of people with mental health conditions and the general population and that much of that might be related to physical health. I would therefore like us to act to make sport and physical activity more accessible to people with mental health conditions, because I do not think that that has been a big enough priority for us in the past. The evidence is there: for example, the

collaboration between jogscotland and SAMH has been fantastic in providing an accessible way into low-impact and affordable exercise that not only brings physical benefits but builds social connections and support between participants.

I realise that I am running out of time, but I want to finish with a plug for exercising in the outdoors. Scotland has a great outdoors, and we must ensure that we make it part of our sporting legacy, too.

16:13

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): On that basis, I assure Alison Johnstone that I will walk home tonight.

If there is any indication of the power of sport, it is the fact that North Korea and South Korea managed to meet yesterday to discuss the winter Olympics taking place in South Korea next month and shook hands instead of doing anything else. Perhaps there is nothing comparable with regard to the contact sport that is Scottish politics, but in the context of this very welcome debate that the minister has introduced it strikes me that, quite unlike any other aspect of life, sport has a power to lift our sights and make things happen that would otherwise not seem possible.

I agree with Maurice Corry that the Glasgow championships will bring a buzz not just to the city but to Scotland. Given what many of us enjoyed in 2014, that can only be good. I also agree with Alison Johnstone's powerful observation about the importance of high-performance athletes with regard to leadership and the ambitions of many people in different walks of life and across different sporting regimes. After all, how many of us are watching Andy Murray's recovering hip with very close interest?

If I caught her correctly, the minister made two welcome financial announcements, one on LGBT and the other on community sports hubs. I am looking for a third, this time on the islands travel fund, which I have been asking her and her predecessors about for a considerable time now. She knows the argument well and she is entirely sympathetic to it. I am very grateful, too, for the work that sportscotland and the local authorities in the islands have contributed to the area. The argument is very simple: performance athletes who come from the islands and who need to improve by competing in events such as those in which Mr Whittle used to take part need to compete against the best. For people who live 180 miles away in the North Sea and who need a night, if not two, away, that means costs that others simply do not face. That was the sensible and very constructive pitch that was made to the Government and to sportscotland some time back.

I hope that, in the context of the additional funds that the minister announced today that she had been able to find in the budget round for the important organisation sportscotland, she will also be able to find some ability to introduce the islands travel fund to which many have been looking forward.

Aileen Campbell: Sportscotland is currently discussing with the local authorities that are most impacted—those in the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland—how a potential travel scheme might work. I will continue to keep the member updated on the point that he makes well.

Tavish Scott: I am grateful for that. We would all be very grateful if that could be brought to fruition.

The second point that I want to make is on the lottery. Many of the aspects of sport that colleagues have discussed in the chamber this afternoon relate to funding for both voluntary and professional coaching, which is the part of the system that appears to me to be hugely important for participation. As the Parliament knows, the biggest challenge that we have at the moment—the minister mentioned it in the context of her budget for sport in Scotland—is the national lottery's reduction in funding for good causes, which has been reduced by some 14 per cent between 2015-16 and 2016-17. Lottery funding makes up 40 per cent of sportscotland's total income. The fall in funding therefore has very serious consequences indeed.

I ask the Government to look closely at the cross-party representations that have been made in London to the UK Government about changing the regime on the turnover limit that applies to charity lotteries. There appears to be a good argument for raising that turnover limit so that the many separate charity lotteries that would provide funding for sport and other good causes would be able to do so. At the moment, many are restricted by the turnover limit, which means that they are setting up separate legal charity lotteries, with all the administration, accounting and other costs that go with that. There is a new culture secretary in London—Matthew Hancock—who is Fiona Hyslop's opposite number. I encourage our Government to make representations there that I know have been made on a cross-party basis—including by Conservative members—to enhance that system. That is not a challenge to the existing national lottery; rather, it would potentially augment the funds that are available for sport not just in Scotland but in Wales, Northern Ireland and England as well. I hope that that can happen.

Why is that important? As the director of UK Coaching said to me the other day, the principle of how coaching works in Scotland—and indeed across all the nations and regions of the UK—is

funded and supported in that way. It would make a difference, it would be important for this debate and I hope that it can happen.

16:18

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): It is a real pleasure to speak in this debate, which recognises the important contribution that events such as the Glasgow 2018 European championships make to Glasgow, which is my home city, and to my Kelvin constituency, in which, as in John Mason's and other members' constituencies, lots of events will take place. I will touch on that shortly.

It is not only Glasgow that benefits, but Scotland as well, and that is not only internationally but locally. I am so proud that my home city will host this prestigious event, building on the legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth games—"the best games", as they have been called—that showcased our beautiful and vibrant city and, of course, our fantastic and friendly people, who live up to the saying "People make Glasgow". They truly do.

I want to mention the continuing legacy of the 2014 games. Other members have spoken about sports membership. There has been a 13.7 per cent rise in membership of the Glasgow club. A point was raised previously about community sports hubs: 179 such hubs are up and running. That is the legacy of the Glasgow 2014 games, not just in Glasgow but throughout Scotland. That has to be welcomed and, as others have said, looked at so that we can try to improve on it.

We also have to look at the overall 40 per cent increase in women across Scotland taking part in numerous sports, including football, hockey, rugby, basketball and aquatic sports.

Obviously, the sporting benefits from the games are important, but there are also economic benefits. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Premier Inn figures show that more people have booked holidays in Glasgow this year alone than in any other part of the UK. That is not a plug, but it just shows the economic benefits that are coming forward for Glasgow and for Scotland.

The Olympic gold medallist Max Whitlock said that Glasgow crowds are the loudest that he has ever experienced. I expect that they will be even louder when world-class gymnastics returns to the SSE Hydro in my Kelvin constituency for eight action-packed days. We will also host in my constituency, along with Glasgow Green in John Mason's constituency, the European cycling championship road races. They will start in Glasgow Green, weave their way through the city centre and go out into the surrounding countryside. That will be fantastic. Glasgow city centre and surrounding areas have experienced it

previously, as they host lots of cycling races. It is a fantastic sight and it brings so many people into the city. The time trial will start from the Riverside Museum, which is also in my Kelvin constituency, and go through the city centre and the surrounding countryside. Staging the road races in the city centre provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase not just the cyclists and the people of Glasgow but the city to a massive TV audience across core European tourist markets, which is fantastic.

I want to raise an important issue that I think has been raised once or twice already. Maurice Corry is not in the chamber at the moment, but he alluded to young people and the cost of tickets. I am really pleased that our young people will be at the heart of Glasgow 2018, because we will be offering 50 per cent discounts on all ticket prices to young people and many more events will be completely free to them as part of Scotland's year of young people, which we need to remember. That is fantastic and I hope that our young people will take up that opportunity. I look forward to speaking to Maurice Corry afterwards in regard to that.

I know that we are short of time, so I will finish by pointing out that George Square, which will be at the heart of festival 2018 and provide a wonderful location to celebrate the championships, will be linked closely in the same month to the Merchant City festival. That is a fantastic opportunity and I think that it is great that those events will be so closely linked. We will not only showcase the cyclists and world-class sports but celebrate the fantastic cultural and creative opportunities that Glasgow has to offer. I am a very proud Glaswegian and a very proud MSP for the Kelvin constituency, which will host many of the fantastic events. I look forward enormously to enjoying them as much as I enjoyed those in 2014.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We are running a bit short of time, so I have to cut down the time for the remaining speakers in the open debate to four minutes.

16:23

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I am pleased to speak in the debate and, like other members, I very much welcome the fact that the first ever European Championships will be held in Glasgow, along with Berlin, this August. As other members have already said, this is a significant boost to Glasgow and to Scotland's profile and reputation as a host destination of choice for major sporting events. The BBC and European broadcasters have already put in place large-scale broadcast plans and, as has already been said, it is believed that an audience of more than one billion people in

Europe and across the globe will be able to enjoy all the action from the championships in Glasgow and Berlin. The income that the games will bring as thousands of athletes and competitors and all the associated media and support services converge here in Scotland will be a welcome boost for the Scottish economy.

The minister did not mention that the Royal Commonwealth pool will host an event but, as a Lothian MSP, I am delighted that such an event will take place. As happened so successfully in the Commonwealth games in 2014, the diving competitions will take place at the Royal Commonwealth pool here in Edinburgh, which will show what we in Edinburgh have to offer the games. I booked my tickets online this morning in case they sold out after this debate—that could be seen as MSPs having insider information.

The Commie pool here in Edinburgh is a great asset to the capital and to Scotland. Local people have benefited from the upgrade that the facility had ahead of the 2014 games, which means that it is able to host world-class swimming and diving events and competitions.

As Maurice Corry and Sandra White mentioned, 2018 is the year of young people. I urge ministers and their agencies to go the extra mile to ensure that as many schoolchildren as possible across Scotland are able to benefit from the games, at both primary and secondary level, and are given the opportunity to enjoy the competitions. I would be interested to learn more from the Government about what complimentary tickets will be made available to schools and youth groups so that they can attend the championships, watch the exciting competitions for free and become inspired by the live performances of so many top-level European athletes.

The championships are a fantastic chance for our young people to be spectators. As Tavish Scott said—he is not in the chamber at the moment—it is important to look at transport arrangements for school pupils from Scotland's rural and island communities to be able to attend the games. I hope that further progress will be made on that. It would be helpful if ministers could set out their plans to ensure that children are at the heart of the games, and I look forward to hearing more about that from the cabinet secretary when she closes the debate.

After every major sporting event, it is important that we take stock. As we did with the Commonwealth games, we need to look at the legacy impact on sport, physical activity and health levels. Bob Doris made some really good points on that in his excellent speech. As Brian Whittle's amendment makes clear, the Parliament's Health and Sport Committee has found very little evidence of an active legacy from the 2014

Commonwealth games, despite the high hopes that it would encourage more Scots to become active participants in sport through the demonstration and inspiration of success by elite sportsmen.

We accept that the games left a positive physical legacy in terms of infrastructure and new facilities, but it is clear that much more needs to be done to ensure that the opportunities that are presented by major sporting events encourage more people to begin participating in sport. I believe that helping our youngsters to be able to watch the games can play an important part in that as we try to build a healthier and more active nation.

The Commonwealth games were rightly praised for the number of volunteers who assisted and the highly positive contribution that they made. The European championships, which will present 3,000 volunteering opportunities, will also be a great opportunity in that regard. I very much welcome the fact that over 10,000 people have already shown an interest. We also need to consider how we can support the retention of those volunteers and get them involved in community sports and activities in the future.

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

Miles Briggs: To conclude, I welcome today's debate. All of Scotland will want to get behind the games. Finally, I wish all the athletes who will be part of team GB the very best for a successful European championships.

16:27

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): I will try to speak to the motion, not ask for more money and conclude on time.

The European championships, which will be hosted by Glasgow and Berlin, are an event to look forward to. They mark an exciting era in multisport events, bringing together some of the continent's leading sports including the existing European championships for athletics, aquatics, cycling, gymnastics, rowing and triathlon with the new golf team championships.

It may not have escaped members' attention that I am not a Glasgow MSP.

John Mason: Hear, hear.

Richard Lyle: I am, however, no less excited about the upcoming games, both for Glasgow and my area. Once again, Strathclyde country park, part of which is in my constituency, will play host to a European event. I say to Mr Mason that I will explain more about that in a moment.

Glasgow and the surrounding areas have made it clear time and again that they are up to the challenge of hosting major international events, including world-class sporting events. I note the amazing successes of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games, where we saw our largest city made even more vibrant with the 71 competing nations and almost 5,000 athletes taking part in 17 different sports and utilising 13 venues across the central belt.

In my constituency, I am privileged to represent Strathclyde country park, which I never tire of championing in the chamber, particularly as I was born there, in the now former Bothwellhaugh village, which the park sits on. *[Interruption.]* Yes, I was born in a park, Mr Adam. *[Laughter.]*

Members might be interested to know that each year the park receives thousands of visitors who take part in a huge range of activities including sailing, football, water skiing and, of course, attending Scotland's Theme Park, one of the best funfair parks in Scotland. Those who are into their music might be interested to know that in 1994 it was the first ever venue for T in the Park, with performers including Blur, Pulp and Oasis—I am sure that Mr Mason will remember them well. The performers in Strathclyde park in 2018 will include some of the approximately 3,000 participants in the European championships when the park plays host to the rowing and triathlon events. That will build on existing success, given that it hosted the Commonwealth games triathlon event in 2014—what a success that was!

I know that all my colleagues from Lanarkshire constituencies will be delighted to have Strathclyde park playing its part in hosting Glasgow's European championships, with the games being broadcast to an estimated 1.3 billion television viewers around the world. That will, once again, put Glasgow and Scotland on the international sporting map. Lanarkshire is but one part of that wide-reaching multi-sport event, with the Royal Commonwealth pool, Loch Lomond, Tollcross, Scotstoun, Cathkin Braes, the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome, Gleneagles and the SEC Hydro all being utilised, which will showcase the wide range of venues that are available in Scotland.

Not only will the European championships be an opportunity to showcase venues, places and spaces in Glasgow and the surrounding areas; they will deliver another extremely important opportunity. As with any large-scale event, we can look forward to welcoming to the championships not only participants—3,000 from all over the continent—but many of our friends and neighbours visiting Scotland from European nations. I hope that all those who visit the championships will enjoy Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Scotland.

16:31

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): As a Glasgow MSP, it gives me particular pleasure to take part in this afternoon's debate. I am looking forward to the European championships 2018. The events will not only provide a fantastic opportunity for the whole country to witness top athletes competing in our country and experience the buzz that top sporting events give spectators; they will bring clear economic and sporting benefits, as we saw in Glasgow in 2014 with the increased number of visitors to the city, the economic growth that resulted from the games and the sheer verve and energy that the event produced.

An element of this debate is looking back to 2014 and looking forward to this year. We are right to celebrate the legacy of 2014 for sporting success and infrastructure. I recently ran along the Clyde for the length of what was the Commonwealth village site and it was amazing to see the extent of the housing there and how the area has been transformed in the past 10 years as a result of the games being held in the city. There are real benefits and advantages to see there.

However, an issue that has run through the debate is participation levels. There is no doubt that there is mixed evidence about participation levels following the games. The recent report by the Health and Sport Committee showed that there had not been any dramatic increase in participation levels; in fact, there had been a decrease in some areas. Although it is great to see an increased number of people turning out to train in athletics, which I see in my local club, Cambuslang Harriers, the household survey that the minister quoted shows that in Glasgow alone participation in sport has decreased to 73 per cent, which is the lowest level in seven years. Bob Doris made a relevant point about who benefits from the legacy of the games. The Scottish health survey statistics show that the participation rate is 80 per cent in the least deprived areas but only 57 per cent in the most deprived areas.

There is a clear challenge for all of us to overcome that. The levels of 65 per cent of people in the country who are overweight and 29 per cent who are obese are real challenges, and we have not been able to turn those figures around in the time since the Commonwealth games.

Some things that could help us to meet those challenges are further promotion of the daily mile and greater use of the school estate. I know that there are contractual issues, but even in my local area, schools often lie dormant over the holiday period and we do not make the most of their facilities.

We are coming up to consideration of the budget, and local government funding is going to

be key. If we want to drive up participation levels, we need to fund sport properly. We also need to encourage employers to have more gym or training facilities on their premises.

Let us celebrate the upcoming events while also looking at the issues that can move participation forward.

16:35

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): Scotland has a long-standing and proud reputation for being one of the true sporting nations of the world. Famously, Scotland is the country of the Highland games and the birthplace of sports such as the shot put, shinty, and curling. Of course, we are also the home of golf.

Although sport is woven through all aspects of our society, right across the whole of our country, the sporting capital of Scotland is indisputably the city of Glasgow. As witnessed four years ago when Glasgow showcased the Commonwealth games to the world, it is unsurpassed in hosting major sporting events. The success of the 2014 Commonwealth games proves that Glasgow is the perfect choice to co-host this year's inaugural European championships alongside Berlin.

To coincide with the European championships, a festival will be held in the city to bring together residents and visitors to celebrate Scottish culture, ensuring that the first two weeks in August will be a stand-out feature of Scotland's offering to the world this year.

Clearly, Glasgow 2018 will bring significant social and cultural benefits, but it is also an occasion to enrich Scotland's economy and public health.

Unlike those of the majority of members participating in today's debate, my constituency does not fall within the boundaries of Glasgow, nor will it host any of the events held outwith the city. Nonetheless, I fully believe that Glasgow 2018 will considerably benefit the people of Rutherglen. Four of the venues for the European championships are found within 5 miles of my constituency office, so Rutherglen is perfectly placed to welcome visitors—and they would all be very welcome—to sample the sports on display, and to enjoy the atmosphere created. The benefit to Glasgow from holding such a global event is undeniable and I hope that neighbouring communities will also be able to take advantage of the positives that it will bring.

According to the post-games report into Glasgow 2014, the Commonwealth games contributed more than £740 million to Scotland's economy, £390 million of which benefited Glasgow itself. Consequently, a staggering £350 million was

pumped into the economy elsewhere across Scotland, and one can suspect that a large proportion of that was seen in nearby areas. If the 2018 championships create even a fraction of the buzz and vibrancy that the Commonwealth games brought to Glasgow and the surrounding communities in 2014, I have no doubt that it will be a resounding economic and sporting success.

As is common with the hosting of major events, new venues were built and others saw major investment due to the Glasgow games in 2014. For my constituents, the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome—which is just over the boundary in the neighbouring Glasgow Shettleston constituency—has been a welcome local addition, due to its extensive and modern gym and football facilities. The velodrome is proof that purpose-built sports venues can have a long-lasting effect if they are managed effectively.

As well as the specific venues built to be used in the 2014 games, 179 community sport hubs were established by the Scottish Government, which have helped around 150,000 people participate in sport and physical activity. When I was a member of the Health and Sport Committee, I visited several of those facilities and I experienced at first hand how they have benefited their local communities. As a direct result of the legacy of the Commonwealth games, there are now more opportunities for people to participate in a range of sports and activities, and I hope that the European championships act as a renewed impetus to get more people into physical activity.

Scotland has been recognised internationally as leading the world on strategies and policies for increasing rates of physical activity, but we cannot get complacent, and we must continually build on our successes. The best legacy that the European championships can leave is that they will inspire people in our country to live healthier and more active lifestyles, and ensure that our visitors come back to Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before we move to closing speeches, I remind members that the Presiding Officer expects that, as a matter of courtesy, members will stay in the chamber for at least two speeches after their own contribution has been made.

16:40

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): This has been an excellent and mainly consensual debate, with well-informed and passionate speeches from across the chamber. It is my personal pleasure that such a debate is the first that I have taken part in as part of the new Labour sport and health team. I want to start by congratulating successive administrations of

Glasgow City Council on the work that it has done to secure and prepare for the European championships later this year.

For me, the most important theme of this afternoon's debate, which most speakers have mentioned, is legacy: continuing the groundbreaking work that was done in relation to the Commonwealth games that were held in Glasgow in 2014. Of course, the wider picture involves ensuring that proper investment helps to alleviate poverty and poor health not only across the city but across Scotland. Investment in infrastructure—in roads, stadia and housing—is crucial, as it will enable events to take place. It will be of great benefit to Glasgow and the rest of Scotland, as will the inevitable increase in tourism, which is a vitally important activity.

As we have heard, Glasgow is co-hosting the championships with Berlin, with six sports taking place in Scotland. As most speakers have mentioned, we will be showcasing cycling, golf, gymnastics, rowing, aquatics and the triathlon. As was the case with the Commonwealth games, the iconic George Square will be the very heart of the celebrations, with two events—the men's and the women's road races—passing through the square itself. The open-water swimming will take place in the quintessentially Scottish Loch Lomond, in one of our national parks. That will be a beautiful image of Scotland to send out to the rest of Europe.

In addition to that, the warm hospitality of the people of Glasgow, including the spectators, volunteers and staff, will show some of the best that our country has to offer. Running alongside the 11 days of sport between 2 August and 12 August will be a festival that will showcase the best of Scottish and Glaswegian culture. As we have heard from Sandra White, the merchant city festival will be part of the celebrations for the duration of the championships.

The debate was opened by the minister, who reminded us of the transformative legacy effect of the Commonwealth games and how the European championships will be an exciting addition to the sporting calendar. She also pointed out the staggering figure that 1 billion viewers across the world will watch this event.

Brian Whittle made a very good speech. As someone who was an athletics champion in the 1986 Commonwealth games, he made a very powerful speech about how we Scots love our sport. He made the very good points that we have to express concern about the health of Scots and that there is an obvious link between positive physical and mental health and physical activity. As he said, legacy does not just happen.

Anas Sarwar also made a very good speech. He talked about the lasting legacy of the Commonwealth games and mentioned the wider point that it is a vehicle of social policy. He also mentioned the important role of trade links and looking at the long-term effect on sport participation and poverty alleviation.

Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch)

(SNP): As a fellow Highland MSP, does David Stewart have any comments on how we ensure that all geographical parts of Scotland enjoy part of that legacy?

David Stewart: That is a very good point. In fact, one speaker made the point that it is important to encourage those who live in island communities, particularly those in school, to participate in the games.

Annie Wells made the point that more than 10,000 people have offered to become volunteers, which could reignite their love for sport. We have lessons to learn from past events. As she said, one of the worries is that one third of adults in Scotland do not meet the guidelines for physical activity.

Claire Baker said that although Glasgow is the centre, this event is not limited purely to Glasgow. She remembered the Clyde-siders—volunteers at the Commonwealth games who made a magnificent contribution. She also made the important point that the visitor impact study showed that the 700,000 visitors who came to the 2014 games made an economic contribution of £228 million.

Maurice Corry made an important point about looking forward to the memorable moments of the championship. He also said that a fifth of those who have applied to be volunteers come from Glasgow, and I agreed with his point that it is very encouraging that so many young people are interested in volunteering.

I agree with Alison Johnstone that we need to build up a cultural legacy and have strong international links with Berlin and Germany, and that although sport, unfortunately, is not yet for everyone, we need to have this active legacy.

I was very impressed with Tavish Scott's contribution. In a short speech that was wide ranging, he managed to mention North and South Korea, Andy Murray's hip operation and the islands travel fund, so he gets the award for packing the most material into four minutes that I am aware of.

Finally, Sandra White mentioned the 50 per cent discount for young people, which is very valid.

I apologise to those whom I have not had the time to mention. The key issue today is about securing and further promoting the legacy of the

Commonwealth games. This is a chance to celebrate Scottish culture and promote Scotland as well as to create a lasting legacy to fight poverty and inequality.

16:46

Rachael Hamilton (Etrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): It has been like a Glasgow love-in this afternoon.

As I am sure many of you know, before I entered Parliament I was a volunteer netball coach and umpire, although that was not my day job. Coaching netball showed me the direct and positive influence that sport has on children, and particularly on young girls. Young people must be at the heart of our conversation.

I was pleased to hear that the minister met people who play walking netball this morning. Brian Whittle stated that there has been an uptake in Netball Scotland membership, which is fantastic, but I must point out that such sports are not accessible to everyone. I will talk about legacy a little bit later.

As for the matter of 11 days, seven sports and two host cities, John Mason and Anas Sarwar highlighted that two fine cities—Glasgow and Berlin—have an opportunity to develop closer links in trade, in sport and in culture. I am sure that all of us will support both the athletes and Glasgow and the outer regions that will be involved in the championships.

Miles Briggs is delighted that the swimming will take place at the Tollcross international swimming centre, that the synchronised swimming will take place at the Scotstoun sports campus and that the diving will take place at the Royal Commonwealth pool in Edinburgh. He has already booked his tickets—lucky boy.

The cycling will bring the four Olympic disciplines of track, road, mountain bike and BMX together for the first time, and the competitions will be staged at Glasgow's Chris Hoy velodrome. I am sure that Clare Haughey is right when she says that that will have a lasting effect, but I question whether it will benefit everyone from all walks of life.

I was astounded to hear from the minister that the championships will have a television audience of more than 1 billion. We know that Scottish tourism is worth more than £11 billion to the economy. Maurice Corry set the scene with stunning settings such as Loch Lomond, which is set against the impressive backdrop of Ben Lomond. The event will see many more visitors come to Scotland. Our Scottish businesses and tourism will be on display, and people will enjoy

the immense, breathtaking scenery that we can offer.

This is, therefore, a time to offer help to the sectors that are connected to the games and to make sure that they get the most out of it. A collective effort to get the most from the games will help Scotland in the long run and will result in lots more visitors and international travellers. VisitScotland's contribution will be a key part of the success.

Claire Baker highlighted the visitor impact study for the 2014 Commonwealth games, which showed the boost that the games gave to the tourism economy. Let us hope that the same will be true of the European championships. We look forward to welcoming first-time visitors to Scotland, too.

Moving on to legacy, it seems that the success or failure of the games will be determined in three ways. First, it will be seen in how well our athletes do. I am sure that we will perform tremendously and that we wish all our athletes the very best. Secondly, it will be seen in how well the host city welcomes people from the competing nations. Glaswegians will warmly welcome more than 3,000 inspiring elite athletes from 52 countries. The third aspect is the legacy of the games, which most members have talked about today. Some have agreed and some have disagreed about the legacy of the championships, but the work is now done and we need to harness the fervour of the games to promote sport and active lifestyles.

Bob Doris agrees that there are concerns about legacy and wants to ask deeper questions about how we will deliver that legacy, such as "Who is taking up sport?" and "How can we get the inactive to become active?"

Brian Whittle mentioned that the Health and Sport Committee recently reported that there is no evidence of an active legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth games, although the SNP reminded us over Christmas of the slight increase in weightlifting among Scots. Perhaps that increase is a good thing, because heavy work will be required to ensure that Glasgow 2018 has a lasting legacy.

Alison Johnstone said that sport is not for everyone, but we have every reason to build increased participation and accessibility. As she mentioned, family incomes may be a barrier—the costs can be prohibitive.

Anas Sarwar made the excellent point that we should ensure that there is a long-term effect on employment, on poverty alleviation and on getting more people from working-class backgrounds to participate in active sport. There is also the serious point that a long-lasting legacy of active

health would help Scotland's physical and mental health.

Brian Whittle reminded us that Scotland has one of the worst obesity records among OECD countries, with two thirds of adults in Scotland being overweight, including 29 per cent who are obese. Worryingly, 29 per cent of Scottish children are at risk of being overweight, including being obese.

Sandra White told us that, in the year of young people, young people are able to access free or discounted tickets, which is fantastic. Miles Briggs hopes that complimentary tickets will be given to Scottish schools.

Aileen Campbell: In the year of young people, will the member consider joining our calls for the UK Government to act on the watershed issue around the advertising of high-fat, high-sugar and high-salt foods on television?

Rachael Hamilton: I have not had a conversation with my colleagues in the UK Government about that, but I would be willing to do so along with my colleague Brian Whittle.

The Scottish Conservatives believe that a lasting legacy is essential to encourage Scotland to become healthier. That would allow us all to lead not only longer but healthier lives. I am sure that we all share the ambition to get the whole of Scotland active, and a strong legacy would help us to get there.

Annie Wells hopes to see further community engagement and involvement at grassroots level but acknowledges the great interest in volunteering that has been shown by hundreds of local people across Glasgow.

In a very good speech, Tavish Scott spoke about the important issues of national lottery funding and the impact of dropping lottery ticket sales on the funding that is available for sportscotland. That proves that we value national lottery funding and it highlights our reliance on the national lottery's contributions. It is a cross-party issue, and I pledge my support for working out how we can encourage more national lottery ticket sales.

I congratulate Glasgow on securing the bid and wish everyone the best of luck for a successful event.

16:53

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): I thank members for their speeches. Clearly, there is a lot of support across the chamber for the Glasgow 2018 European championships and Scotland's thriving events industry.

As the minister said in her opening remarks, we do not share the Conservatives' negative views on the legacy of the Commonwealth games so will not support their amendment.

We know from the analysis of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games—which were the best ever Commonwealth games—that the economic, social, sporting and cultural benefits of the games can be felt right across Scotland. Indeed, we know that the Commonwealth Games Federation's co-ordinating commission formally congratulated those who were involved in planning and delivering that legacy, calling it a blueprint for future games.

During the debate, a lot of reference has been made to the importance of the impact through what we can do in communities. It is important to emphasise that community sport hubs are part of sportscotland's legacy commitment from the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games and provide a fantastic opportunity to build on that success. Clare Haughey talked about her visits to the hubs. There are now 181 hubs up and running, and the Scottish Government, through sportscotland, is investing £500,000 to support the delivery of a sporting legacy for communities right across Scotland. There will be 200 hubs up and running by 2020.

Brian Whittle: Far from being negative about the legacy of the Commonwealth games, I was hoping to get across the point that, as I said in my speech, it is very difficult to have a positive physical legacy. I agree with Bob Doris that the legacy in the city centres has been fantastic, but how will the Scottish Government take that out into the communities?

Fiona Hyslop: That is exactly the point that I want to make. Bob Doris was very clear about the importance of local community role models and their credibility, and that is what the community sports hubs that have been established as part of the legacy of the Commonwealth games have been focusing on. As I said, there are more community sports hubs to come—there will be 200 by 2020—and their main focus will be on the Go live! Get active! programme, which supports the community sports hubs in establishing new sport and physical activity sessions. They will target those people in the community who are most inactive and will use sport or physical activity to improve health, wellbeing and social cohesion in the local area. Those points were made by James Kelly, John Mason and Bob Doris.

Alison Johnstone made the important point that we need to talk about physical activity generally. Play activity and outdoor play are also important, and walking is the easiest and cheapest of physical activities.

We support the Labour Party's amendment. I pay tribute to the bid team and previous Glasgow City Council administrations for securing the Commonwealth games and its legacy and for securing the European championships. I also pay tribute to the current Glasgow City Council administration and the delivery team for their enthusiasm in taking forward the delivery of the 2018 European championships.

Points have been made during the debate that reflect the importance of the legacy of events, and we have heard examples of that. Through our national events strategy, "Scotland the Perfect Stage", we are committed to the delivery of a robust events impact methodology that balances economic outcomes and impacts. That was referred to by Claire Baker in relation to the Ryder cup and in welcoming the golf—a new European championship event—to Gleneagles, which is in her region. We will continue to promote the ambition to host major events in Scotland.

With less than seven months to go until the championships begin, the organisation of the event is gathering pace and excitement is building. They are the first combined European championships and they will include seven sports and many of the best athletes in Europe. As well as Berlin, six local authorities in Scotland are involved in the event's delivery, and the championships will be broadcast to more than 1 billion people around the globe. That is very exciting, and I hope that Richard Lyle's enthusiasm for the championships, despite his being a non-Glasgow MSP, is shared by everybody else in the chamber.

Scotland has developed a strong reputation as a world-class host of major events.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, cabinet secretary. The noise level is getting a bit high, so I ask members to keep it down a bit.

Fiona Hyslop: My voice might also be a bit strained.

From the Ryder cup to the MTV Europe music awards, we have a strong reputation for hosting events, and Glasgow is currently ranked number 5 in the world in the SportBusiness ultimate sports city awards.

There will be a lot happening outside Glasgow, too. With 12 venues in six different local authority areas, our approach to the championships will mean that existing venues and outstanding facilities are built on and developed.

Miles Briggs and Maurice Corry seemed to be unaware of the young person ticketing policy, which is one of our targets as 2018 is the year of young people. However, Sandra White talked about concessions. As a result of the debate, we

will share information with members about the young person ticketing policy so that they can help to promote it. There will be a concession pricing strategy for families, single-parent families and those on low incomes. There will also be group discounts for large groups of young people and free events will be promoted to young people, in particular.

I am particularly interested in the broadcast reach of the championships. The potential television audience will be more than 1 billion people around Europe and beyond, and there will be more than 2,700 hours of programming, which will, as Annie Wells said, promote Scotland as a welcoming destination. As Maurice Corry mentioned, the beauty of Loch Lomond, which will be seen in the open-water swimming competition, will be a great advert for Scotland. The championships will also be a chance to reinforce Scotland's position as a European nation, and we will ensure that the impression that we give is one of welcome.

With Festival 2018, there will be cultural opportunities that we will share with the year of young people, as 19 of the 34 successful bids for the programme will celebrate young people.

The European championships will, once again, put Scotland on the international stage. They will provide opportunities not just for Glasgow but for the whole country to get involved and to continue to enhance our reputation. I hope that members will help to promote the championships, especially if events are taking place in their constituency. Please book tickets early and take the time between 2 and 12 August to go and support our athletes. I ask people to create an even louder supportive wall of noise than Brian Whittle experienced, to support our athletes and to support this exciting new sporting event, which is a first for Scotland and for Europe. I support the motion.

Business Motions

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of two business motions: motion S5M-09812, setting out a business programme, and motion S5M-09813, on a stage 2 timetable.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 16 January 2018

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Stage 1: Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's International Policy Framework and Priorities for 2018

followed by Financial Resolution: Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 17 January 2018

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
Education and Skills

followed by Scottish Labour Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 18 January 2018

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 Debate: Building a Connected Scotland: Tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness Together

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 23 January 2018

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 24 January 2018

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
Health and Sport

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 25 January 2018

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

and (b) that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on 18 January 2018, in rule 13.6.2, insert at end "and may provide an opportunity for Party Leaders or their representatives to question the First Minister".

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Social Security (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 9 March 2018.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

Motions agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of two Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S5M-09814, on designation of a lead committee, and motion S5M-09835, on committee membership.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Finance and Constitution Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the legislative consent memorandum in relation to the Trade Bill (UK Legislation).

That the Parliament agrees that Iain Gray be appointed to replace Monica Lennon as a member of the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

Decision Time

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The first question is, that amendment S5M-09789.2, in the name of Brian Whittle, which seeks to amend motion S5M-09789, in the name of Aileen Campbell, on the Glasgow 2018 European championships, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

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

Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 32, Against 80, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-09789.1, in the name of Anas Sarwar, which seeks to amend the motion in the name of Aileen Campbell, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-09789, in the name of Aileen Campbell, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament recognises the important contribution that hosting world-class events makes to Scotland's international profile; welcomes the opportunity that the new flagship sporting event, the Glasgow 2018 European Championships, brings to Glasgow and Scotland in August; supports the aim that the championships will drive the ambition for Scotland to become an active nation by helping to inspire people to lead more active lifestyles; acknowledges that the championships will showcase all that Scotland has to offer and build on the legacy of the "best ever" Commonwealth Games in 2014; values the opportunity that the championships offer to engage with young people in Scotland's Year of Young People; recognises that the championships will facilitate the development of strong relationships across Europe, including creating a unique partnership with Berlin and Germany; congratulates the bid teams and successive Glasgow City Council administrations on their roles in securing both these championships and the Commonwealth Games in 2014, and believes that there should be medium to long-term analysis on the legacy impact of these events on poverty reduction, economic growth and new employment.

The Presiding Officer: The penultimate question is, that motion S5M-09814, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Finance and Constitution Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the legislative consent memorandum in relation to the Trade Bill (UK Legislation).

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-09835, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on committee membership, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that Iain Gray be appointed to replace Monica Lennon as a member of the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2018

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-09828, in the name of Adam Tomkins, on Holocaust memorial day 2018. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament recognises that 27 January 2018 marks Holocaust Memorial Day; believes that the day serves as an opportunity for learning institutions, faith groups and communities across Scotland, including in Glasgow, to remember the six million men, women and children murdered by the Nazi regime in occupied Europe; notes that the theme of the 2018 memorial day is the Power of Words; understands that this theme aims to look at how words can make a difference, both for good and evil; values the Holocaust Education Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project, which gives two post-16 students from every school and college in Scotland the opportunity to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau; celebrates the Holocaust survivors who subsequently made Scotland their home; thanks them for their contribution to Scotland as a nation, and acknowledges the view that anti-Semitism in all its forms should be challenged without fear or favour.

17:04

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con): The Holocaust was a new order of criminality, the like of which the world had never previously witnessed. In the very heart of Europe, it was Government policy to eradicate the Jewish people—to wipe them from the face of the earth.

The policy failed, but not before 6 million men, women and children were murdered by the Nazis. That is more than the entire population of Scotland. That did not happen a long, long way away; it happened here in Europe. It did not happen a long time ago; it happened within living memory.

The Holocaust is an exceptionally difficult thing to talk about, and that is precisely why we must. As this evening's motion notes, the theme of this year's Holocaust memorial day is the power of words—the power of words to do both ill and good. We all know that the children's nursery rhyme

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me”

is untrue. Words can wound. They can damage relationships, destroy reputations and darken any conversation, but words can also enlighten, inform, educate and inspire.

That is just as well, because here in this chamber words are all we have. Words are our tools. We use them to make law, to question ministers, to engage in debate. The very word “parliament” comes from the old French “parler”—

to speak. Without words, there would be nothing to say, and we would all be out of a job.

The power to speak—the freedom to use words—was just one of the many attributes of human life stripped from those sent to the death camps. Those who were sent there lost their possessions, their loved ones, their family members, their clothes, their shoes, even their hair. They were deformed by starvation. They were enslaved in hard labour. They were tattooed with a number. They lost their names, their identities. They were stripped naked in the snow and ice with nothing but their own arms to warm them, alone in huge numbers. This was mass, systematic, organised murder on an unprecedented scale. At Auschwitz in August 1944, 24,000 people were murdered in a single day, and those people were not prisoners of war. The war had nothing to do with it. They were just people that a Government wanted to annihilate because that Government hated Jews.

That that happened and how it was allowed to happen are stories that we must tell and keep telling. Somehow we must find the words. The Nazis used words to mask the truth. They spoke of the “final solution” instead of extermination, of “transfer” instead of deportation, and of “special treatment” instead of death in the gas chambers. We must use words not to mask the truth but to reveal it.

A key way in which that has been done is the collection and curation of eye-witness accounts—of Holocaust testimony. It started even during the war itself. Anne Frank, aged 14, was inspired to rewrite her world-famous diary after her family listened to an illegal radio broadcast imploring Dutch citizens to record their experiences of Nazi occupation. Scotland's own Holocaust archives are held in Glasgow's beautiful Garnethill synagogue. Many hundreds of Jewish people made a new life in Scotland after the war. They made, and continue to make, an immense contribution to Scottish society in business, in our public services, in science and medicine, and in our cultural life.

One of the most disturbing truths revealed by those who have sought to find the words to write about the Holocaust is that, even though it was a crime on a monstrous scale, it was perpetrated not by monsters but by ordinary, even banal, men and women, who were organising train travel across Europe not as if they were mobilising a million murders but as if they were simply taking goods to market. It was Hannah Arendt who coined the controversial term “the banality of evil” in her report on Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem. Eichmann was a Nazi lieutenant-colonel in the SS who had played a major role in organising the Holocaust. He was hanged for war crimes in 1962.

At his trial, Eichmann's defence was that he was simply obeying orders, that he was a fully law-abiding citizen doing his job. He was motivated, he said, not by a hatred for the Jewish people but by duty. It was his duty to do his job. It seemed immaterial to him that his job entailed the management of genocide. It was just a job. Eichmann was far from alone in collapsing morality into legality—in living his life such that, as long as he obeyed the law, he could, by definition, be doing no harm. However, the cold, calculating callousness of that is both breathtaking and horrific.

The world reacted. At the beginning of my remarks, I said that the Holocaust was a new order of criminality. The world's reaction was no less than to create a new international order. One of its centrepieces was, and still is, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose 70th anniversary we will celebrate this year. That declaration is just words. They are not law—not in any conventional sense—and there is no court to enforce them. There is no judicial sanction in the event that its words are not honoured. It is a declaration: it is just words. However, they are words that make impossible not merely Eichmann's technical defence in his trial in Jerusalem but his very world view.

Among the opening words of the declaration are:

"the ... dignity and ... inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

The foundation of justice is not law, as Eichmann thought; the foundation of justice is the inherent dignity of every member of the human family, and it is beyond the reach of mere law to change, alter or affect that foundation, because the rights that flow from it are inalienable.

Those are beautiful words. If we cleave to them, hold them in our hearts and act true to them in everything that we do, I will be able to look my Jewish children in the eye and all of us will be able to look our and each other's children in the eye and say to them not merely in hope but in certainty, "Never again."

This debate will not be contentious, but it is an important one. By ensuring that the Holocaust is never forgotten, we can ensure that it is never repeated.

I thank all members of the Scottish Parliament who have supported my motion, and I look forward to hearing the thoughts of members from across the chamber as we remember together and reflect on the unique horror of the Holocaust. *[Applause.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am not permitted to clap, but that was a very moving and excellent speech.

17:12

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I warmly congratulate Adam Tomkins on securing the time to bring this important debate to the chamber and on his excellent speech.

It is a privilege to contribute in some small way to the continued remembrance of those who perished at the hands of the Nazis in ghettos, mass shootings, and concentration and extermination camps. The timing of this year's debate is particularly apt. Having said goodbye to 2017, which saw a prominent resurgence of far-right extremism, most starkly demonstrated by the Charlottesville rallies in August, 2018 presents an opportunity for everyone across society to take ownership of their actions and, indeed, their words, as this year's theme suggests. As we well know, of course, left-wing and religious extremism also have a strong history of anti-Semitism. European history clearly shows that.

The power of our words is boundless, and we can choose to use that power to do something positive, such as sharing the life stories of those who were murdered or, indeed, those who resisted, witnessed and survived genocide. We can use our words to remember, challenge and evoke change.

One shining example of someone who used the power of words was Dr Alfred Wiener, who was born in Germany in 1885. He was an expert in oriental languages and Jewish religious thought, and he became one of the top officials in the Centralverein, which was an organisation that aimed to combat anti-Semitism following world war one. Dr Wiener's mission was to warn Jews and non-Jews alike of the dangers of Nazism. In 1933, he established the Jewish Central Information Office in Amsterdam. His collection of Nazi and anti-Nazi books and documentary material quickly grew to 8,000 books and leaflets before it was moved to London in 1940 and renamed the Wiener library.

Dr Wiener's wife and three daughters survived the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, which was responsible for the deaths of approximately 70,000 people, including Margot and Anne Frank. Sadly, although the Wiener daughters escaped safely to America, his wife eventually succumbed to malnutrition and exhaustion, which claimed many innocent lives not just during the war but in the years afterwards. By Dr Wiener's death in 1964, his library was well established as a record for scholars, researchers, the media and the public. Today, the Wiener library continues to be home to the words that serve as a living memorial of the evil that took hold across much of Europe. Those words are a constant call on us all to ensure that such atrocities are never repeated.

What about now? What about the language that we use with each other and the words that we share, spread and endorse in our day-to-day lives and use on our social media profiles? Over the past year, Jewish Human Rights Watch and the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities have highlighted growing levels of hate speech, anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial across Facebook and Twitter here in Scotland, right now. Those platforms are used by a small minority to share fabricated global Jewish conspiracy theories and classic anti-Semitic tropes, which cumulatively represent an attack on Jewish faith and culture within our society.

Last September, the Institute for Jewish Policy Research found that more than a quarter of people living in the United Kingdom held anti-Semitic attitudes, with 30 per cent of the 5,466 people studied agreeing with the statements

“Jews think they are better than other people”

and

“Jews exploit holocaust victimhood for their own purposes.”

We are now more careful than ever about the language that we use to refer to our peers, and many of us would be quick to challenge a friend if they were to share homophobic, racist, sexist or Islamophobic slurs online, so why do we let anti-Semitism slip under the radar? In 2018, I hope that we can all make more effort to monitor the language that is used to discredit and to disparage the Jewish faith and Jewish people.

Holocaust memorial day is not just an opportunity to remember and mourn what has passed but a time when we should seek to learn lessons and to prevent discrimination, racism and hatred from taking hold once more.

Dr Wiener recognised the power of words when he opened his library in 1933, and we are recognising that here in the chamber today. We have never had anti-Semitic legislation in Scotland, but that does not mean that we are exempt from playing our part in the global fight to end religious prejudice and persecution. Denial of the Holocaust is often a seed from which harmful and insidious attitudes grow. Holocaust memorial day is not only an appropriate occasion to commemorate the horrors of our past but an opportunity to discuss the action that we can take to prevent atrocities in the future.

17:17

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): In each of the 10 years that I have been a member of this Parliament, it has been my privilege to contribute to the Holocaust memorial day debate. I have heard many excellent speeches—none more so

than the opening contribution from my colleague, Adam Tomkins, which was profound.

I represent Eastwood—I previously represented the West of Scotland—and three quarters of Scotland’s surviving Jewish population live in that community. Throughout my life, those people have been my friends, my neighbours and my colleagues.

In 2017, I was the member who moved the motion on the Holocaust memorial day debate. I talked about the nefarious tapestry of death that the various camps created across the continent of Europe during world war two, which appeared independent of one another and not through a planned process. It was only after the war that many people came to understand how comprehensive that network was, and the different traditions that had led to the camps’ establishment.

Holocaust memorial day takes place at the end of January, on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. We should remember that Auschwitz survives for us to visit today—and for the Holocaust Education Trust to send parties of schoolchildren to see—only because the German Reich’s collapse was so comprehensive and its speed so quick that it was unable to destroy the evidence of Auschwitz’s existence as it so efficiently managed to destroy the evidence of many other camps.

The Deputy First Minister will have business elsewhere tonight: I am aware that he visited Auschwitz before Christmas for the first time. Anyone who has been there cannot have failed to have been profoundly moved—it is particularly true at this time of year when it is so bitterly cold—by the realisation of the reality that Auschwitz represented, and its closeness to the main roads through the immediate neighbourhood and the town that sits alongside it. That realisation confounds any expectation or hope that one might have that the camp existed in isolation—somewhere away from a population centre and away from people who must have understood what was going on.

I remember that when I was on a private visit to Auschwitz, the guide whom we had contracted to show us around was deeply ashamed of his family because, when he had questioned his grandparents about the existence of Auschwitz on their doorstep, they could not convincingly argue that they had not known what was going on, or that they had not, in their own silent and gruesome way, realised their own complicity in all that.

This year’s theme is the power of words, and Adam Tomkins talked about some of the profound voices in history that allowed the Holocaust to happen. I would like to talk about the very simple

voices of some of my constituents. At last year's Edinburgh festival, which was the 70th anniversary of the event, its establishment by a Scottish Jew, Rudolf Bing, was commemorated, and many of my constituents came through to Edinburgh for the unveiling of a plaque.

I thought that I had met many, if not all, of the neighbours and friends in my constituency who are survivors of the Holocaust, but I sat next to a lady who suddenly talked to me about her experience. I asked her whether she often came to the festival, and she said that she had come to it every year with her family every time she could. She said that she was able to come that year only because a special bus had brought her through—she would not otherwise have been fit and able enough to come.

She told me that she had escaped from Germany. Her father had thought that things were getting very difficult, so the family moved to Poland to escape the Third Reich. He then became increasingly concerned that matters might deteriorate further and he left the family to go to London. It took him more than a year and three applications to the Home Office—some things never change—before it agreed that his family could join him. She told me that they left on the day on which Germany invaded Poland on the outbreak of war, and that he had tried to persuade the rest of his family to apply to come to Britain, but they had said that he was exaggerating and that there was no need. She and her immediate family made the journey across Europe in a sealed train. Only they survived—the whole of the rest of the family was obliterated.

I have said in debates on assisted suicide that we have a right to life, but not a duty to live. A great many of my Jewish constituents take completely the opposite view—they believe that because they survived, they have a duty to live. They determined to make a full contribution to the life of Scotland in the years following the Holocaust, and to live life to the full. They are modest and quiet in their recollections, but the memory of the Holocaust hangs like a cloud over everything that they do. In the spring, on the anniversary of Yom HaShoah, those families will list on screens in the constituency all the family members who were lost.

A favourite memory of mine from the past year is of the time when Ross Greer came along to Yom HaShoah and sat beside the sweetest lady, who tells people that she is a Holocaust survivor in the same way that she might say that she used to dance with Scottish Ballet. She always says it with an enormous smile on her face, to the extent that people have to think, "What did she just say to me?" I do not know what she would have thought of Ross Greer's broader views on Israel, but they

had the most fabulous conversation about what Yom HaShoah exists to commemorate. It is those lighter voices of the survivors who determined that they would live life to the full—the constituents of mine who have done exactly that—that I want to celebrate and remember today.

17:22

Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to make a brief contribution to what I think is an extremely important debate. I congratulate Adam Tomkins not only on securing it, but on the power of the speech that he made. We recognise that there is significant cross-party support on the issue, and I hope that that means that we will do more than simply agree with one another. We must recognise the power of that cross-party support and make sure that it counts in the commitment that we show on the issue.

I congratulate everyone who is involved in the work that is done for Holocaust memorial day. Although it might take place on one day, it does not come about through the work of people on just one day: a massive amount of work goes into making it successful. That work rightly forces us to confront the truth and reality of the Holocaust. I congratulate the Holocaust Educational Trust for ensuring that successive generations of young people learn about what happened in the Holocaust.

It is important to mark the Holocaust itself and what it meant for individuals, families and communities, and to understand fully what anti-Semitism led to in Europe at the time. We cannot overstate the power of the testimony and courage of the survivors who have relived the horrors of their experience so that we all might learn.

As a young woman, I had the privilege of knowing a woman called Susan Singerman, who came from Hungary and was active in our local Labour Party. Like all young people, I had a lack of proper respect for older people. I knew that she had been in Auschwitz, but she never spoke about it until her old age. In talking, with great dignity, about the horrors that the Holocaust had brought for her and her family, she left to following generations the legacy of being able to understand properly what it meant at an individual level. She was known as the duchess of Auschwitz, because throughout her time there she carried herself with dignity and refused to be broken.

Such testimony is important, because genocide in all its forms can overwhelm us. It can feel as if it is beyond us, because it reveals people's capacity to step away from their own humanity and to engage in systematic cruelty, violence, torture and murder, often of people who live in the same communities as them. Sometimes, when we think

of genocide, we feel that it is beyond our comprehension and beyond being tackled. However, comprehend it and tackle it we must. Genocide can happen here—it can happen anywhere.

It is significant that this year's theme for Holocaust memorial day is the power of words. Genocide does not start with monsters or begin with the outrageous, and it does not appear as a fully formed assault on others. Instead, it creeps towards us step by step. The Jewish communities across Europe did not suddenly wake up and discover that they were under attack. What happened began with cruel words, with grievances, with their being separated, with talk about "the other" and about differences, and with people being described in the cruellest terms. Genocide is a long journey: it is a journey that we, in our modern society, have the power to break.

I am privileged to be a member of Remembering Srebrenica Scotland—I declare an interest as a board member of that organisation. In 2016, I was invited to visit Bosnia, and later that year I went on holiday to Krakow and visited Auschwitz. I will never get over what I learned on both visits not only about the capacity to be cruel—and to be systematic in that cruelty and in turning against others—but about the power of humanity to overcome that cruelty. The survivors of the Holocaust join survivors of what happened in Bosnia to demand justice for people who have experienced genocide.

There are important parallels just now across our communities. To be opportunistic, I will tell members about the event that we are hosting next week in Parliament with Jasmin Mujanović, who is an intellectual and academic who understands Bosnia but who has also been working on the parallels that are now developing in our society. What happened in Bosnia when we said that we did not understand it? What happened in the Holocaust when we thought that it was all too complicated for us? He talks about the way in which democratic institutions are being degraded, even as we speak, and the importance of confronting that.

We need to be vigilant, and we must recognise the significance of the Holocaust for the Jewish people and the need for us all to confront the issue. In our own debates, however, we too often take to ourselves all that is virtue and attribute to everyone else all that is without virtue. We owe it to those who speak out for a fairer and equal society in which no one is demeaned or demonised to think in the debates that we have every day about the things that bring us together instead of the things that divide us. Of course, there is division and debate, but in marking the

occasion today, we should recognise the power of words to heal as well as to divide.

I congratulate all those who are involved in ensuring that the memory of the Holocaust is not forgotten.

17:28

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I, too, thank Adam Tomkins for bringing this debate to the chamber and for mentioning in his opening speech this year's theme of the power of words. Each year, as we debate Holocaust memorial day, we no doubt all struggle to find the right words—words that are up to the challenge of describing events for which the early 1940s will no doubt be remembered in European and global history long after we have gone. I am thinking of terms such as "atrocious", "genocide", "crime against humanity" and "Holocaust"—are any of them up to it?

I agree with Adam Tomkins that this is likely to be a consensual debate. He says that by never forgetting we can ensure that we never repeat such atrocities, but I think that we need to go further. Remembering is important and necessary, but it is not sufficient. Words are powerful, but sadly the human story since the 1940s includes our collective failure to use that power to prevent other atrocities, other genocides and other crimes against humanity.

The words that we use to remember the past matter, but if we want to prevent such things from happening again we need to talk about the words that we use to define the present and to shape the future. On that front, we are allowing the forces of hatred to regroup. When those forces act, it is the power that their words have gained in a culture that can make the difference between individual acts of hate crime and the wave of violence that can carry a whole society with it.

As Johann Lamont referred to, for years before the industrial-scale mass murder of the Nazi regime, both word and image were used to dehumanise Jewish people, queer people, intellectuals, disabled people, the left and any other target that the regime had in mind. That is what created the conditions in which a whole society could permit atrocity. In just the same way, for many years, the British empire used the same kind of dehumanising words and ideas about racial, religious and national groups in order to make atrocities possible. Those included the prototypes of concentration camps and forced-labour camps, which the empire used to massacre tens of thousands, decades before the second world war, and its later acts of mass murder, such as those against the Kikuyu people in the 1950s, to give just one example.

Today, we can see that same attempt to use the power of words to dehumanise groups of people who are the chosen targets of today's far right—whether that is though anti-Semitism or any other form of hatred or prejudice. That happens not just on the Facebook pages and Twitter profiles of far-right activists, but in the pages of so many national newspapers and on the broadcast airwaves, too. Muslims, immigrants, refugees and trans people are often the groups at the sharpest end of such abuse of the power of words today.

We should see through the thin veneer of free speech concern that is used to cover the indignation of those who today howl outrage that a train company will not be distributing a daily dose of racism to its passengers or who rail against a students union for its choice not to invite racist or transphobic speakers, while they simultaneously denounce MPs or judges as traitors and enemies of the people, or demand that universities hand over lists of academics who have the nerve to speak the truth about the impact of leaving the European Union.

We should hold in contempt those who promote vicious and hateful rhetoric about disabled people, working-class people, women or any other groups under the absurd cover of being a contrarian in an attempt to portray their efforts to dehumanise others as some kind of public service.

With far-right parties being in the ascendancy in many European countries, an apologist for white supremacy holding the office of US President and a global culture so threatened both by self-serving far-right media owners and by modern state propagandists seeking to undermine democracy and human rights, the task of facing down the misuse of the power of words is immense. It begins with a commitment to assert—again and again, relentlessly—the equal human worth of people regardless of ability or disability, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, social class, religious belief or the lack of it, immigration status or any of the other arbitrary characteristics that forces of hatred will latch on to.

Every one of us, in whatever positions of influence politicians and political parties might hold, must commit to assert the values of human solidarity—and to do more than assert them, but also live by them in the laws that we pass, the policies that we promote and the candidates that we select as our potential colleagues, and not only in the words that we use.

17:24

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): I thank Adam Tomkins MSP for organising this debate, which is of extreme importance, on

national Holocaust memorial day, which takes place later this month.

The memorial day serves as another poignant reminder of the horrific actions and human rights violations that took place during the second world war. The reality of the Holocaust is inescapable. Between 1933 and 1945, when the Nazis were in power, 6 million Jewish people were slaughtered at the hands of hatred and intolerance. Adolf Hitler and the Nazis displaced countless families into Jewish ghettos and separated loved ones in concentration and extermination camps throughout eastern Europe. As we know, entering those camps was a death sentence. Their inhabitants were welcomed with inhumane living conditions and with poisonous gas and fire. If they were not murdered on arrival, those in the concentration camps were worked day and night. Starvation and exhaustion permeated the camps and fear infiltrated Europe.

There are countless individual stories of those who suffered during the Holocaust. Each story tells a tale of hardship and loss and details the personal horrors experienced throughout world war two. One such story always come to mind when I think of the Holocaust and has already been mentioned several times in the debate: it is the well-known story of Anne Frank. My mother-in-law was Dutch and was in Eindhoven in Holland during the war. When we went to visit family in Eindhoven, she encouraged my wife and me to visit Amsterdam and go to Anne Frank's house. Many know of Anne Frank because of the publication of the personal diary that she kept during the German occupation of the Netherlands.

When she was 12, Anne and her family were forced into hiding and spent their days living in small rooms whose entrance was concealed by a bookcase. Between 1942 and 1944, the Franks were trapped and unable to see the world beyond the confines of the bookcase, and they lived in fear of capture and certain death. Unfortunately, after two years of hiding, Anne and her family were discovered and shipped off to concentration camps. Anne and her sister were transferred to Bergen-Belsen, where Anne soon died of typhus. She was 15. Like 6 million others, her religion cost her life.

Today, it is important for us to remember stories such as Anne's. She was a young woman who had her childhood and then her life stripped away from her by hate. It is necessary that we continue discussing what happened during world war two to remind us all of the importance of equality. No person should ever be discriminated against because of their religion. Such discrimination is an insult to the memory of all the 6 million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust.

As we know, and as Adam Tomkins has stated, the theme of Holocaust memorial day 2018 is the power of words. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust states on its website:

“Words can make a difference—both for good and evil.”

As parliamentarians, it is imperative that we use our platforms to spew words of fairness, freedom and equality. Everyone should be free to express themselves through whatever religion they choose and no one should feel as though their religion makes them less than equal. My mother-in-law was Catholic and my father-in-law was a Lithuanian Catholic. I am Church of Scotland and I have taught my children and my grandchildren to judge an individual not for what they are but for who they are. Religion, race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation do not define the quality of a person; their actions and words do. It is time for everyone in this Parliament to start preaching equality for everyone, regardless of their religion, creed or ethnicity.

Again, I thank Adam Tomkins for bringing this debate to the chamber. I hope that, in continuing to remember our mistakes, we can ensure a more positive and tolerant future for all.

17:39

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): I start by thanking my colleague Adam Tomkins for bringing forward this important debate. It is right that the Parliament recognises Holocaust memorial day, for it is one of the most significant days of remembrance of modern European history.

I would like to reflect on that word “history”. History is something that we associate with the past. In my day, it was taught in two forms. The first was ancient history, including that of the Jews, the history of the Romans, the history of the Egyptians and, to an extent, even Robert the Bruce. Then we had modern history, and I was taught about Malcolm X, apartheid, JFK and the cold war. The second world war, however, fell somewhere in between, in the gap. These days, we learn more about world war two on the Discovery Channel or in Hollywood movies.

We teach our children about the second world war and the ensuing Holocaust as history; as a distant period in the past. Let us not forget that the events took place less than 80 years ago. There remain among us those who drew breath in 1940, whose boots laid prints on the battlefields of Europe and who still bear the scars and memories of the horrors of that war.

Last night, I watched a television programme about the Yemen. The horrific images of bloodied children and air strikes on hospitals and homes

were difficult for the eyes to see. I thought for a second what it would be like if those images were in black and white, as we so often see the second world war portrayed. Perhaps I would then have been protected from the horrors of a modern-day war in colour. However, what would the Holocaust look like in full, high-definition 4K colour, being played out on our mobile phones and on social media, if it were happening today?

My point is that the genocide of 6 million Jews took place within living memory and barely a stone’s throw away from where we are, but it still somehow feels like something so distant from the modern day. Holocaust memorial day addresses that very issue. It stands as a stark reminder of what happens when society lets hatred and division grow like a cancerous political ideology. It was something that seemed almost acceptable to the common man in its early incarnation, but which grew as fascist hatred and racial and ethnic dominance. It grew into an ugly and hateful act of crime against humanity—all of humanity: gay people, disabled people, Jewish people, Romany people, Slavs, Poles, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Catholics, Freemasons, communists and even speakers of Esperanto.

To get a sense of the horror, as my colleague Jackson Carlaw said, people can go and visit Auschwitz, or go to Berlin and walk across from the Brandenburg gate to the memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. It is important that we understand the magnitude of what happened as the result of that culture of fear. Alternatively, people can go, as I did last year, to visit Yad Vashem in Israel. There is neither time this evening nor even words in my head to describe that experience. My hairs stood on end, my legs wobbled and my emotions were overcome as I saw the images and movies of what happened—the voices of the victims, the names of the lost, the artefacts of the robbed, the faces of the dead, the pain of the survivors and the illusions of the propaganda.

Let us ask ourselves why debates such as Mr Tomkins’s debate are still important today. Should we not be looking forward to a positive, bright future and not looking retrospectively to the dark days and deeds of the past? The truth is that we are still faced with the blight of anti-Semitism in the UK today. In July, we learned that anti-Semitic hate offences in Scotland had reached their worst levels on record, and across the UK official police figures marked the third consecutive year in which anti-Semitic incidents were on the rise.

It would be easy for me to stand here and say, “Isn’t this terrible? We must do more. They must do more.” However, as politicians and, by default, as members of political parties, we too have a duty to address anti-Semitism, just as we call out anti-

Islamic rhetoric and anti-Christian, anti-Hindu or any other forms of religious or racial hatred. Free speech is one the wonders and marvels of our modern democratic society, but in my view Holocaust denial should never be up for debate.

The Holocaust will soon no longer be part of primary history or living memory. There will soon be no survivors to tell their stories. As such, it is more important than ever that we educate our children about what happened and, more important, why. The scourge of anti-Semitism is ever dangerous, ever real and ever so apparent. We should never forget that so many died to protect the freedom that we have to protest, demonstrate and disagree in political discourse, but modern-day anti-Semitism should not hide behind thinly veiled campaigns. It cannot and should not jump on the bandwagons of commercial sabotage or the boycott of cultural events or come under the guise of political freedom fighting.

I conclude by making a plea to us as politicians and to society in general. Never forget how easily and quickly the Holocaust was allowed to happen. May the voices of the past guide the words of today and shape the actions of tomorrow.

17:45

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): I, like others, thank Adam Tomkins for creating the opportunity to have this evening's debate—I have previously participated in similar ones.

It is as well to remember that the Holocaust was not a single event but the aggregation of millions of decisions to execute millions of people who had committed no crime.

The world's legal systems have worked over the decades since 1945 to deliver justice for the missing millions, their families and friends, but that on its own cannot be enough. We cannot undo the injustice done by the Nazis. We cannot restore life and liberty to those from whom such basic rights were removed by the Nazis. We simply cannot reset the world that the Nazis destroyed.

However, we can remember those whom we lost to the Holocaust. I have the tiniest of personal connections with the events. The last sentences passed at the Nuremberg trials were passed on 30 September and 1 October 1946, and those who were found guilty were due to be hanged on 16 October, which was my first full day on this planet. Indeed, Hermann Göring beat the hangman by committing suicide on 15 October, the very day that I emerged from my mother's womb.

We have to use the example of the Holocaust to remind our contemporaries of the injustices that

came from it and to educate new generations about the dangers of demagoguery designed to characterise ethnic or religious difference as somehow less worthy. The theme of Holocaust memorial day 2018, which is the power of words, is a fine choice, because it was words that created the Holocaust—when Adolf Hitler sat in prison writing "Mein Kampf", he wrote the words that would lead to the Holocaust. We can, to some extent, prevent a repetition with our words and the words of others.

Words can lead to action, which can be good or bad. Adam Tomkins reminded us that our business as politicians depends on words, and the meanings that we ascribe to them and the use to which we put them are important. Our most important words might be those that we deploy when we defend those with views with which we disagree and when we defend their right to be different from us. Democracy depends on diversity, and so does society's future.

Those who lost their lives in the Holocaust were not an undifferentiated group. Each was an individual of worth. Each had individual views and potential. Each could disagree with his or her neighbour, as we do with each other in this place.

My personal visits to Auschwitz thus far have been vicarious. The good work of the Holocaust Educational Trust features regularly in the media. The trust was founded in 1988, and its good work in taking school students to the site is highly valued by those who participate in its programme. The most important visit that I have made to Auschwitz was via the television series, "The Ascent of Man", which was written and presented by Jacob Bronowski and broadcast in 1973, a year before he died.

Bronowski was born in 1908 into a Jewish family at Łódź, a couple of hundred kilometres north of Auschwitz. Forty-five years on, the profound effect of seeing him at Auschwitz, walking slowly towards the camera, pausing, leaning down to scoop mud into his hand from a puddle, then looking at the mud and saying in a quiet voice, "This is my family," remains with me and will never leave me. Personal experience speaks directly in a way that our debate today—worthy and necessary as it is—simply cannot match. That is why each generation must relearn the lessons of Nazi bigotry. That is why visits can communicate and embed by experience the message of history in students who are supported by the trust. That is vital, if we believe that this should never, ever happen again—and we do.

17:50

The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan): Like other

members, I thank Adam Tomkins for lodging his motion and for highlighting with some feeling the significance of Holocaust memorial day, which has allowed us to have an important and dignified debate.

International Holocaust memorial day provides an important moment for us all to remember and reflect upon the terrible events of the Holocaust and the 11 million people who were murdered in it, including 6 million Jews. It is important that we remember that, above all else, the Holocaust was a criminal enterprise. Those lives were lost as the result of the systematic denial of the most basic human rights and freedoms to particular groups in society. We must remember the unspeakable persecution by the Nazis of the Jewish community and their concerted and systematic effort to destroy every last Jew in Europe.

We must also remember the persecution and killing of gay people, disabled people and anyone else who was labelled as different or a threat. All of that was underpinned by a profoundly racist ideology that still has the capacity to shock and horrify when we read about it today.

We cannot forget that the horrors of the Holocaust were not the end point of what Burns called “man’s inhumanity to man”. Since then, human rights have been denied and atrocities have taken place in many places such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Cambodia and the Darfur region in Sudan. Although all that has repulsed people around the world and action has been taken, brutal racism and intolerance continue to flourish in too many places to this day.

We must all, therefore, take action to tackle hatred and intolerance as well as promote the positive vision of the society that we all aspire to be.

That is why, every year, we in Scotland have funded a major event to commemorate international Holocaust memorial day. The First Minister will open this year’s event at Glasgow Caledonian University later this month. The Scottish Government works in partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, along with our intermediary partner, Interfaith Scotland, to deliver Scotland’s national Holocaust memorial day event each year. This year, a variety of events are taking place across Scotland, and I hope that members will take the opportunity to participate in them if they can.

It is also why we continue to support the lessons from Auschwitz project, which is an incredibly powerful way for young people to gain some insight into the horrors of the Holocaust and, just as importantly, to learn about why it happened.

I had the honour of accompanying those young people on their visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau in

2012. I compared notes with different people who were on that trip, and we all had different things lodged forever in our minds. For some people it was the piles of shoes and suitcases, the stolen house keys or—almost unspeakably—the piles of human hair. For other people it was walking around that massive site and beginning to realise the sheer scale in numbers of the crime that we were discussing. For many people it was the shocking fact that Auschwitz is in the middle of a town, in plain sight of a whole community.

I am extremely proud that, since 2009, we have enabled more than 3,200 young people from Scotland to visit Auschwitz to find out about what happened there and to share their experiences with friends, classmates and others. That visit to Auschwitz brings home the reality of what happened far more vividly and effectively than any amount of speaking can achieve. I commend the Holocaust Educational Trust on its work to raise awareness and understanding in schools and among the wider public of the Holocaust and its importance today.

Our acts of remembrance forbid us from forgetting. They warn us all never to allow such atrocities to take place again. An active way of ensuring that the seeds of such atrocities are not sown in our lifetimes is to promote equality, tackle discrimination and foster good relations between and within communities. Interfaith dialogue is a vital way to lower the tensions that might exist between communities, to eliminate fear and distrust and to increase understanding and mutual respect, helping to create one Scotland of many cultures in which diversity is recognised as a strength.

The steps that we take for a better tomorrow require commitment today. That is why the Scottish Government supports efforts such as the work of Remembering Srebrenica, and it is why we are committed to doing all that we can to prevent and eradicate hate crime and prejudice and to build community cohesion and promote inclusion.

One area that I particularly want to—and must—emphasise is the approach that I hope that we all take to tackling anti-Semitism. We appreciate the significant contribution that our Jewish communities make to this country, and the Scottish Government continues to support the important work of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities. We know, from our regular engagement with community leaders, that Jewish people continue to experience anti-Semitism and discrimination. That is unacceptable. It is why, last year, the Scottish Government adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of anti-Semitism. We are working with key partners to consider how that can support

practical steps to tackle anti-Semitism in all its forms. More broadly, we will continue to implement our action plan “Tackling Prejudice and Building Connected Communities”.

As other members have mentioned, the theme of this year’s Holocaust memorial day is the power of words, which is apt. In today’s world, many people are concerned that, with the rise of populism across Europe and America, a permissive environment is being created in which the forces of racism and intolerance believe that they can promote their cause with greater vigour. In that context, it is the words of our leaders that will have the greatest impact.

Whether they are delivered through a speech or a tweet, the words of our leaders are seen by millions as setting the context for everything that happens in our society. That is why words that seek to cast immigrants as “other”, that seek to spread anti-Semitism, that label Muslims as terrorists or that seek to attack people on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, or because they are asylum seekers, are so harmful. Above all, we must use our words—as I hope we have done in the debate—to continue to robustly challenge such intolerance.

The Holocaust is the outstanding, chilling example of what human beings are capable of doing when fundamental human rights are disparaged and bigotry and intolerance are given free rein. It seems that, today, the message that we send out on Holocaust memorial day is more important than ever. I know that everyone in the chamber will want to ensure that we remain vigilant in standing up to hate and in promoting a Scotland and a world in which everyone is accorded the fundamental human dignity to which they have a right.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate. I thank and commend all those who have spoken in it.

Meeting closed at 17:59.

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Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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