



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

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**Session 5**



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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 26 February 2020

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

## Inshore Fisheries

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** Good afternoon—[*Interruption.*]. I was pressing the mute button. I will not get anywhere by doing that; I now know to press “speaker”.

The first item of business is a statement by Fergus Ewing on modernising and empowering Scotland’s inshore fisheries. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. As always, I am unmuted.

Scotland’s inshore fisheries are one of our most valuable community assets, and fishers and their businesses contribute significantly to the economic and cultural fabric of our coastal communities. Those benefits have cemented the centuries-old bond between the coast, the communities and the families.

Currently, there are just more than 2,000 Scottish-registered fishing vessels, 80 per cent of which operate in our inshore waters. Those 1,600 vessels, most of which are classified as microbusinesses, are made up of a mix of nephrops trawlers, scallop dredgers, and creelers and divers—all fishing for high-quality shellfish. Much of the catch is destined for export markets in France, Spain and Italy. Seafood is our second largest export; for example, in 2018, £100 million of langoustines alone were exported from the United Kingdom. Two thirds of the world’s langoustines are sourced in Scotland; the main markets are France, Spain and Italy.

To help that diverse sector to co-exist and co-operate more effectively, we published our “Scottish Inshore Fisheries Strategy 2015”. Its key objectives are: to improve the evidence base for inshore fisheries, improve governance and participation of fishers in policy making, and improve integration with marine planning. Through the modernisation of the inshore fleet programme, we are progressing those objectives; the key commitment is to more effectively monitor fishing in inshore waters. That will provide vital data for Government to manage fishing resources, reassurance to local communities about fishing activity, and information for fishers to guide how, when and what they fish.

Following a procurement process that was undertaken last autumn, I announce today that Woodsons of Aberdeen Ltd is the Scottish Government’s preferred supplier to deliver the remote electronic monitoring programme. The scallop dredge fleet will be among the first to be equipped with remote electronic monitoring systems.

Modernising our approach to vessel monitoring and tracking will help improve our insight into the inshore fleet’s profile: how it operates, how it adapts and what matters most to its sustainable development. However, we also need to blend technological innovation with other policy activity. Competition for space in our inshore waters can be intense, and no more so than in some fishing grounds.

The “Report of the Gear Conflict Task Force” in 2015 laid the foundations for the modernisation programme. Since then, we have worked with inshore fisheries groups and communities to address issues and encourage co-operative working. Moreover, we have all become increasingly aware of the risks that plastics in our seas pose to fish and other marine wildlife, and that marine litter is an increasing problem. In Scotland, we are not immune to that and we must all do more to clean up our waters and coastlines.

Therefore, this spring, I intend to lay a Scottish statutory instrument to regulate the marking of creels. That will enhance visibility, improve navigational safety and identity of ownership, while ensuring that buoys are of a consistent material and design. The use of footballs and milk cartons to mark creels will be a thing of the past.

Government officials continue to engage with local fishing communities and groups to encourage behaviour change. Empowering our inshore fishers to contribute to and manage their own activity is key to sustainable fishing in the future.

We are continuing to develop a multi-agency approach to managing conflicts between fishers, including building the relationship between Marine Scotland and Police Scotland. That will enable Government, working in partnership with the industry and communities, to facilitate more effective sharing of sea space between the various users, and will help determine where and how Government intervention is most needed.

Given the increased intensity of marine planning activities, an improved evidence base is key. We must protect Scotland’s unique and valuable marine environment while enabling appropriate offshore wind and renewables initiatives, as well as allowing fishing to continue. It can often feel that Scotland’s historic and still hugely relevant inshore fisheries fleet that their needs and interests are

less important than other considerations. I assure them that that is not the case. They matter, and the Government wants them to continue to fish sustainably into the future. That is why gathering verifiable data on inshore activity is so important. It will give everyone confidence that the right decisions are being made for the right reasons, and it will allow open dialogue to continue to ensure that compromise on activity in our inshore waters can be achieved.

I welcome and appreciate the willingness of the inshore fishing industry to engage in that dialogue, and help to inform future management. The dialogue has been evident in the inshore fisheries pilot programme. The Mull spatial separation trial has seen conflict successfully mitigated. Now in its second year, the lessons learned from the Mull trial will be applied to the Outer Hebrides pilot, where we will also be continuing to develop the prototype low-cost vessel tracking solution.

That has been developed through the world-leading Scottish inshore fisheries integrated data system project led by the University of St Andrews and funded through the European maritime and fisheries fund. It is due to commence soon and will trial a range of behavioural changes, including gear capacity limitation measures.

It is fair to say that less progress has been made with the inner sound inshore fisheries pilot. Following a further consultation last year, it was still difficult to see where different users agreed on the way forward. However, there were important points of agreement that can be built on. That is why I am establishing an inner sound local fisheries management advisory group to design cross-sector participation in the modernisation programme, and to open up dialogue between the range of interests in this area. Further details on the way ahead are set out in the consultation outcome report, which I have published today.

Communication is key to empowering our inshore fisheries fleet so that they can get more involved in managing activity in inshore waters. That has been a key aim of the regional inshore fisheries groups. The network has been evolving for over a decade and it now contains five groups. The role of the chairs of those groups is key, so I am pleased to advise Parliament of the appointment of Jennifer Mouat to chair the north and east group, and Simon Macdonald to chair the west coast group.

Enabling more inshore fishers to engage and contribute to their local group is key to their sustainability, so I can also announce that we are creating a new online platform at [rifg.scot](http://rifg.scot).

This is Scotland's year of coasts and waters. It is entirely appropriate that we pay tribute to the role played by our inshore fishers, who still often

work in hazardous and sometimes, sadly, life-threatening conditions to bring economic, social and cultural benefit to our coasts and waters.

Our fleets must be encouraged and enabled to modernise, not just to survive but to thrive in a way that contributes to the sustainable management of these vital and valuable waters. They must also be empowered to make that contribution. That means providing them with tools and opportunities to engage and collaborate. Above all, it means valuing them and the economic, social and cultural benefits that they bring to our coastal communities. The Government remains committed to doing just that.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The cabinet secretary will now take questions on the issues in his statement. I have about 20 minutes for questions, after which we will move on to the next item of business.

**Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con):** I thank the cabinet secretary for prior sight of his statement. Our inshore fisheries are, indeed, a very valuable resource for Scotland, and there is much in the statement that I welcome, including the many positive proposals that will help to take away some of the tensions between static fishermen and those using mobile gear. I welcome the announcement that the remote electronic monitoring programme is going ahead, and I agree that the scallop dredge fleet should be among the first to be equipped with remote electronic monitoring.

I agree that local management is the way ahead. It is right to empower our inshore fishermen to manage their own activity and to work together to manage gear conflict. However, the industry was promised an inshore fisheries bill. Is that yet another broken promise? The statement was long on expectations but short on detail and silent on funding. Can the cabinet secretary outline what funding will be provided to support those initiatives, so that they can be completed successfully?

**Fergus Ewing:** On funding, we are already taking steps to improve vessel monitoring via the £1.5 million commitment to modernisation of the inshore fleet, as my statement laid out. That funding was in place prior to the tender process. We have committed to further subordinate legislation—I alluded to that in relation to the identification of creel markings—which will be brought forward fairly soon. Last year, we issued a discussion paper and, when the responses to that have been analysed, we will bring forward a consultation paper in the first half of this year. We have no plans to proceed with legislation prior to the outcome of that consultation.

It is right not to proceed with legislation until one has the best possible way forward and until we have reached a consensus. I am heartened by the support that Mr Chapman has expressed for the main components of my speech, which shows that there is recognition across the chamber of the value of the excellent work of our inshore fishers. I am happy to work with Mr Chapman to build on that consensus going forward.

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of his statement, and I welcome a number of the measures in it. The cabinet secretary stated that competition for space in our inshore waters and, in particular, our fishing grounds can be intense. He also stated that the modernisation programme will help to guide fishers on

“how, when and what they fish”.

However, the statement did not really address the question of who can fish and where, although resolving that conflict is clearly key to protecting and enhancing our inshore marine environment.

For the avoidance of any doubt, what is the cabinet secretary’s view on the issue of the re-implementation of a three-mile limit or any other form of comprehensive spatial management measure? If he does not support such measures, can he say what type of Government intervention he has in mind if local management does not resolve the gear conflict that we see so often in our communities?

**Fergus Ewing:** As I said in my statement—I think that I made this explicit—we think that local fisheries management on a regional basis is the best way to deal with those matters, because who is better placed to reach agreement about those often complex matters than the people who are involved?

The work of the regional inshore fisheries groups is excellent. I met the leaders of those groups in the past few weeks, and some of the groups are exemplars of how to work together to resolve issues by agreement. Although there are areas of conflict, I understand that gear conflict is relatively rare. There are areas, such as the inner sound, where it was not possible to reach agreement. However, we hope to complete the installation of REM equipment on 114 scallop dredgers, on which we aim to install it first—20 of them already have the equipment—by around the end of this year. I am trying to word that somewhat carefully to give myself a little wriggle room. Weather, training and other things permitting, we hope that the scallopers will be fitted with that equipment by the end of the year.

Once that has happened, it will substantially change, if not transform, the dynamic, because we will know where the vessels are and what they are

doing. That means that there will be clarity and objectively verifiable facts. It is the absence of those that has led to controversy, difficulty and unnecessary conflicts that are difficult to resolve. REM is a pathway to solving those problems.

I apologise for the length of that answer, Presiding Officer, but it was an important question.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I realise that the issues are technical, but I would appreciate shorter questions and answers, to allow all members to get in.

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary mentioned gear conflict as an issue that continues to create tension and real economic problems for many skippers through the loss of valuable equipment. We know that it is hard, if not impossible, to prove that there have been intentional actions that amount to potentially criminal offences. What more can be done to protect the interests of the microbusinesses that make up the fishing fleet in many inshore waters?

**Fergus Ewing:** Maureen Watt is right to point to that issue, although I believe that there is conflict in a minority of cases. Where there is conflict, it can be difficult and intense, and it can cause economic loss and hardship to many small businesses. I am pleased that a representative of the Scottish White Fish Producers Association has presented on harmonised co-operation of fishing effort in the north-east and that there has been a series of four meetings in the past six months, at which Marine Scotland has been present as a neutral observer. We are seeing progress in the member’s part of Scotland, and REM will enable us to make substantial further progress in resolving some of the conflicts or preventing them from arising in the first place.

**Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** I apologise for having to leave directly after this question, and I thank the Presiding Officer for allowing me to do so.

I, too, broadly welcome the actions that have been announced and, equally important, the recognition that Scotland’s hugely important inshore fisheries fleet feels that its needs and interests are less important than other considerations. What assurances can the cabinet secretary give hard-working fishermen in Galloway that their interests will be his Government’s top priority when it comes to planning activities such as offshore wind and that he will not allow the lights to go off in our rural coastal communities?

**Fergus Ewing:** Mr Carson raises a fair point. Around the coast, there is concern about offshore wind among some fishing communities, particularly among fishers. We have taken steps to ensure that there is co-operation and discussion

with offshore wind developers so that their plans are developed in a way that takes account of the needs of fishing. After all, fishers were there first.

It is important that, in places such as Galloway, the consultation should be seen as being meaningful or, in other words, as leading to a *modus operandi* that allows fishing to coexist with offshore wind. There is enough space, but there are difficulties. I will not go into the details, as that would take too long, but we are well aware of the issue. I am grateful for the opportunity to reaffirm our determination to ensure that, in relation to offshore wind development, the interests of fishers are properly and fully considered.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** I welcome the modernisation and empowerment of Scotland's inshore fisheries. What will the impact be on the coastal fishing communities of the Clyde?

**Fergus Ewing:** Around the coast, the impact of the measures will be positive. I was delighted that representatives of the Clyde Fishermen's Association welcomed the proposals on REM, as did the whole inshore fishing sector. That is a positive step.

Mr Gibson is absolutely right to raise that important issue, because the Clyde has some of the most congested waters, as it is a busy shipping lane, with ferries as well as recreational activity. The Clyde fishing grounds raise some of the most thorny issues. I again reaffirm my admiration for the work of those involved with the Clyde Fishermen's Association, including Elaine Whyte and Kenny MacNab. We work closely with the association to ensure that its members' interests are respected and fostered.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** What assessment has the cabinet secretary made of the cost to creelers of the new regulatory plans requiring standard Government-approved marker buoys? What, if anything, does he propose to do to mitigate the cost?

**Fergus Ewing:** Mr Macdonald raises an important issue. It will be dealt with more fully in the statutory instrument, on which I expect that the relevant committee will want to take evidence, although that is a matter for the committee.

The memorandum that is attached to the SI will set out fully the estimated financial cost. Suffice it to say, we are talking about markers and not complicated or expensive equipment, so I would expect the costs to be relatively modest. I cannot give Mr Macdonald the costs today, but I assure him that we have no desire to foist disproportionate or excessive costs on the creel sector.

We will of course work closely with the sector in the development of the regulations. Prior to their introduction, I will seek to meet representatives of the sector, if they wish to discuss those matters. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide that confirmation.

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** Kirkcudbright in Dumfries and Galloway is Scotland's second busiest inshore fishery, producing world-renowned west coast produce such as scallops. Will the cabinet secretary outline what support is available to our inshore fishermen and women, including those in the south-west of Scotland, to allow them to adopt measures to play their part in tackling the climate emergency?

**Fergus Ewing:** We obviously want to ensure that we continue to provide financial assistance to fishing communities and the fishing sector as a whole. It has been a consensual session so far and I do not want to interrupt the mojo, but it is only fair for me to point out that fishing communities around Scotland had a good financial friend in the European maritime and fisheries fund. That is now gone and has been replaced by a much lower level and less reliable form of finance. I wrote to George Eustice about that a couple of days ago. Members should rest assured that we will ensure that the United Kingdom Government replaces, as it promises to do, the funding from the European Union on which we used to be able to rely.

**Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green):** I welcome the commitment to remote monitoring of vessels, which was a Green proposal that achieved support in the chamber in 2018. However, the statement is light on detail regarding the roll-out of monitoring. Given the impact of illegal dredging on marine protected areas, will the cabinet secretary confirm that the roll-out will include gear monitoring for all vessels over and under 12 metres, and that the technology will be tamper-proof and sufficient to enforce the regulations and prosecute offenders?

**Fergus Ewing:** We developed the policy long before 2018, but I welcome that the Greens now support it.

As far as the roll-out is concerned, there is an awful lot of detail and I do not have the time to go into it. In March, the first equipment will be delivered to Aberdeen, and in April, the first fitting will take place, to scallopers in Shetland. Training slots will be provided for the fitting of the equipment. There are two basic systems: the tracking device and the television equipment to film what happens.

The approach will be proportionate. Rhoda Grant is not in the chamber, but she previously asked about the very smallest vessels. They will have a tracking device, but they probably will not



have a camera device, because it is not required. That is a matter of further consideration and discussion, but we have to be proportionate. We should not just assume that all fishers are guilty. When we talk about reefs being damaged, the implication is that fishermen are intent on doing such damage. We take very seriously any incidents in which that occurs, but, as the implication has been made, I stress that the vast majority of fishers fully respect the marine environment. After all, it is the source of their livelihood and that of their successors for decades and centuries to come.

**Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):**

The cabinet secretary said that he wants

“to ensure that compromise on activity in our inshore waters can be achieved.”

How does he envisage that happening, especially if local management groups cannot agree?

**Fergus Ewing:** Mike Rumbles has picked up on a fair point. I meant to change “ensure” to “help to ensure”, but I omitted to do that prior to giving the statement. I have been found out by Mr Rumbles’ sharp and forensic analysis—that is a rare confession, Presiding Officer.

On a more serious note, we will do everything that we can to find a way through. I should say that Marine Scotland officials do not just sit in their offices; they get out and about a lot and listen carefully to the concerns of all those involved. Kate Forbes, who is the member for the local area, remarked to me how much it was appreciated that Marine Scotland representatives came along as—if you like—impartial observers but enthusiastic supporters of finding a solution.

The second point is that the new development will be the implementation of remote electronic monitoring equipment. Until now, because evidence could not be provided, it has been almost impossible to resolve disagreements that arose because of disputed facts—claims and counterclaims about matters such as where vessels were or whether they were fishing in the wrong places or where other vessels’ creels were located. REM provides an opportunity to change that, which is why—to answer Mike Rumbles’s question—it is so important.

**Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde)**

**(SNP):** The progress on the remote electronic monitoring programme is welcome. Will the cabinet secretary say a bit more about the timescale for the programme becoming operational and how the equipment on vessels will work?

**Fergus Ewing:** I will not repeat what I said earlier, but I stress that the aim is to apply the equipment first to scallopers, of which there are, I

think, around 114, of which around 20 already have it. The contractors will work around the coast, starting from Shetland and going round to the Hebrides and then the west coast. The aim is to complete that section of the work by the end of the year if at all possible, and then to work on the other vessels that will be subject to the scheme.

I could give a lot more information. For example, the components of the contractors’ work include fitting the equipment, testing it and ensuring that it works, licensing it, checking that the data is being transmitted correctly from vessels to Marine Scotland and can be monitored properly, and providing training on use.

Like anything new, the process will not necessarily be straightforward, and it will take time to complete. However, I am confident that next year, we will be able to say that we have introduced a world-leading initiative for inshore fisheries, which would be a great thing.

**Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands)**

**(Con):** I, too, welcome much of what the cabinet secretary has said. The scheme does not involve the introduction of a bill on inshore fisheries, but it does represent some good steps forward.

Inshore fishermen and the aquaculture industry need to be good neighbours. Will the cabinet secretary inform members of his proposals on that aspect of the matter?

**Fergus Ewing:** We are straying somewhat into the subject of aquaculture, but I will be happy to answer that. I inform Mr Mountain—although I think that he might already know—that the fisheries framework that we set up included several workstreams. One of those involved establishing a group to consider the interactions between farmed salmon and wild fish—in particular, wild salmon. In the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity of receiving a quick update from John Goodlad, the group’s chair, which I think might be the reason for Mr Mountain’s having raised the matter now. I hope that the group’s work will come to a conclusion reasonably soon.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Well, I did not understand that—but there we are. I am not too clued up on fish, except that I know that I like to eat them.

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary has highlighted the valuable export trade in shellfish. Will he say more about that? Does he share my concern that the UK Government’s approach to Brexit, which has been reckless and foolhardy throughout, still threatens to destroy not only that trade but a way of life that is integral to our coastal communities and, indeed, our Scottish identity?

**Fergus Ewing:** I do not think that that is an overstatement. We are already seeing serious threats to the trade, with businesses getting into major difficulty because of the loss of the Chinese crab market.

The problem with shellfish is that it is extremely perishable. If there is any delay in reaching export markets, whole consignments very quickly become valueless. Such markets include France, Spain and Italy, where the just-in-time delivery mechanism that is used works to an accuracy of within a few hours, so any delay is critical.

As I understand it, the UK refused dynamic alignment, leading to the requirement of export health certificates and additional costs and also possible delay. In addition to that, the workforce implications of the measures that were announced by the Home Secretary are devastatingly bad for the shellfish sector, as they are for the farming, tourism and care sectors.

I am afraid that the industry faces a perfect storm at the moment and, therefore, I take this opportunity to renew our calls for the UK Government to think again about its Brexit proposals.

## Portfolio Question Time

### Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

14:30

#### Live Music (O2 ABC)

1. **Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how it will grow the live music industry in Scotland, given the closure of the O2 ABC. (S5O-04155)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture (Fiona Hyslop):** Despite the closure of the O2 ABC, Glasgow and Scotland continue to have a strong and diverse live music scene. Live music events in Scotland were attended by 1.1 million tourists in 2018, which was a 38 per cent increase from 2017.

We recognise that there are challenges, but we are committed to working with our partners to grow the sector. Creative Scotland is working with stakeholders to identify skills, audience and talent development projects that will help to increase knowledge and capitalise on resources. Audiences and talent development were particular focuses in its targeted funding of the 2020 independent venue week.

**Pauline McNeill:** A new report estimates that last year the live music industry generated spending of £431 million throughout Scotland, through tickets, accommodation and the usual merchandising, and that it sustained 4,300 full-time jobs. However, the report also warned that there is an urgent need for more investment in order to keep Scotland's market growing.

When I checked the Creative Scotland website yesterday, I could not see even a mention of the contemporary music industry or the live music sector. Considering that Creative Scotland has not published a review of the industry since 2013, how can we trust that the agency cares at all about live music? Can the cabinet secretary look into that? What can she do to maintain Scotland's position as a world leader?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I am more than happy to ensure that Creative Scotland provides the information that Pauline McNeill seeks.

Independent venue week, which I just referred to, is an important part of helping venues to develop. Creative Scotland's ring-fenced funding for Scottish venues has allowed the expansion of venues in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bathgate in my constituency, Falkirk, Aberdeen, Dundee, Galashiels and Inverness. Creative Scotland has advised me that almost weekly it funds acts in all music genres to record albums and tour them, and

that it ensures that live music remains vibrant by funding venues and organisations as geographically diverse as An Lanntair, Aberdeen Performing Arts, Shetland Arts, Platform, the Centre for Contemporary Arts, Horsecross, the Queen's Hall and others.

I understand that Pauline McNeill wants specific information about contemporary music. I will make sure that, from within what I have just described, information about contemporary music is passed to her.

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** I am pleased to hear that there has been a 38 per cent increase in tourists attending live music events in Scotland, because Glasgow certainly has a fantastic live music industry.

The 26th conference of the parties, or COP26, is coming to Glasgow in November. What advertising will be produced to encourage its delegates to enjoy the live music events in Glasgow?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I am not familiar with the programming of live music performances immediately around COP26. I know that Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government are keen to ensure that we can showcase Scotland to best effect and, which is important, that we can show how culture can influence behaviour and challenge thinking in relation to some of the big ideas that will be discussed in COP26. We will work co-operatively with the United Kingdom Government on the wider issues and on the hosting aspects. However, the event is an important opportunity to showcase Glasgow, which is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization city of music.

### **Tourism (Dumfries and Galloway)**

**2. Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** As you know, Presiding Officer, I need to leave after my question. Thank you for agreeing to that.

To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to boost tourist numbers across Dumfries and Galloway, and how south of Scotland enterprise will assist with this. (S5O-04156)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** We have provided VisitScotland with £1 million to market the region, and it has created the "See south Scotland" campaign. That is in addition to the £1.5 million that we are investing in forest tourism infrastructure and the £85 million that we have committed to the borderlands growth deal. Through the South of Scotland Economic Partnership, 13 tourism projects have also received funding.

The new body, south of Scotland enterprise, will be operational from 1 April this year and will drive inclusive growth across the region by taking a fresh approach to economic development and boosting growth in key sectors, including tourism.

**Emma Harper:** Last week, I met representatives from Visit South West Scotland who expressed concern about the current approach to accessing funding from the new south of Scotland enterprise agency, because any and all applications must be for things that will benefit the whole of the south of Scotland. Local businesses and constituents in Dumfries and Galloway are concerned that the pan-south-of-Scotland approach might be a barrier to people accessing support. Will the cabinet secretary agree to meet me to discuss the issue in more detail and to examine the current arrangements to see whether a change can be made?

**Fergus Ewing:** South of Scotland enterprise will work with businesses and communities across the south of Scotland to support activities that drive inclusive economic growth. I understand that the chair designate, Professor Russel Griggs, recently met the chair of Visit South West Scotland to discuss tourism in the south of Scotland. As the funding criteria for south of Scotland enterprise will be an operational matter, I have asked Nick Halfhide, who is its interim chief executive, to meet Emma Harper to discuss the approach that the new agency is taking to future tourism project support.

**Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con):** Will the cabinet secretary ask the new south of Scotland enterprise agency to make urgent contact with Gretna Green Ltd, which is one of the largest tourism businesses in the south of Scotland, but is experiencing an extreme drop-off in tourists from China as a result of coronavirus?

**Fergus Ewing:** I hear what Oliver Mundell says; he makes a perfectly reasonable point. I will draw the matter to the attention of Professor Griggs and the interim chief executive, Nick Halfhide.

In general terms, we are all extremely concerned about coronavirus. It is a devastating blow and an absolute tragedy for China, but there are now also concerns about its impact on other parts of the world, including our country, to be quite frank. The matter is being dealt with principally by the chief medical officer and the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport. We take it very seriously. We will bear the issue in mind, but I will ask the appointed leaders of SOSE to look at Gretna Green Ltd in particular, because Oliver Mundell has raised it with me.

### Tourism (Impact on Cities)

3. **Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of how the increase in the number of tourists is impacting on the country's cities. (S5O-04157)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish Government recognises that tourism makes an important contribution to the economy of all our cities. Our cities had the highest levels of tourism employment in 2018, with 36,000 jobs in Edinburgh and 31,000 in Glasgow. We have carried out some assessment in relation to specific issues such as the impact of short-term lets on Edinburgh and Glasgow. At local level, we continue to engage with key organisations and authorities in order to help us to understand the wider context of the impact of tourism, and what the Scottish Government and its agencies can do to support it.

**Gordon Lindhurst:** CDP, which is a not-for-profit charity that runs the global disclosure system for environmental impacts, published its global annual ranking of the best-performing cities last week. Not a single Scottish city appears in the global A-list of 105 cities, although five English cities appear. Given that the Scottish Parliament has committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2045, how does the cabinet secretary explain the absence of cities including Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen from the list? What is being done to address that?

**Fergus Ewing:** I am happy to look at the specific report that Gordon Lindhurst mentioned: we will do so. Although my tenure as tourism minister this time round has been relatively short so far, I know that tourism leaders and all those who are involved in the industry are as keen as everyone else is, if not more so, to engage in the low-carbon agenda.

That Scotland is a world leader in that regard is beyond question, through the First Minister's lead and hard work by Roseanna Cunningham. That will become evident in November this year when Glasgow hosts COP26, which will be a tremendous opportunity to showcase not the negatives—about which we hear far too much from the Conservatives—but the positives. One of those positives will be the contribution that many tourism businesses are making.

### Support for Heritage Projects (Cochno Stone)

4. **Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what support it can offer to projects such as the Cochno stone heritage project in Faifley, Clydebank. (S5O-04158)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture (Fiona Hyslop):** Support for community heritage projects is provided through Historic Environment Scotland, our lead public body for the historic environment, to which the Scottish Government provides £14.5 million annually for grants to support communities to understand, celebrate and revitalise our heritage, including £1.4 million that is spent on archaeology projects. Historic Environment Scotland also works in direct partnership with communities through projects such as Scotland's prehistoric rock art project, which supported members of the community in Faifley to create detailed records and models of rock art sites in Clydebank.

**Gil Paterson:** I thank the cabinet secretary for addressing a reception at the Parliament last week to highlight the Cochno stone project. The time that she spent was well appreciated by all the folk who turned out. Would the cabinet secretary like to visit the site at the appropriate time to see at first hand the very good work that has been done there and the opportunities that the site offers to Faifley and the wider community?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I had a very enjoyable evening last week with the community from Faifley. Faifley most certainly rocks, with regard to community-engaged archaeology. It was fantastic to see how the archaeologists from the University of Glasgow had engaged the local community. The community council and primary schools that were represented there have a tremendous sense of place about their community. They are discovering and understanding Scotland's place historically over many thousands of years of the art.

I would be delighted to visit the site. The Cochno stone is covered up just now, but what is important is the empowerment of local communities that comes from heritage and arts projects that work with communities. When we publish the culture strategy shortly, I hope that members across the chamber will see that it will be an important part of how we take forward Scotland's relationship with culture and heritage.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** I remind members that questions 5, 6 and 8 are grouped together. If members want to come in with a supplementary, they can do so at the end of the supplementaries to question 8. I am being very helpful.

### Tourism (Shetland)

5. **Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what support it is providing to develop the tourism industry in Shetland. (S5O-04159)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish

Government fully recognises the importance of tourism to Shetland's economy. The numerous attractions of Shetland, from stunning scenery to historical sites such as the Jarlshof, are actively promoted by VisitScotland through its many marketing campaigns. In recognition of the fact that the popularity of sites on the Shetland Islands brings challenges to public infrastructure, £133,000 has been awarded through the rural tourism infrastructure fund for parking facilities in Hoswick to address those issues.

**Beatrice Wishart:** The cabinet secretary may be aware that the Sumburgh hotel and the Shetland tourism industry have been waiting for more than three years for Historic Environment Scotland to sort out badly needed visitor facilities at the historic Jarlshof site in Shetland. In January 2019, the Scottish Government rejected a business case to build toilets and bus parking, leaving a private business to voluntarily provide those basic facilities to growing numbers of cruise ship visitors. Will the cabinet secretary look into the matter with a sense of urgency, to ensure that another tourist season does not pass without any progress?

**Fergus Ewing:** I am aware of the great contribution that cruise tourism is now making to the islands. Fiona Hyslop and I have been promoting it for many years and it has been developed with great success locally throughout Scotland. On the matter that Beatrice Wishart has raised, I understand that Historic Environment Scotland is actively engaged in looking at the matter and will be happy to consider it further with the member if she so wishes.

#### Tourism (Highlands)

**6. David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to support tourism in the Highlands. (S5O-04160)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish Government, both directly and through its public bodies, provides significant support to the tourism sector in the Highlands.

Through the Inverness and Highland city region deal, we are providing £15 million towards the Highland Council's redevelopment of Inverness castle into an international visitor attraction that promotes the whole Highlands, which will benefit the wider tourism economy of the area. The Highlands have also benefited from our rural tourism infrastructure fund, with 12 projects receiving funding of nearly £2.7 million out of the total £6 million allocation for the first two rounds.

**David Stewart:** I welcome the cabinet secretary to his new tourism brief.

Mr Ewing will be well aware of my campaign to find a new home for the iconic Ironworks music venue in Inverness, which is very popular with tourists and locals alike. Will the cabinet secretary support to the hilt the excellent work that is being done by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and will he accompany me on a future visit to the Ironworks?

**Fergus Ewing:** I thank David Stewart for the good wishes. The offer is somewhat more unexpected, but it will be given due and appropriate consideration.

Mr Stewart has been raising that matter for some time and I know that locally that is much appreciated. I support the campaign's aims and objectives. I am pleased that HIE has been positive, and I am very happy to work with the member in my new role to see what progress we can make and how quickly we can make it.

#### Tourism (Orkney)

**8. Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Destination Orkney and Orkney Islands Council regarding the future needs of the tourism sector. (S5O-04162)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish Government has had on-going contact with Orkney Islands Council in relation to the support given to it through the rural tourism infrastructure fund. Our support for the sector is delivered through a range of public bodies. All of those are members of the Destination Orkney partnership—along with the council—that is chaired by Destination Orkney, offering strategic direction to tourism development.

**Liam McArthur:** I thank the cabinet secretary and, like David Stewart, welcome him to his new role.

He will be aware of the frustration that is felt because of the continued failure to deliver road equivalent tariff and cheaper fares on the Pentland Firth route. The tourism sector is also affected by the relatively high costs of air services to and from Orkney. Will he agree to engage with his colleague the transport secretary and Loganair, which is in the process of introducing larger aircraft on to its routes, to discuss ways in which that opportunity can be used to reduce fares?

**Fergus Ewing:** I thank Mr McArthur for his kind words. I think he knows that I enjoyed an excellent holiday in Orkney with my family. It was slightly wet, but great fun. We travelled by ferry and had a lovely time. I have also travelled frequently by air. The journey can be somewhat exciting and the landings muscle-clenching.

I know that he asks about a serious issue and I will be happy to raise it with the cabinet secretary for transport. It is a serious issue for all island inhabitants because the costs of air travel are, indeed, pretty high.

**Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Cabinet secretary, your enthusiasm for tourism does you credit. It is critical to the Highlands.

When will the funicular railway be operational? Will it be 2024, 2025, 2026 or later?

**Fergus Ewing:** I assure the member, and all members across all parties, that Highlands and Islands Enterprise is working extremely hard to develop a master plan and scheme out a sustainable future—economically and environmentally—for the funicular railway in Cairn Gorm. It is doing a power of work and is also consulting with local communities.

I understand that skiing has been taking place in Cairn Gorm in the past few days. That is hugely welcome after a lean season.

Mr Mountain knows that there are complex engineering matters and solutions that must be worked through properly, and that the costings of the remedial work that needs to be done to put matters right have to be carefully assembled. I assure him that that work is under way. I have undertaken previously to report to the Parliament periodically.

I give my absolute commitment that the Scottish Government is determined to find a solution, because we are well aware of the huge importance of the funicular railway for visitors to that part of Scotland all year round. We are working extremely hard across portfolios to deliver a long-term, successful, viable solution, so that once again we see Cairn Gorm providing excellent opportunities, in winter and in summer.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I have bids for supplementary questions from Gail Ross and Richard Lyle. Mr Lyle, I have to caution you: this group of questions is on the Highlands and Islands. [*Interruption.*] You are on notice. If I do not hear “Highlands and Islands” in your first breath, you are stopping in your tracks.

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary say what the Scottish Government’s proposed solutions are to protect our tourism and hospitality industry in the Highlands and Islands from the United Kingdom Government’s attack on immigration?

**Fergus Ewing:** I have to say that the response in Scotland from representatives of all businesses to the UK’s appalling proposals on immigration and migration has never been clearer and stronger, more united and more compelling.

Whether we are talking about the tourism sector, the agriculture and fishing sector or the care sector, all representatives—entirely independent of politics—are saying exactly the same thing: these proposals will not work. Moreover, the proposals put at risk—“at risk” is a phrase that most of the representatives have used—the very future of those sectors.

We are in an extremely serious situation. I am not straying into politics when I say that the current situation will not hold; the UK Government must start listening to the voice of Scotland and its representatives across the whole spectrum of society.

**Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP):** I agree that it is important that we continue to attract people to work in the tourism sector, particularly in the Highlands and Islands. [*Laughter.*] What impact does the cabinet secretary think the UK Government’s new immigration plan will have on the tourism industry in Scotland—and the Highlands and Islands?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Ah, the work of a pro, Mr Lyle.

**Fergus Ewing:** As members know, Mr Lyle is a great friend of the Highlands and Islands, and a great friend of mine.

Let me be serious. In addition to the previous answer that I gave, let me say that the working population of the Highlands and Islands is due to shrink massively before 2040. We have an urgent requirement, not to see fewer people but to retain the existing people and bring in more people.

That is one of the greatest challenges that we face, and it will require a whole suite of policies. The very last thing that it needs is the negative, narrow-minded, insular, parochial, arrogant and dismissive approach of the Home Secretary to the matter. That approach cannot hold, and I suspect that we will see change to the absurd proposals, the likes of which I cannot remember having seen in my 20 years in the Parliament.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 7 has been withdrawn.

## Education and Skills

### School Leavers (Positive Destinations)

1. **John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the importance of young people leaving school going on to positive destinations. (S50-04163)

**The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills (Jamie Hepburn):** The Scottish Government places the utmost importance on our

young people securing a positive next step in learning, life and work following their school education, which increases their chances of continuing on a positive path. In that regard, I welcome the figures that were published this week, which show the highest-ever rate of positive post-school initial destinations for school leavers, in 2018-19, at 95 per cent.

**John Mason:** Does the minister think that, as a society, we sometimes put too much emphasis on inputs, such as the number of subjects that are studied, as opposed to considering outcomes and outputs, such as whether young people are successful in going into training and careers?

**Jamie Hepburn:** I agree that we should take a broader look, although I recognise that the range of subject matters that a young person studies is part of the equation. Yes, we should look at outcomes and attainment. Between 2006-07 and 2018-19, the number of young people who secured one or more qualification at Scottish credit and qualifications framework level 4 or higher went up 2.5 percentage points, the number with one or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or higher went up 14 percentage points and the number with one or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or higher went up 18.9 percentage points.

The latest figures show that the gap between the most and least-deprived communities in achieving a positive destination is less than 6 percentage points for the first time and that, over the decade from 2008-09, the unemployment rate for young people fell from 16.4 to 9.1 per cent, which is the lowest in the United Kingdom. I agree with Mr Mason that we should be looking at the outcomes.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** The minister will be aware that not all positive destinations are deemed equal and that virtually anything other than an unknown outcome or claiming unemployment benefit is considered positive under the Scottish Government's definition. The figures show that attainment across multiple levels of qualification has declined, limiting the opportunities for young people to fulfil their potential. Will he give a commitment to ensuring that future data gives more detail so that we can get a clearer and more accurate picture of the on-going employment outcomes, educational journeys and destinations of our young people?

**Jamie Hepburn:** We will, of course, take away and consider any suggestion that is made in good faith—I trust that Mr Halcro Johnston was making his in good faith. However, the figures that we publish show a direction of travel over a period of time, allowing people to compare one year to the next, and I remind Mr Halcro Johnston of the point that I have just made, which is that record levels of

young people—95 per cent—entered positive destinations after school in 2018-19. Everyone should welcome that.

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** The minister will know that achieving a positive destination is much harder for school leavers who have additional support needs. Only around 16 per cent of autistic adults are in employment. Today, the Scottish Children's Services Coalition highlighted that the attainment gap for children in our schools with additional support needs is growing. Does he agree that we need to restore the specialist support staff who have been lost from our schools and that much more work needs to be done to help children with additional support needs so that they too can achieve positive destinations?

**Jamie Hepburn:** Yes, of course. We must continue to do all that we can to support young people in schools who have additional support needs. The Government is committed to doing that. We will always look to see what more we can do, and it is not just within the school environment that we are committed to doing that; it is also about post-school destinations, and we are seeking to undertake that type of intervention through a range of measures in the employability and training system, for which I have responsibility, in order to secure better outcomes for young people who need additional support for learning.

### **Brexit (Impact on Higher Education Institutions)**

2. **Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what impact Brexit will have on higher education institutions across Scotland that are in receipt of European research funding. (S5O-04164)

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Richard Lochhead):** Scottish organisations can continue to participate fully in horizon 2020 until the programme closes and projects have been completed. The impact during the transition period is therefore limited regarding the current horizon programme. Scotland's future participation in the next programme, horizon Europe, would ensure the continuation of significant benefits and opportunities. There is no good alternative to being part of the world's biggest research and innovation programme. That is why the Scottish Government has been pressing the United Kingdom Government to enable full participation of Scottish organisations in horizon Europe.

**Sandra White:** I have raised this issue before in the chamber: we need clarity on European funding and the Erasmus programme, not just for the institutions but for students in the future. What

safeguards can we put in place apart from speaking to the Westminster Government?

**Richard Lochhead:** Clearly, if the UK decides to go for a reduced form of participation in horizon Europe or, indeed, if any association with the programme takes place, we would look to ensure that current overall funding levels are at least maintained in Scotland to avoid a shortfall in income for our excellent higher education institutions. We are told that, at the moment, the UK Government is still considering a value-for-money analysis of the horizon programme. As members can imagine, we are inputting that it is very good value for money, given that Scotland has benefited to the tune of €687 million. That is 11 per cent of the UK's funding pot, which illustrates the strength of science and innovation in our universities and other organisations.

Clearly, the Scottish Government's response will depend on the extent to which the UK Government has any association with horizon Europe. If the UK Government looks at a domestic alternative, we will have to respond to that as well. We will have to look at how Scotland can maximise its participation in horizon Europe, or find some other means of securing funding from the UK Government.

### **Students (Financial Support)**

**3. Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether its work to improve financial support for students who are estranged from parents or guardians will also cover students who are estranged from one parent, rather than both. (S5O-04165)

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Richard Lochhead):** The Scottish Government currently defines an "estranged student" as a student who has no contact with their parents. That means that there is a permanent breakdown in the relationship between the student and their parents, with no sign of it being resolved in the future. We are committed to undertaking independent research to understand the numbers of estranged students in Scotland, the issues that they face and the support that they need. Our intention is to ensure that the exercise is as inclusive as possible with regard to the variations of estrangement.

**Bill Kidd:** I am glad to hear of the work that is being done in collaboration with Stand Alone to engage with the issues that estranged students face. As I understand it, currently, children who are raised by a single parent will still be means tested on the basis of the income of both parents and are given guidance to that effect by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland. However, in practice, students will often receive no financial support from the non-present parent. Will the

Scottish Government research how the requirement affects that category of students, in terms of both finance and stress?

**Richard Lochhead:** If Bill Kidd has examples of students who have been affected in that way, I would be keen to hear about them. I am also keen to ensure that the research that I spoke about, which I have recently announced, takes into account the circumstances that Bill Kidd outlined.

However, the amounts of bursary and student loans that a student can access from SAAS are based on the household income of their permanent home. Therefore, only the income of the single parent would be taken into account in such circumstances. That information is perhaps not reflected in Bill Kidd's question, but I assure him that the advice that I have from SAAS is that only the income of the single parent would be taken into account when looking at the overall household income for the student. I will certainly write to Bill Kidd with any further clarity that is required on the issue.

As I said, we are keen to look at the issue. We have commissioned the independent research so that we can be better informed and take the right decisions.

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** I commend Bill Kidd for raising this important issue, which touches many families in Scotland.

I appreciate that the Government is doing work to analyse the scale of the situation, but how will the minister ensure that any additional funding that is made available will give sufficient support to pupils who have a single parent, given their relative lack of household income compared with that of students who have two parents? What additional support will the Government give to those pupils to ensure that they have the same opportunities and chances as those who are in two-parent families?

**Richard Lochhead:** Charities such as Stand Alone, which effectively makes the case on behalf of estranged students, have outlined the barriers that estranged students face that are not faced by other students. The issue goes to the heart of this debate. The Scottish Government wants to knock down as many of those barriers as possible.

With regard to the circumstances that have been outlined by Jamie Greene, there are already arrangements in place for different situations at the moment. However, we are talking specifically about estranged students, and I have already outlined the criteria that SAAS looks at when assessing estranged students. At the moment, there are special arrangements in place to support estranged students, for instance, to ensure that they are not subject to the means-testing elements of other support that is available for independent



students. Some account is taken of estranged students, but the purpose of the research is to understand all the issues that estranged students face and make sure that future decisions that we take are informed by that research.

#### **Mental Health First Aid Training (School Staff)**

**4. Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that all school staff have access to mental health first aid training. (S5O-04166)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for the Scottish Government. To ensure that all school staff have access to quality and effective resources and training, we have convened a mental health in schools working group. The group will develop a new mental health and wellbeing professional learning resource for primary, secondary and special school staff, which will provide the essential learning that is required to support children's and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The training will be made available in addition to the current Scottish mental health first aid training programme.

**Ross Greer:** The Scottish Government's commitment to providing mental health first aid training is commendable, but the funding for it was first provided six years ago. Some time has passed, and it was targeted at the schools that were most in need, which meant that a huge majority of school staff were not able to access it.

When I requested information from the Government on how many staff had received the training, it stated that it did not hold that information and did not intend to include it in its forthcoming evaluation. Without knowing how many staff have even received mental health first aid training, does the Government really believe that it is going to meet the needs of our young people's mental health in schools?

**John Swinney:** A variety of different interventions are being undertaken to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people in schools. Mr Greer will be aware that, with our local authority partners, we are taking forward the commitment to put in place a mental health counsellor in every secondary school in the country.

This morning, I was at Wester Hailes education centre. Before I left, I had the pleasure of meeting representatives of Place2Be, an organisation that is funded to provide mental health support to young people at the centre. It is a well-focused service that meets the needs of young people, and

there are a range of interventions of that type in different parts of the country.

There is always a dilemma about how much data we gather and how much information we request of individual schools, which is where the information has to come from. I am mindful of the workload challenges that that puts on individual schools. However, I am confident that we have a range of measures in place that will provide the effective support that individuals are entitled to expect and that will be of advantage and of benefit to young people in Scotland's schools.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** A survey by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers in Scotland found that nearly two thirds of teachers feel that their job has adversely affected their mental health in the past 12 months. Can the cabinet secretary tell the chamber how the Scottish Government expects teachers to go further in supporting the mental health of pupils when they already face increasing pressures and stress on their own mental health?

**John Swinney:** Local authorities have a duty of care to ensure that all staff, in whatever capacity, are well supported in the work that they undertake, and we expect local authorities to fulfil that obligation.

**Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD):** While committing to increase mental health first aid training in schools, the Government has said that it will increase the number of available counsellors in schools by September 2020. Does the cabinet secretary recognise that there are difficulties in assessing that target because of insufficient information on the number of counselling courses that are currently funded by education authorities? Will the cabinet secretary consider requesting from local authorities a breakdown of pupil equity funding spend to assist with that scrutiny and to ensure that that important expansion is successful?

**John Swinney:** I return to the question of how much data we collect on these issues. I am conscious that, were I to do exactly what Beatrice Wishart has asked me to do, I would be adding to the workload burden on individual schools. I am constantly pressed in this Parliament to minimise the workload burden that I place on individual schools.

I do not doubt the significance of the issue—I recognise it. We have agreed with local authorities how we will take forward the distribution of resources to support the expansion of the counselling service, and I look forward to that taking place. I am sure that it will be of benefit to young people in Scotland's schools.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 6 has been withdrawn.

Questions 5 and 7 have not been lodged, which is not good practice, because it excludes other members from the ballot. The parties concerned should take heed.

### Teacher Numbers

**8. Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the number of teachers in post. (S5O-04170)

**John Swinney:** Statistics that were published on 10 December 2019 show that the number of teachers has increased for the fourth year in a row, rising to 52,247 in 2019. There are now more teachers than at any time since 2009, and the ratio of pupils to teachers is at its lowest since 2013. The number of primary teachers is at its highest since 1980.

**Alexander Stewart:** Although there has been a small increase in the number of teachers compared to last year, the pupil teacher ratio remains unchanged. What is the cabinet secretary doing to address the fact that the number of probationers who achieve a full-time teaching post has fallen by 7 per cent? That is the first time it has fallen since 2013.

**John Swinney:** Obviously, that is one of the fraught issues in workforce planning. We have to estimate the number of candidates whom it is responsible to bring into the education profession in order to provide suitable opportunities for individuals to seek employment and so that there is appropriate choice for public authorities in selecting individuals. That will never be an exact science, but we are trying to ensure that we have a flow of sufficient teachers joining the teaching profession.

I am very pleased that the number of teachers is at its highest since 2009. That is a very strong platform on which to deliver education for young people in Scotland. We continue to keep under review the intake into initial teacher education, and we will take decisions according to the presence of teachers in the teaching workforce.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There are two supplementary questions. I ask members to be brief.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** The cabinet secretary knows that many—if not most—of the recent new teaching posts are on fixed-term contracts because they are funded by the pupil equity fund. Does he agree that that brings an undesirable uncertainty into the profession? What will he do to address that?

**John Swinney:** I accept that that brings an undesirable and unnecessary uncertainty. Pupil equity funding has been provided to schools on a

sustained basis, Scottish attainment challenge resources have been provided for a longer period and, indeed, the timescale for pupil equity funding and the Scottish attainment challenge has been extended by a further year.

I would have thought it reasonable for local authorities to provide full-time contracts for the individuals affected, because there should be adequate turnover in the natural turnover of teaching staff in our education system to enable us to accommodate any strain that might come from that issue. However, these are matters for local authorities to take forward. The Parliament often advises me to restrain the direction that I issue to local authorities, but I gently encourage local authorities to deliver full-time contracts in those circumstances.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** Local authority-level Opposition members often demand autonomy to decide how many teachers to provide. However, if the Scottish Government provides additional funding and Opposition councils cut teacher numbers, Tory MSPs such as Alexander Stewart are among the first to blame that on the Government. Does the cabinet secretary share my view that the Opposition cannot have it both ways?

**John Swinney:** Mr Gibson makes a very fair point, as he does on many things. It is important that the Government is providing resources to local authorities that have enabled us to get to a point at which we have the highest number of teachers in our schools in a decade. That is a really welcome and strong position. I am glad to have had such enthusiastic support from Mr Gibson in taking forward that policy position, and I look forward to that having a positive effect on education around the country.

## Police Scotland (Draft Budget 2020-21)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-20979, in the name of Liam Kerr, on Police Scotland underfunded in the draft budget. I call Liam Kerr to speak to and move the motion. He has up to 13 minutes.

15:14

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** I have 13 minutes to address a matter that is too grave and serious for anything other than a cold and blunt analysis. I hope that that will not be sidetracked by politicking this afternoon.

I have drafted a motion behind which I hope that we can all unite, because, as a Parliament, we have a common interest in ensuring that the police are able to carry out the difficult job that we ask of them and are prepared for the challenges that we ask them to take on—now and in the future, as technology develops, our understanding of issues such as mental health increases and the type of threats that we face as a society changes.

The simple proposition for which I seek acceptance is

“That the Parliament believes that Police Scotland is underfunded in the Scottish Government’s draft Budget 2020-21.”

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Liam Kerr:** Of course.

**Humza Yousaf:** The member asked for £50 million in the budget for policing. He might have seen that we have reached a deal with the Greens, which includes an extra £60 million for Police Scotland. I take it that he will now be able to stand up and say unequivocally that, yes, he will now support the Scottish budget.

**Liam Kerr:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that information. I was aware of it, because the answer to the Government initiated question came out 14 minutes ago. However, he cannot take that as a general acceptance of support for the budget, because, as the cabinet secretary knows, the budget is a lot bigger than just one issue. The important point that I will make this afternoon is that, when I talk about police underfunding, it is about much more than just £50 million for 750 officers. It is an important point that the cabinet secretary, wilfully or unintentionally, chooses to miss.

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Liam Kerr:** Let me make some progress, please.

The starting point must first be understood. Audit Scotland and the chief constable were clear that a significant uplift in funding was required just for the force to stand still—just to maintain the service that it currently provides. Picking up their words, we said ahead of the budget that a minimum of £50 million was required, otherwise the consequences were clear: fewer officers, rising crime and the public at risk. Unfortunately, neither the revenue nor the capital settlements that the SNP provided in the original draft budget or is providing now meets that risk.

We could spend the next couple of hours arguing about why that funding was not initially provided, but that does not help anyone move forward. The motion craves a basic statement—that “Police Scotland is underfunded”—and therefore begs the solution, not a debate about how we got here.

The figures are so huge that it is imperative that we make them real for people. According to the Scottish Police Federation, the reality is that two thirds of the police estate is more than 40 years old; in fact, one third is more than 70 years old. The maintenance backlog is almost £300 million, and more than a quarter of the estate is graded as being in poor condition. What does that mean on the ground? We have all seen revelations in the media of mould, leaks and rat infestations in police buildings across the country and ceilings in Broughty Ferry police station collapsing. Members should not forget that, as one commentator pointed out at the weekend, that applies to the entirety of the stations, including—in his example—interview rooms for rape survivors and other victims of crime.

When our officers leave those buildings, they get into fleet vehicles whose average maintenance cost is up by 16 per cent, due to half the fleet operating beyond replacement criteria. In evidence, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents said that the fleet manager and his team were

“being asked to play a form of Jenga with marked response vehicles”

as they juggled what was safe to drive.

Last week, at the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, I listened as the justice secretary talked about the budget apportioning £5 million to green the fleet. That is in the context of the federation saying that £30 million would be required just to get back to 2013 levels.

This is a funding environment that leads the chief constable to describe information technology capability as “poor”, due to underinvestment and

the lack of funding that has led to the lack of a national network. He has also said:

“Younger officers ... live in a digital mobile world and they ... almost have to step back into an analogue world.”

That was made clear in deputy chief officer David Page’s submission on the draft budget, when he said that Police Scotland will not be able to roll out smartphones or body-worn cameras to all officers. He said:

“This equipment, which is basic equipment issued to officers in England and Wales, was one of the key recommendations made by Dame Elish Angiolini’s independent review into complaints handling, investigations and misconduct issues.”

All of that is happening in a context in which demands on officers are rising. Because waiting lists for mental health services are at an all-time high, police officers often spend much of their time dealing with individuals who should be looked after by health services, but who have sadly fallen through the SNP-induced, increasingly large cracks in the system.

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** Does the member recognise that the Government’s distressed brief intervention programme deals precisely with that, including in his own patch in Aberdeen?

**Liam Kerr:** I recognise that—it is exactly the point that I am making. Waiting lists for mental health services are at an all-time high. The police are having to deal with that as a direct result of SNP underinvestment in services.

The police are also dealing with issues such as historic child abuse, human trafficking, terrorism, cybercrime, and, of course, drug problems. Scotland has seen a dramatic reduction in the number of rehab beds, leading to serious decline in support for problem drug users, which, in turn, leads to another demand on our police officers.

Operating in such conditions is unacceptable for any employee, so what must it be doing to the morale and wellbeing of our police officers? I will tell members. A survey that was done last summer reported that more than half of officers rarely or never had time for an uninterrupted break during working hours; two thirds said that the lack of resources to do the work was stressing them; and around half were stressed by being unable to provide the desired level of service to their community because of the lack of resources and heavy workloads.

Last September, Police Scotland’s chaplain wrote to the justice secretary to say that SNP underresourcing has left officers in his pastoral care “tired, frustrated and depressed”. He highlighted that public order officers had to wear protective clothing for days in a row even though it

was soiled, and that some officers were soaked as they did not have time to collect waterproofs.

I leave the last word on the current position to the Scottish Police Federation, which said:

“The police officers we represent are working harder than ever. They are under strain and it is taking its toll on their physical and mental health and their families. Their working conditions are not satisfactory.”

That is the situation in which the budget was initially presented.

As I said, the budget underfunds the police. However, those are not my words. Many members will have been as shocked as I was that, in the past few weeks, a number of senior police officers have publicly criticised what they insist is a derisory funding settlement for Police Scotland. Deputy chief officer David Page said:

“the current capital allocation for policing is amongst the lowest in UK policing on a per capita basis, is low compared to other public bodies in Scotland and will undoubtedly inhibit our ability to keep up with the threat, harm and risk posed to the people of Scotland from increasing crime, increasing cyber/digital crime and the continuing sophistication of serious and organised crime.”

The Scottish Police Federation said that it

“considers the proposed police budget to be woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the police service and in turn the needs of the public.”

It went on to say that the proposed budget allocation will “impede operational effectiveness” and increase the risk to the public.

The Association of Scottish Police Superintendents said that the capital budget

“falls considerably short of the estimated £80 - 100m investment required, year-on-year, to address long-standing and embedded structural deficiencies across the business areas of Estates, ICT and Fleet.”

The vice-chair of the Scottish Police Authority, David Crichton, said in a report to the board that

“the policing budget remains in deficit and ... this is unsustainable going forward”.

He also said that

“The anticipated capital allocation, while welcome, will not support the full scope of new investment required to achieve greater efficiencies and improved services.”

To my mind, the motion is made out, not by me or by any party in the chamber, but by the very officers who are being asked to work with the proposed funding settlement.

We can anticipate where the pushback will come from, although I would not have thought that it would prevent members from voting for the motion tonight. We will be asked, “Where will the money come from then?”, particularly given the finance secretary’s recent assurances that there is

no money down the back of the sofa, although we have discovered that perhaps that is not the case.

Let me put that into context. This year, the overall block grant will grow by more than £1 billion in real terms—a 2 per cent real-terms increase. Furthermore, the Prime Minister has committed to a massive uplift in funding, leading to a £96 million Barnett consequential that is directly and inextricably linked to police funding in England and Wales. That is £96 million from the United Kingdom Government for the police. In choosing not to pass all of that on in the budget, the SNP is making a direct choice. The trade union Unison said in a submission:

“In previous budgets the Scottish Government has announced that all consequential they received from Health spending would go to Health. We strongly urge that the sub Committee press upon the Scottish Government the idea that any consequentials from Policing budget increases be spent on policing in Scotland”.

It is difficult to argue with that.

Two amendments to the motion have been lodged and accepted. We cannot vote for Labour’s amendment. Although we acknowledge that it accepts the motion’s fundamental principle that the budget underfunds Police Scotland—and we are grateful to Labour for accepting that—we cannot accept an amendment that seeks to apportion the blame for historic underfunding to Police Scotland. Furthermore, the idea that the UK Government is responsible for the Scottish Government’s funding decisions over devolved matters in the context of the Scottish budget being up in real terms from when the SNP came to power in 2007 simply does not stack up.

**Humza Yousaf:** I am sure that Labour will speak to its amendment, but the member surely cannot ignore the fact that the discretionary budget has been cut by £800 million since 2010-11. Will he accept that fact?

**Liam Kerr:** The cabinet secretary needs to accept that the Scottish budget is up in real terms from when the SNP came to power. As I have outlined, £1 billion is coming to Scotland, with £96 million in Barnett consequentials for the police. Unison has said clearly that that £96 million should be passed on. If the cabinet secretary is not going to do that, he needs to stand in the chamber and explain exactly why.

We will not vote for the SNP’s amendment. There is much in the first half of the amendment that we can unequivocally agree with. In particular, we welcome the cabinet secretary’s acknowledgement that

“the workforce requires capital investment”

and take that as an acknowledgement that the current budget underfunds that requirement.

The inevitable reference to VAT that was paid as a result of the decisions that were taken by the SNP seven years ago is, as always, a diversion from the failures of this SNP Government. Every member in the chamber is aware that the SNP was warned that if it pressed ahead with the model that it proposed, VAT would not be reclaimable—but it did it anyway. Thanks to the hard work of Conservative MPs last year, VAT can now be reclaimed—which shows, of course, just how ineffective SNP MPs were and are.

In choosing to underfund Police Scotland in the budget, the SNP is undermining our police. It is the SNP’s choice not to fund improvements to police stations, to invest in police equipment or to maintain police numbers. It is the SNP’s choice to risk hindering the police’s ability to investigate crimes and to risk leaving the people of Scotland and police officers less safe, and it is the SNP’s choice to leave our officers and staff stressed, overworked and underresourced.

Given the evidence that I have presented, no reasonable parliamentarian can believe that the current draft budget represents an adequate funding settlement for our police. The Scottish Conservatives demand a different choice. We demand a police force that is funded and valued properly. I truly hope that the Parliament will unite behind my motion to send a signal that our police officers deserve better.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that Police Scotland is underfunded in the Scottish Government’s draft Budget 2020-21.

15:27

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** I am delighted to speak in the debate on police funding. I am pleased to say that, as a result of the on-going budget discussions that have been taking place since the initial publication of the draft budget, we have announced a deal with the Scottish Greens. I can announce that in that deal, we were able to allocate a further £13 million for Police Scotland’s resource budget and a further £5 million for its capital budget. Taken together, that means that there will be an uplift of £60 million for Police Scotland, which is more than £10 million more than the Conservative Party asked for for policing in Scotland. I am delighted that we have managed to work closely with our friends and partners in the Green Party—*[Interruption.]* Conservatives are saying “Oh!”, but working constructively with the Greens means that we are putting £60 million extra into Scotland’s police service, which I am delighted about.

**James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab):** How, in any way, can the cabinet secretary describe the capital

budget allocation as adequate when the police told us that it was £56 million short? An additional £5 million will not address the fundamental issues with the capital budget.

**Humza Yousaf:** There is an increase of almost 30 per cent on the capital budget for the current year, and in the current year there was an increase of almost 52 per cent. I of course concede that there are capital pressures, and the uplift will help to address a number of them.

In recent weeks, there has been no shortage of opportunities to talk about policing in Parliament. That is recognition from members across the chamber of the importance of Police Scotland. Although I am sure that the debate will be robust and that we will have differences of opinion on the motion and amendments, I have no doubt that every member who speaks in the debate, including those on my left in the Conservative Party and those on my right in Labour, will accept that our police officers and staff do an incredible job, day in and day out, to keep Scotland safe.

I am delighted that I can speak about the significant gains in the budget for policing in Scotland. The total budget for policing in 2020-21 will now be more than £1.2 billion, which means that, since 2013, we have invested more than £9 billion in policing in Scotland. The figure for 2020-21 is more than £140 million higher than the figure in 2016-17, which was the first year of the current parliamentary session, when we committed to a real-terms protection of the policing budget. I am delighted that that commitment has now been exceeded. Remarkably, that has been achieved against a backdrop of a decade of austerity, led by the Conservative Government, which has cut Scotland's discretionary resource budget for 2020-21, meaning that it will be around 2.8 per cent lower in real terms than it was in 2010.

I look forward to hearing, in the coming weeks, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer finally giving some clarity on next year's funding for Scotland. As I said, we have already committed to providing an extra £60 million for Police Scotland in 2020-21, which of course is well over what the Conservative Party asked for earlier this year. That is why it is disappointing that, despite the fact that we have exceeded the Conservatives' ask for policing, they still will not support the budget, which invests in our public services.

There will now be an increase of 5.1 per cent on the 2019-20 position, which will ensure that Police Scotland has the money that it requires to maintain officer numbers at current levels. That recognises the unprecedented events that Police Scotland will be dealing with in the coming financial year. The issues include planning for the still-very-real prospect of a no-deal Brexit, the need for significant policing resource in and

around the 26th conference of the parties, or COP26, and potential action stemming from Covid-19, or coronavirus disease 2019. The increase in the resource budget will also mean that Police Scotland can enhance its community policing capability. That demonstrates that the Government values and listens to its key public sector partners.

I mentioned the further capital budget increase of 28.6 per cent on the current year. Over the past three years, the capital budget has more than doubled, from a baseline of £20 million in 2017-18 to £45 million in 2020-21. That will allow Police Scotland to accelerate its commitment to greening its fleet, and therefore contribute to the Scottish Government's commitment to addressing the global climate emergency.

Members should not simply take my word for it. The Conservatives might like to pretend that we are underfunding the police, but senior members of the police, the Scottish Police Authority and the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents are clear that that is not the case. Following the publication of the budget, the chief constable, Police Scotland's deputy chief officer David Page and interim SPA chair David Crichton, among others, acknowledged that the settlement is greater than was expected. Those comments were of course made before ministers were able to confirm the additional uplift that I have highlighted today.

**Liam Kerr:** The cabinet secretary perhaps should not quote selectively because, in the same letter, Police Scotland slammed the overall funding settlement. Does the cabinet secretary recognise that Police Scotland's capital budget remains one of the smallest per capita among forces in the United Kingdom?

**Humza Yousaf:** As I said, we have increased the capital budget by almost 30 per cent. From a baseline of £20 million in 2017-18, we now have a capital budget of £45 million, so it has more than doubled.

In an attempt to find some sort of consensus, I acknowledge that there continue to be capital pressures, just as there will always be capital pressures on a number of the services that we fund, and that the chief constable may well have to prioritise certain projects over others. However, the settlement is a good one for the chief constable and for the police service as a whole.

It would be remiss of me to talk about funding for policing without mentioning COP26, as it has come up in every meeting that I have had with the SPA, the chief constable and other Police Scotland officers in the past few months. COP26 will be a great event in Glasgow in November, but it will put huge pressure on our police service. The

Scottish Police Authority has now provided estimated policing costs for consideration by the UK Government. The estimated costs will continue to be developed and validated, alongside independent scrutiny and financial assurance work.

I want to be absolutely clear that there is no precedent for COP26 anywhere in the UK. It is a vast undertaking that will put pressure on the resources that Police Scotland has at its disposal. Therefore, the Scottish ministers will continue to engage with the UK Government on our expectation that all costs arising from the decision to hold COP26 in Glasgow will be met by the UK Government. It would be good to hear from the Tories in one of their speeches that they agree that their UK Government colleagues must stump up every penny of the policing costs of COP26. Indeed, I am happy to take an intervention if Liam Kerr can confirm that it is his understanding that the Scottish Tories will stand up for policing in Scotland and demand that every penny of COP26 policing costs is met by their UK Government colleagues.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You are just closing, cabinet secretary.

**Humza Yousaf:** I am not surprised that nobody from the Conservative benches chose to stand up when I asked them to stand up for Scotland; instead, they chose to remain seated.

**Liam Kerr** *rose*—

**Humza Yousaf:** I am more than happy to take an intervention in my final minute.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I will allow that.

**Liam Kerr:** On that point, will the cabinet secretary recognise that, despite the new deal, he has still short-changed the police, given that he has an extra £96 million coming in Barnett consequentials?

**Humza Yousaf:** That was a waste of time. I should not have accepted the intervention, because Liam Kerr was not able to confirm that he agrees that the UK Government should meet the policing costs of COP26.

I am in my final minute, so I will come to one final point, which is that the UK Government must return the £125 million of VAT that it unfairly stole from Police Scotland. It was taken from the police in Scotland only and was not taken from any police forces elsewhere in the UK.

**Liam Kerr:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. The cabinet secretary refers to money being stolen. The word “stolen” implies impropriety, dishonesty and criminal activity. Words have meaning—referring to the money as

being stolen is a clear breach of the MSP code of conduct.

Will you ask the cabinet secretary to moderate his language, use accurate terms and deliver a speech in terms that are appropriate to his senior and responsible role?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is not a point of order. What individuals say in the chamber is up to them, but there are means by which complaints can be made about that. I say to all members that they should be respectful and that there are times when their use of language should be considered. Perhaps the cabinet secretary would like to address that point.

**Humza Yousaf:** I did not realise that Liam Kerr was such a sensitive soul when it comes to minding one’s language. If he is so sensitive about language, I would have thought that he would have pulled up his leader when he talked about backing the “boys in blue”, forgetting that there are 5,000 female police officers in Police Scotland. He might want to address that point.

Yes, the UK Government has retained £125 million of VAT that should never have been paid. It has pinched that money and is keeping it in the Treasury.

I hope that the Scottish Parliament will back my motion, applaud the excellent work that is done by police officers and staff around Scotland to keep us safe, acknowledge the 5.1 per cent increase in the draft 2020-21 budget, support our calls to bring the VAT back to Scotland and help us to keep investing in Police Scotland to keep Scotland safe.

I move amendment S5M-20979.3, to leave out from “believes” to end and insert:

“values the hard work of police officers and staff in keeping local communities safe; welcomes the ongoing work by Police Scotland to develop a workforce strategy that will inform the workforce mix, including specialist staff and community police officers required to deliver the 10-year policing strategy, *Serving a Changing Scotland*; recognises that this workforce requires capital investment, including to green the police fleet and to deliver a transformed police service; further recognises the exceptional and unprecedented demands currently facing policing in Scotland, including planning for a no-deal EU exit and COP26; supports the return of the £125 million of VAT previously paid to the UK Government, and recognises that discussions on the draft Budget 2020-21 are ongoing.”

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call James Kelly to speak to and move amendment S5M-20979.2.

15:39

**James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to take part in the debate, which the Scottish Conservative Party has brought to the

chamber. At the outset of my remarks, I pay tribute to our police officers and police staff, who work so diligently in communities around the country to keep the public safe.

The debate examines the serious matters of Police Scotland's budget and its management of the challenging backdrop against which policing is having to be conducted. If we look at budget settlements over recent years and at the challenges that senior police people tell us that they face, it is clear that there are real issues with the Police Scotland budget.

First, we must recognise the circumstances in which police officers are having to work. Just before Christmas, a survey reported that a third of police officers had experienced mental health issues, and that two thirds had felt sick while they were at work. Those are serious matters that Parliament must consider. The Government must also take on board the fact that people are going to their workplaces and encountering such issues.

I believe that, over the years, budget settlements have undermined the atmosphere and the culture in which our police work. We have heard from the trade union Unison about how changes that stem from centralisation have resulted in altered work patterns. Some tasks that were previously carried out by police staff are now being allocated to officers. That can only weaken the presence of front-line policing, and that will not be welcomed by people in affected areas. At First Minister's question time a couple of weeks ago, Colin Smyth gave the example of staff from the Dumfries area having been centralised to Glasgow to work in the surveillance unit.

If we examine crime rates, we see that they have been rising, in some respects. In the past four years, non-sexual violent crime has risen: for example, in 2018-19 it rose by 10 per cent. At the same time, the clear-up rate, which is 58 per cent, is at its lowest since 1979, which must be a matter of real concern.

Where the cabinet secretary's defence of the budget falls down is most clearly demonstrated by examination of Police Scotland's capital budget. Even with the change that has been announced this afternoon, it stands at £48 million. The police have clearly told us that £99 million would be required this year, which means that there is a shortfall of £56 million.

**Humza Yousaf:** In the spirit of coming to the budget negotiations with credible plans, I ask where James Kelly would have taken capital from and where he would invest capital in Police Scotland.

**James Kelly:** You are the cabinet secretary, so you are responsible.

**Humza Yousaf:** Yes, I am the cabinet secretary and the decision is mine.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Excuse me, gentlemen. You should not have private conversations with each other. Everything must be said through the chair, please.

**James Kelly:** You are the cabinet secretary. You are responsible for the Police Scotland—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Kelly, please speak through the chair.

**James Kelly:** Presiding Officer, I put it to the cabinet secretary that he is responsible for the Police Scotland budget and for bringing to Parliament a budget that is £56 million less than Police Scotland tells us it requires.

To illustrate that, we need look no further than the police estate. We are told that a quarter of police stations are not fit for purpose. The cabinet secretary himself rubbished that suggestion when I raised it in Parliament last month. However, we have seen the reality on the ground, which is that mushrooms are growing in the Dunoon police office, there is a leaking roof in Paisley and there is dampness in Forfar. In the Broughty Ferry office, the roof has fallen in—thereby demolishing the cabinet secretary's bluster.

Of the police's fleet of cars, 2,400 need to be renewed. Police Scotland told us that £40 million is required for that, with £13 million being needed in the first year. The capital budget will not meet that. It is no wonder that—as Scottish Labour reported last year—one police car a week breaks down.

To the Tories, I make this point: it is the reality that, since 2010, the UK Tory Government's budget choices have sought to shrink the public sector and its budget and, therefore, to shrink the settlement that is allocated to the Scottish budget. That has undermined Scottish budget settlements. The Tories should not lecture us about budget choices.

We have heard much bluster from the cabinet secretary, but the evidence on the ground is that police officers are working against a backdrop of massive challenges and that, in some areas, crime is on the rise. That is totally unacceptable. Furthermore, we have heard the cabinet secretary dismiss as "hyperbole" charges that have been put to him about the capital budget when, in fact, police stations are falling apart.

Those are serious matters, so I put it to the cabinet secretary that he should spend more time concentrating on the challenges that the police face and less time on his Twitter account. He should get on with the job of making sure that we get a budget settlement that, in total, makes the public safe and supports the police.



I move amendment S5M-20979.2, to insert at end:

“; considers it unacceptable that past budget decisions by Police Scotland have resulted in cuts to the number of officers in local policing divisions and redundancies for police staff, and notes the negative impact on Scottish budgets of UK Government austerity policies.”

15:46

**John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):**

I am delighted that the Scottish Green Party was able to come to an agreement with the Scottish Government that includes an additional £13 million in revenue and £5 million in capital to support modernisation of the police estate.

We lodged an amendment to the motion that was not selected for debate. It called for

“increased funding for community-based police officers”.

Quite rightly, the letter setting out the agreement that we have come to with the Scottish Government says that although decisions on deployment of the additional investment are, rightly, for the SPA and Police Scotland, the justice secretary will highlight to the SPA the need to refocus on community policing.

Last August, Gill Imery, who is Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary in Scotland, highlighted some of the challenges with the police estate. In particular, she said that

“In specific areas such as custody a lack of capital investment in the custody estate will impede efforts to deliver as efficient and effective a custody service as possible.”

I hope that some of the new money will go towards that.

We want an “effective and efficient” police service. I have to say that that is, largely, what we have. There is a lot of public support for the police, and it ill behoves colleagues to scaremonger about police safety. The reality of the situation is that the public have a lot of confidence in the police.

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):**

I understand why John Finnie wants to celebrate the £5 million additional capital funding. However, does he agree that that will go only a small way towards the £300 million investment that is required to bring the police's information and communications technology up to 21st century standards?

**John Finnie:** Daniel Johnson rightly identifies ICT as a significant issue. As I did, he served on the committee that examined the challenges around that.

The reality is that the budget round has been a bit of a wish list for Police Scotland. I am not

criticising it for that. For example, on body-worn cameras, the position that was clearly laid out in 2017 to the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing was that all the necessary impact assessments would be undertaken to ensure compatibility with existing ICT infrastructure before those pieces of equipment ever went beyond a trial. The reality is, of course, that Dame Elish Angiolini has suggested that they be rolled out nationally.

I will talk now about officer numbers—in particular, about the roles of police officers and police support staff, who make a significant contribution to the good work that Police Scotland does. One of the challenges is that we are all fixated on numbers. There is a commitment to having 17,234 officers. I asked the cabinet secretary's predecessor, Mr Matheson, whether he had a view on that, and he said that he did not. We should be looking at the contribution of the 17,234 officers, because everyone accepts that the nature of crime has altered. We are living in the digital age, so the question might be whether we want one police officer with the necessary powers or two digital experts. It might be that we want both. There are challenges.

We talk about the difficult discussions that take place about money, but difficult discussions about the future lie ahead, because police officers cannot be made redundant, whereas police support staff can. That has brought about the ridiculous situation in which well-remunerated officers with police powers have been doing jobs to which they should not have been deployed and for which they are not necessarily equipped.

I associate myself with James Kelly's remarks about the decade of austerity. I might not have used the phrase that he used, but he outlined the background against which the budget process has taken place.

The challenges that we hear about in delivery of a modern police service include mental health and the role of the Scottish Ambulance Service. Do those things show that we need a fundamental review of how public services work together? I suspect that my former police colleagues are not necessarily making the case that the moneys should, rather than going to Police Scotland, go to the health service or the Scottish Ambulance Service, but there are many challenges there.

I make no apology for highlighting in the chamber for the umpteenth time an area of significant growth within Police Scotland—the growth in chief-officer rank numbers. The idea was to have rationalisation and to move from having more than 20 chief officers—the vast majority of whom were chauffeur driven—to having an appropriate number. Ironically, the situation disadvantages the superintendents' associations, which are pivotal. They are the divisional officers.

However—ironically, again—they will perhaps be happy about the promotion opportunities that have been afforded them.

I am pleased that the Government's amendment mentions community officers, who represent everything that is positive about the service. They provide a uniformed presence on the street, which reassures people.

Hand-held devices have also been talked about in relation to capital. It is wholly appropriate that operational officers have them, although it is not necessarily the case that every officer should have one.

We also need to encourage the triage system that is applied with mental health services. The figures on police hours that have been saved as a result of that are important.

There are many challenges ahead, due not least to Brexit. The European arrest warrant, judicial co-operation and the real-time criminal intelligence that we get all affect how the police operate. There are also challenges to do with COP26 and how it will be dealt with. I will not labour the VAT issue, but we cannot ignore it, either.

I will leave it there.

15:53

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I, too, welcome this important debate and thank Liam Kerr for allowing Parliament an opportunity to consider at least some of the profound challenges that our police service faces.

As members know, Liberal Democrats consistently opposed the centralisation of policing in Scotland, but it is worth recalling that the main reason that SNP ministers gave for going down that route was the need to deliver savings in order to protect policing budgets. Eight years on, no one could deny that Police Scotland has delivered on its end of the bargain. Cuts have certainly been made, including the loss of 1,700 of the civilian staff who play a vital role, as John Finnie acknowledged, with many of those posts now being filled by officers.

Despite those cuts, Police Scotland remains in a dire financial position. That is not just what the Government's political opponents are saying; it is what Audit Scotland is saying and has been saying year after year; it is the strong message from the Scottish Police Federation, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents and even—belatedly—the Scottish Police Authority; and it was the unambiguous message from Chief Constable Iain Livingstone, who recently described the funding levels that are available to Police Scotland as “derisory”.

It is worth taking a moment to let the significance of that sink in. This is the time of year when those who are in receipt of public funding seek to make a case for increased resources—and resources have, indeed, been increased, as the cabinet secretary announced. However, for the chief constable to reach a point where he feels that he has no alternative but to declare very publicly to the SPA and, by extension, to the justice secretary that the funding that Scottish policing receives is “derisory”, is astonishing. It is also unprecedented.

When we look at the figures, we can see why Iain Livingstone, the federation and others have reached the conclusion that they have reached. On capital, Police Scotland and the SPA told the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing that the requirement last year was £99.3 million, which was more than twice the £43 million that was allocated. Although the funding is up by £5 million this year, with a further £5 million announced earlier today, it still falls well short of what is required. As the Scottish Police Federation has pointed out, Police Scotland enjoys the lowest capital allocation of almost any force in the UK, per capita.

On revenue too, the shortfall is significant. Despite a proposed increase for the coming year, the federation estimates that the starting point is a deficit of £42 million in 2019-20. Audit Scotland also recently concluded that the force needs an additional £50 million over the next two years to avoid cutting officer numbers.

Those are large sums, but what do they mean in practice? On the capital side, they mean that officers and staff have to cope with an IT infrastructure that has been described by the federation as “decrepit”. As the SPA stated:

“many of the IT systems are out of date, not joined up and cannot be upgraded”.

In addition to the impact that that has on officers and staff and their ability to carry out their roles, it also prevents Police Scotland from delivering the efficiencies that have been demanded by Government. That is simply not a sustainable position.

Things are little better when it comes to the police estate. Last year, the federation shone a light on “unsafe working conditions” across the country: rat infestations, crumbling plasterwork, dangerous electrics and even examples of officers having salvaged chairs from skips because they were in a better state than the ones that they already had. When confronted with those concerns, the justice secretary inexplicably dismissed them as “hyperbole” shortly before the ceiling collapsed in his local police station in Broughty Ferry.

On the fleet, although additional investment is welcome, it is not clear whether the £5 million that has been earmarked for greening the fleet comes close to meeting the need.

The human side to the underfunding is perhaps most alarming of all. We know that officers and staff are under more pressure than ever. Brexit is already placing an additional strain on resources, while COP26 in Glasgow later this year will have a profound impact on Police Scotland's ability to manage its range of responsibilities.

**Humza Yousaf:** Will there be an acknowledgement in any of this speech of Labour's amendment, which talks about a decade of austerity? Does Liam McArthur recognise the part that Liberal Democrats played not just in austerity but in Danny Alexander being the chancellor who would not give back the £125 million of VAT?

**Liam McArthur:** The minister has belaboured the point on VAT. As I said to him in the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, if we are to go down the route of suggesting that, once a principle is accepted, there is a retrospective repaying of funding, I look forward to Orkney and Shetland receiving 10 years' worth of retrospective funding for the road equivalent tariff.

We know that officers are under severe pressure. Meanwhile, the police have had to become the emergency service of last resort, particularly when dealing with individuals who can be struggling with a wide variety of mental health issues. At the same time, we now know, from recent expert research, the scale of the mental health issues that officers and staff themselves face. Almost half of officers suffer from exhaustion; a third reported going to work while mentally unwell; one in five officers reported high levels of depressed mood; and one in 10 reported drinking alcohol and/or taking prescription drugs as a coping mechanism. Only 3 per cent of officers agreed that Police Scotland cared about their wellbeing.

In response, the justice secretary said that he was

"very satisfied the support structures are in place for those officers for their mental wellbeing to be addressed."

That prompted Calum Steele of the Scottish Police Federation to say that

"it is difficult to understand the basis upon which Mr Yousaf was able to derive that satisfaction",

which is not shared by officers. Mr Steele also stated that replacing dedicated welfare officers with contracted-out services had been a "poor substitute", which my colleague Willie Rennie raised with the First Minister recently.

We ask the police to do a difficult and often dangerous job on our behalf. The Government's amendment—and, indeed, the cabinet secretary's opening remarks—rightly calls on us all to value

"the hard work of police officers and staff in keeping local communities safe".

We do not live up to that aspiration by providing the police with what the chief constable has described as a "derisory" level of funding.

Scottish Liberal Democrats will support the motion.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes the opening speeches, and we move to the open debate. The opening speeches ate into some extra time, so members should please be mindful that speeches should be six minutes long.

15:59

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** There are more than 1,000 additional officers in Scotland, but the Tories have cut 20,000 officers in England and Wales. Police officers in Scotland have received a 6.5 per cent pay increase, but in England and Wales they have had an increase of 2.5 per cent. There are 317 police officers per 100,000 people in Scotland, compared with 209 per 100,000 people in England and Wales. The police spend on public order and safety is £478 per person in Scotland; in England and Wales, the spend is £420. I outline those things not to demonstrate some sort of bizarre competition but to highlight the facts that put the Tory motion in perspective.

**Liam Kerr:** The member has chosen her data rather selectively. Police Scotland is the second-largest force in the UK, but it is the fifth-worst funded. Since 2013, Scottish policing has faced a cut of 22 per cent, which is more than in England and Wales, where policing has faced a cut of 20 per cent. Police Scotland is able to spend £9 per square metre on estate, whereas the UK average spend is £46 per square metre. What is her answer to that?

**Rona Mackay:** I am sorry, but the member spoke at such a rate that I could hardly take in what he said, to be honest. The facts that I read out are facts, and he cannot deny that.

In reality, as the cabinet secretary outlined, an additional £13 million in resource spending and £5 million in capital spending have been committed to support our police service and enhance community policing. That takes next year's total uplift to £60 million despite the fact that the UK Tory Government owes Scotland's emergency services £125 million in VAT repayments, which is needlessly depriving our police of extra resources. [Interruption.] Tory members can groan if they like,

but that is another fact, and there is radio silence from Westminster on that so far.

Despite a decade of austerity and the UK Government's disrespect and failure to provide clarity on funding for Scotland next year, the Scottish Government has committed to providing an extra £60 million for Police Scotland's annual budget. That represents a rise to more than £1.2 billion for the police.

Last weekend, the *Mail on Sunday* ran a sensationalist, over-the-top piece that was written by Liam Kerr. The newspaper was happy to publish such a piece, as it is entirely in line with its political persuasion. I am aware that the ridiculous headline for Liam Kerr's piece, which read

"Police farce! The SNP has abandoned our boys in blue",

was not written by him, but it was retweeted and quoted by the new leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Jackson Carlaw. What century are we in? Is Jackson Carlaw even aware that the divisional commander for the Greater Glasgow division, which takes in his Eastwood constituency, is Chief Superintendent Hazel Hendren? She is not a boy in blue, and nor is my amazing area commander in East Dunbartonshire, Lorna Gibson. There are around 5,000 women officers in Scotland, and it is more than a century since the first woman was added to the police establishment, in September 1915. It is time to stop perpetuating sexist stereotypes—the fact that the Tories seem happy to do that shows just how out of touch they are with reality. Stories like that undermine public confidence in the police and do our hard-working officers a great disservice.

To say that policing is in crisis and that the SNP has abandoned Police Scotland is utter nonsense. It really is the height of hypocrisy to suggest that. Although the Conservatives claim that the Scottish Government is underfunding the police, some senior members of Police Scotland, the SPA and the ASPs are clear that that is not the case. Chief Constable Iain Livingstone said:

"I have made our financial situation clear in recent weeks and I welcome the package announced by the Scottish Government. The creation of a single national service has enabled responsive and visible local policing to be maintained and transformed how we deal with serious crime and major incidents."

David Crichton, who is the vice-chair of the SPA, stated in a paper to the SPA board:

"I do want to acknowledge a settlement that is better than might have been expected".

In his submission to the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, David Page stated:

"The draft funding settlement for policing in 2020/21 includes an uplift of revenue funding ... This is something that we welcome."

Of course, there are pressures on the police and it is entirely acceptable for the Scottish Police Federation to ask for more money. That is normal and expected, as it represents its members' best interests and there are challenges ahead.

However, policing in Scotland is currently facing exceptional and unprecedented demands, including European Union exit—which is not a situation of our making—COP26 and Covid-19. The resources for those demands are firmly the UK Government's responsibility.

Every day, our police face more diverse challenges. They are often the first responders to people who have mental health issues, and they face the increasing challenges of cybercrime and the rising rate of sexual crime, among many others. I know that all members agree that the police do a fantastic job. Working alongside partners, Police Scotland has reduced crime by around 42 per cent over the past decade, which includes a significant reduction in violent crime.

I hope that all members can come together to recognise the great work that Police Scotland does. The police know that they will always have the backing of the Scottish Government and that, whatever challenges they face—financial or otherwise—we are committed to working with them to alleviate the pressures.

16:05

**Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con):** I am grateful for the work of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing. The sub-committee's report highlights gaps in the current budget that must be addressed.

Scotland's police force relies on consistent and sustainable funding if it is to operate as effectively as possible, with the utmost efficiency. I am sure that all members can agree on that. However, the current allocated capital budget for Police Scotland, which is intended to cover the police estate, IT and the fleet, does not go far enough. That view is not held by our party alone—far from it. Senior figures from various police branches across Scotland think that that is the case and have made their voices heard, strongly. For instance, the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing heard from representatives of the Scottish Police Federation, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents and the Scottish Police Authority. Surely, those representatives' concerns, which reflect their insight and perspective, need to be taken seriously and addressed.

Underfunding our police force underserves our police officers and, in turn, the public. Local police officers deserve the absolute confidence of the communities that they serve. What appearance do sub-par police stations, ageing vehicles and

outdated IT systems present to the public? If there is not appropriate funding to address such issues in full, the reputation of our police service is at stake, despite our officers' best efforts in their day-to-day work.

The burdens of operating in continually underfunded circumstances can—understandably—place a great deal of strain on our police force. Many officers consistently work above and beyond what is expected of them in challenging situations, often without the resources that they need. That can have a knock-on effect on officers' mental health, which is particularly worrying when we know that they come up against and devote time to the challenges of drug abuse, violent crime and terrorism. The frustrations that officers feel are symptoms of what Calum Steele, from the Scottish Police Federation, described as the “chronic underfunding” that Police Scotland is experiencing.

Knowing that, we cannot accept a budget that does not give officers the resources that they need to keep our communities and the public safe.

**Humza Yousaf:** I have been listening carefully to Maurice Corry. Will he explain why his party said that £50 million would be acceptable in a budget deal but somehow a £60 million uplift for policing is unacceptable?

**Maurice Corry:** We said that that was a minimum—[*Interruption.*] It was a minimum. This has been going on too long, and that was a minimum for now, to get us through.

Police Scotland is in desperate need of modernisation, not least in terms of its IT capabilities. Our police force has long required an extensive IT upgrade that moves the force on from outdated and backward processes. Such an upgrade is necessary for a number of reasons. The advances of cybercrime, for instance, require our police force to be equipped to meet modern-day challenges with a digital approach that the current system lacks.

Moreover, as Deputy Chief Officer David Page said to the sub-committee, there is a need for body-worn cameras and smartphones for police officers. Such an approach is long overdue. Officers in England and Wales benefit from such equipment as standard issue, which shows the need for Police Scotland to keep pace. The Scottish Government must equip Police Scotland in that regard. Such measures provide a vital layer of safety for officers, so it is a serious concern that the allocated budget does not reflect their provision. Linked with that, investment in body-worn video is much needed. Video would be an asset in the investigation of any complaints of misconduct. Overall, such upgrades are not mere add-ons to the work of Police Scotland and its

officers; they are integral to safeguarding the police and the public whom they serve.

The limited budget threatens to overlook the maintenance of the police estate. If a quarter of police buildings are in poor condition, as the SPF has stated, that will not improve perceptions of Police Scotland as it seeks to modernise and innovate as a national service. We must think carefully about the impression that that will give to vulnerable victims as they enter police stations that are in worsening condition, not to mention the effect on staff and officers who work there every day.

On improving the fleet of vehicles, the capital budget yet again has significant underinvestment. The sub-committee heard evidence that £13 million would be needed in the first year to upgrade the fleet as required, yet only £5 million has been allocated to that, which raises serious concerns over how efficient and far-reaching that investment can be in maintaining police vehicles. According to the SPF, that shortfall will increase replacement costs in years to come. With reports of regular breakdowns and police officers having to drive deteriorating and ageing vehicles on duty, marked response vehicles clearly need a sustainable improvement in funding and not temporary short-lived fixes.

The current budget allocation hinders Police Scotland from achieving the full transformation that its officers and support staff desire and need. Police Scotland is, of course, required to prioritise how it will use its budget, especially when it comes to the welfare, health and safety of police officers. However, that should not be at the expense of wider structural investment that will see key improvements made. Scotland's police force requires much more funding than just enough to get by for the meantime. It needs transformative and embedded change to increase its efficiency, creating true value for a service that prioritises safety.

16:11

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** Here we are again with another brass-necked Tory motion on the subject of justice. It is brass-necked because there is no mention of Tory austerity, which is driving the overall reduction in our budget. As with every other issue that we debate in the chamber, austerity is simply brushed aside—it does not affect the Tories, so why talk about it? Austerity affects our communities in two ways with regard to policing—through the budget that we can give to policing and through the devastation that austerity causes in communities across Scotland. It is impactful and it should have been included in the Tory motion if they want to be taken seriously.

**Liam Kerr:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Fulton MacGregor:** Not just now; I want to make progress.

The motion is brass-necked because it makes no mention of the £125 million of VAT that is owed to our police force; not once has any of the Tories here fought for that. What are you going to say about that in your summing up? Should we get that money back or should it be kept by Westminster? I would like to hear your view on that; I am interested to know.

The motion is also brass-necked because it makes no mention of the fact that our police service is much better resourced and protected than the service in England, where your party is in power.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr MacGregor, I remind you to speak through the chair.

**Fulton MacGregor:** I am sorry, Presiding Officer.

As the cabinet secretary said, there is no mention of external factors such as Brexit or COP26; I am delighted to say that we will have an evidence session on the latter of those two at the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing.

Finally, the motion is brass-necked because the Tories know that budget discussions have been on-going, yet there is no indication of what they would cut. However, there is no need for that because the mature parties in the Parliament have stood up to the plate. It is great news that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance has been able to announce a deal with the Greens today. I heard members on the Tory benches laughing when that was mentioned earlier. I have no idea why they were laughing about the fact that we are about to pass the budget; perhaps they can answer that as well.

**Liam Kerr:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Fulton MacGregor:** No; I want to make progress.

Having said all that, I thank the Tories for continuing to make the case for independence with every motion that they lodge. Just imagine what we could do with our resources if we were not reliant on the UK Government deciding when and how much of our money we can spend. As I said, it is no surprise that the independence parties have stood up to the plate.

**Liam Kerr:** Can I take it from that that the member thinks that it is okay not to pass on the full £96 million in Barnett consequentials to Police Scotland?

**Fulton MacGregor:** A very good deal was put forward in the budget and it was increased today. Liam Kerr came to the chamber with a pre-prepared speech—he admitted that he got that information 14 minutes before he spoke. He has no answer to the fact that there is £10 million more in the budget than the Tories asked for as a minimum. They keep saying that that is a minimum. I hope that Mr Kerr and his party will support the budget.

Despite the austerity that has been imposed on us, which has led to our resource budget from the UK Government for 2020-21 being around 2.8 per cent lower than it was in 2010, policing services in Scotland have been maintained and improved.

As Rona Mackay rightly said, there has been an increase of 1,025 police officers from the position that was inherited in 2007. That contrasts with cuts of up to 20,000 officers in England and Wales. Even in a scenario in which forces in England and Wales replace the officers who have been cut, there would be around 24 officers per 10,000 of population, which is still well below the rate in Scotland of 32 officers per 10,000 of population.

Our commitment is supported by the decision of the Government in the draft budget to invest £60 million in Police Scotland's annual budget. More than £9 billion has been invested in policing since 2013, and Police Scotland's budget has been increased in every one of the past five years, which clearly shows the Scottish Government's position on the matter.

The Conservatives may like to make out that the Scottish Government underfunds the police, but as others have said, that does not reflect the facts.

**James Kelly:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Fulton MacGregor:** No, I do not have time. My apologies, Mr Kelly.

The fact is that Police Scotland's capital budget has been more than doubled between 2016-17 and 2020-21. As other members have said, it includes, for example, £5 million of extra funding to allow Police Scotland to accelerate its commitment to greening its fleet, and a further £37 million uplift to the Scottish Police Authority resource budget, which exceeds by £12 million the Scottish Government target.

The record of Police Scotland even in austerity is an impressive one, and I am glad that Liam McArthur made that point. The force has helped to reduce crime by around 42 per cent over the past decade, which includes significant reductions in violent crime. Over the past 10 years, crime has been on a downward trend in Scotland, having decreased by 27 per cent since 2009-10.

It is important that we always pay tribute to the police officers—the men and woman—who do the job day in, day out. It is easy for us to stand here and argue the case one way or another, but as a local MSP, I am always impressed by their amazing work. Just last week, two local community officers covering Coatbridge north popped into my office and told me about an exciting new project that they are running with local young people at primary schools: early intervention in action and positive policing in the community.

The Conservative motion is completely misleading as it leaves out any context. I am not saying that it is all rosy, and neither is the cabinet secretary. I am sure that the cabinet secretary would like to give more to policing—even more than what has been agreed today. However, while we are tied to austerity, I think that we are doing a pretty good job of protecting the police budget, driving down crime and keeping our streets safer. That is thanks to the hard work and dedication of our men and women in blue.

16:17

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** I am happy to participate in the debate and recognise the key role of the police in keeping our communities safe and secure.

I will make a couple of general points about the budget process before commenting specifically on the underfunding of Police Scotland. The budget is always a difficult process, which this year has been compounded in part by the delays and uncertainty that have been created by the Tory Government. Although it is difficult for us, it is a great deal more troubling for local groups and organisations that cannot plan for the future and whose staff face potential redundancy.

With regard to the deal that has been done, why was the money not in the budget already? We really deserve better than a bit of parliamentary choreography, whereby money is held back, there is a bit of discussion and the money is found. We need something more mature, rational and logical than that.

There have been significant criticisms of the Scottish budget by experts, including the Fraser of Allander institute and Professor Graeme Roy, who commented that the budget

“doesn’t answer the questions the public, and MSPs, are most likely to ask: what difference will it make, and does it actually follow the priorities being set?”

Given the opaqueness and lack of transparency, it is important to understand the role of MSPs in cutting through it. A key way of doing so is for MSPs to give a voice to those who are on the front line—those who are living with the consequences

of budget decisions that are made here. That is why the debate on police budgeting matters, and although the justice secretary may not wish to listen to MSPs, it is not good enough to dismiss that direct evidence. Scottish police officers, staff and unions are saying that there is a serious problem here. It is simply an abdication of responsibility to shrug a ministerial shoulder and say, “If you don’t like it, lump it, or you go sort it.” Perhaps the justice secretary should be asking more questions of the finance secretary about the inadequate capital allocation that he has been given.

It must be the job of Government to be explicit in its priorities, to listen when there are serious concerns, to interrogate the consequences of its spending choices and then to be prepared to change.

**Humza Yousaf:** I am grateful to Johann Lamont for giving way. Perhaps she will be able to answer the question that James Kelly was unable to answer. From where in the justice capital budget would she get additional money for policing? Should we not build Barlinnie prison? Should we not build the female custodial estate? Those are the choices. I am delighted with the additional 30 per cent uplift in police capital budgets.

**Johann Lamont:** He did not listen to my point. I would not be starting from this position, but I would also want an army of civil servants to help me solve the problem. I would be going to the finance secretary and asking why that allocation is so inadequate.

It is not good enough to look at the consequences of the Government’s choices and then respond to the issues that people direct through them. We know that, because of the active choices of the Scottish Government, Police Scotland is underfunded and local authorities are being forced to make yet more serious and damaging cuts to local services and to increase, again, local charges and taxes.

That reveals clear evidence of the absence of joined-up thinking in relation to the budget, and that has a direct impact on the security of local communities. For example, in Glasgow, there have had to be real cuts to community safety funding. Locally important initiatives, such as the hot spot intervention team, have been discontinued. An approach that sought to divert young people in identified hot spots for antisocial behaviour is to end, at the same time that recorded crimes by 8 to 15-year-olds in Glasgow have increased. That makes no sense at all. When that is coupled with cuts to criminal justice social work, for example, we see how it leads to increased pressure on the police to deal with problem behaviour at a time when police budgets are already inadequate.

This is not a parliamentary game, where you put people behind the eight-ball and ask them what they would do. There are real-life consequences to the choices that the Scottish Government is making. It is not good enough to celebrate some headline initiatives; the Government needs to do the heavy lifting. If the police are telling you that the money is derisory and they are incapable of doing their job, it is your obligation to listen and to make decisions that are driven by evidence and need.

Police Scotland is underfunded. So is local government. Those who are paying the price are local people whose rights to peace and security are not being met. I urge the Scottish Government and the cabinet secretary to do their job.

16:23

**Angela Constance (Almond Valley) (SNP):** The Tories started the debate by saying that matters were “too grave and serious” for cheap “politicking”, yet recent tweets and articles in the Daily Mail have done just that.

What we have is a one-line motion from the Tory boys in blue, to coin a phrase, that encapsulates neither the successes nor the challenges of modern-day policing in Scotland. Nor does it reflect the facts, because despite the fact that our discretionary budget from the UK Government is around 2.8 per cent lower in real terms than it was a decade ago—which equates to an £800 million cut—the Scottish Government is proposing an extra £60 million for Police Scotland. That is a massive increase. It equates to a £50 million uplift for the SPA resource budget, which more than exceeds the Scottish Government’s commitment to protect the police budget in real terms.

The challenge for the Conservative Opposition—although they now support the budget—is that they asked for an additional £50 million for the police, and the Government is delivering an additional £60 million.

**Liam Kerr:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Angela Constance:** No, I will not, Mr Kerr, because you had 13 minutes and I have only six—but I am about to be even-handed. The challenge for the Government is that, because it is delivering that very welcome increase, it will be pressured in future years to either maintain or increase the new baseline figures.

Since the Government was re-elected in 2016, we have seen a continuing trend in increasing funding for both resource and capital. I more than accept that Opposition parties and, indeed, stakeholders and community voices are entitled to

make a case for more money for policing, but some people are, of course, more successful in making that case than others. It is a shame that some of those voices could not simultaneously join the Scottish Government and demand that Her Majesty’s Treasury pay back the £125 million that it owes us, given that we had to pay a VAT bill when south of the border did not. So much for a partnership of equals.

It is a fact that we continue to have a higher number of police officers than there were at any time during the previous Administration. I am pleased to say that that includes 5,000 female police officers. During my time as the constituency MSP for Almond Valley, there have been at least three female divisional commanders for West Lothian. I accept that there is more to do to create a truly diverse police force that reflects the community that it seeks to serve, but we need to recognise and celebrate the fact that the police force has changed a lot since the days when women officers were issued handbags and skirts as part of their uniforms.

I know that the Tories do not like comparisons with England—I am not surprised by that—but there is a bigger and better comparison. Scotland is above the European Union average, with 322 police officers per 100,000 of the population. That compares with around 212 police officers per 100,000 of the population in England and Wales.

It is imperative that we really understand the experience at the local level and scratch beneath national statistics and headline figures for a richer debate—that is, of course, lacking in the Tory motion. For example, I fully recognise and welcome the national figures that demonstrate that crime is at its lowest level since 1974 and that the number of adults who experience a crime has fallen from one in five to one in eight since 2008-9. However, in West Lothian more recently, there has been an 8 per cent increase in recorded crime, some of which has been driven by an increase in sexual offences.

I know that, with the formation of Police Scotland, we have seen the introduction of more specialist support, such as the historical cases unit, which is very important in encouraging the reporting of past and present crimes. We know that the police service does not operate in isolation, so the increased funding for victim support, criminal justice social work and the equally safe strategy is very welcome. Good partnership working is imperative.

Historically, the local council in my area used to fund additional community police officers, as it recognised the importance of that in prevention. It is deeply regrettable that it backtracked on that commitment. I do not demur from the fact that the public pound is precious across the public sector,



but the years of austerity have resulted in short-sighted decisions, and the council has now returned to supporting community officers engaging with schools. That must be welcomed, of course.

We must remain resolute in our commitment to community policing, and we must have the courage to make long-term commitments. That is why I am keen to know more from the cabinet secretary about how the additional funding for policing that he has secured in the budget will help to protect and value community policing. That is particularly important, with policing being increasingly focused on addressing vulnerability and the consequences of inequality. The Tories did not mention that in their one-line motion, of course.

I had a really positive experience recently when I reported concerns, as a citizen and not as an MSP, about a vulnerable elderly gentlemen whom I had a chance encounter with. I place on record my thanks to the community police officer involved.

16:29

**Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con):** The upholding of justice and the rule of law is one of the great challenges for Government in Scotland today. That is so in spite of continued ramped-up and repeated rhetoric about the supposed respect for human rights, which is increasingly nowhere to be seen, save in the self-promoting language of the SNP Government.

The Scottish Conservatives have consistently called on the Government to guarantee greater revenue funding for the police, which would allow Police Scotland to continue providing an already overstretched and struggling service; £50 million would safeguard 750 police officers, making sure that Scots can walk the streets in safety. During this parliamentary session, my party colleagues successfully lobbied the UK Government for the refund to the police and fire services of £35 million of VAT payments.

It is well-trodden ground that, under the SNP, the police have faced severe real-terms cuts to their capital budget, which is one of the smallest per capita in the UK, with inadequate increases in revenue funding since the SNP came to power 13 years ago—this is not just about a short fix 14 minutes ago. Yet, due to increases in police spending south of the border, the Scottish Government will receive an extra £96 million in Barnett consequential this year alone. Sadly, this SNP Government does not plan to hand much of that to Police Scotland but plans rather to use it to plug its profligate spending in other areas.

**Humza Yousaf:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Gordon Lindhurst:** I will allow a brief intervention.

**Humza Yousaf:** I thank Gordon Lindhurst for allowing a brief intervention.

When I spend that money on the Prison Service, community justice and the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, which all get an uplift in the budget, is that “profligate spending”?

**Gordon Lindhurst:** That is not what we are talking about.

**Humza Yousaf:** That is where the money is going.

**Gordon Lindhurst:** It is not. That is the problem. The money is going to other things—not to those areas that it should be going to.

We see the consequences of that flawed approach in Edinburgh. The SNP-Labour council administration has just waved through the ending of its £2.6 million contribution to policing this city, driven largely by its savings cuts of £88 million for the next three years. It is politically opportunistic to suggest that the reason for those cuts is anything other than the SNP Government’s cuts to council funding in real terms. If the SNP Government will fund neither the nationalised police force nor the councils that might assist, who will? Considering Westminster’s increase and projected continuing increases in the Scottish budget, that is indefensible. The loss of that funding means 50 fewer community police officers in Edinburgh, which cuts police visibility in our communities. I know those community officers because I see them at the local community council meetings, where they come to assist the local communities.

The trade union Unison has publicly called for a commitment from the Government to protect and fully pass on the policing consequential to the police service. Why not? That is the question, and it demands an answer here today.

Structural funding issues will halt modernisation of the force, leaving us lagging behind when it comes to new types of crime, such as cybercrime, and other types of organised crime. Our police force has been left behind when it comes to the most basic infrastructural problems, which we have already heard about.

**John Finnie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Gordon Lindhurst:** No, sorry—not at this point.

There is a £300 million maintenance backlog across the police estate. The money that has been found today will not cover that. Last Monday, Deputy Chief Officer David Page said:

“the current capital allocation for policing is amongst the lowest in the UK policing ... and will undoubtedly inhibit our ability to keep up with the threat ... posed to the people of Scotland”.

That is what the SNP, which has been in power for 13 years, has done to Scottish policing, in spite of the fact that it has benefited from preferential funding settlements from the Westminster Government.

On the issue of police funding, we have dangerous shortfalls in resources, infrastructure and technology, which, every day, hamper our ability to deal with the crime that so many suffer from. At the same time, south of the border, there are increased and consistent commitments to police funding and numbers. Here, we see an SNP Government that is determined to disregard the issues that are facing our police force. The SNP's record on police funding has been examined and found wanting. The Scottish Conservatives are, however, committed to upholding a strong and fully funded justice system in Scotland. We are, and will remain, the party of law and order.

16:35

**Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP):** All of that begs the question of what the Tories are doing in England.

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this debate on justice. It provides an opportunity to consider what the Tories have said about policing in Scotland, and to shine a light on the SNP Government's record of delivery of policing in Scotland. Indeed, the SNP Government has a record on policing that it can be proud of. Despite constraints on Scotland's public services through a decade of UK austerity and Tory cuts, policing services have been maintained and improved under this Government, and they will be improved by the budget.

Across resource and capital funding, the Scottish Government has increased Police Scotland's budget in every one of the past five years. Since 2013, the Scottish Government has invested more than £9 billion in policing in Scotland. I note, as other members have, the email that was received today that indicated that a further £13 million resource and £5 million capital funding has been allocated. The Scottish Government has backed up promises for reform with investment, and the further commitment in the budget underlines that. In England, the Tories have closed more than 600 police stations.

We know that there have been significant improvements in the SPA's financial management that have been recognised by the Auditor General. In the most recent report and accounts published

last month, Audit Scotland acknowledges improving systems of financial control.

That record of investment has to be set in context, because the hypocrisy that is on display in today's motion is staggering. We have the Tories demanding more and more money, and denigrating the SNP Government budget, but they say nothing about the fact that Scotland's resource budget from the UK Government for 2020-21 will be around 2.8 per cent lower in real terms than it was in 2010, and that our budget is being set despite the UK Government's failure to provide clarity on next year's funding for Scotland.

The Scottish Government has committed to providing an extra £42 million, plus the extra money that the cabinet secretary has told us about today. That represents a 3.6 per cent rise to more than £1.2 billion, which will ensure that the service can keep officer numbers at current levels, as well as maintaining and modernising its estate. Police Scotland's capital budget has doubled from £20 million in 2016-17 to £40 million in 2020-21.

When they are talking about policing, the Tories in this place should direct their critique and attention to their friends in the UK Government, particularly the Treasury. Although the SNP Government has ensured that Police Scotland will benefit from being able to reclaim VAT of around £25 million a year that was to be paid to the UK Government, the Scottish ministers continue to press the UK Government to pay back the £125 million that Police Scotland paid in VAT before the Treasury reversed that unfair policy in 2018. Fifteen letters have been sent to the UK Government and we have received no answer. There is no respect agenda for this place among the Tories. When will the Treasury see sense and give back that essential funding? Perhaps the Tories will raise the issue with their UK Government friends, instead of carping from the sidelines as they always do.

I have a further ask of my colleagues on the Opposition benches. Policing in Scotland is facing exceptional and unprecedented demands including EU exit, COP26, and Covid-19 coronavirus. Our ministers will continue to negotiate with the UK Government to ensure that it meets the full costs of policing EU exit and of hosting the COP26 summit. The Scottish Government has been clear that any costs relating to EU exit should not have a detrimental impact on Scotland's public finances and policing, and I agree. Let us hear what the Conservatives have to say about that. I hope that they will clarify their advocations to the UK Government in that regard.

If the Opposition is not talking down education in the chamber, it is talking down health, and if it is not talking down health, it is talking down justice, but we know what the core issue is, as do the

people of Scotland. The SNP Government is delivering on all those areas and it is delivering on policing in particular.

Policing in Scotland is performing well. The 2018-19 annual report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland stated:

"we continue to be impressed by the determination of officers and staff to delivering an effective policing service to the communities they serve."

Working alongside its partners, Police Scotland has reduced crime by around 42 per cent over the past decade, which includes significant reductions in violent crime. Over the past 10 years, crime has been on a downward trend in Scotland, having decreased by 27 per cent since 2009-10. The majority of adults say that the police are doing a good or excellent job in their local area, and 77 per cent of adults say that they feel very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood .

All that has been delivered by our hardworking police. Our police officers and staff do an excellent job. I will end by paying tribute to all our police staff, men and women, and thank them for everything they do to keep all our communities safe.

16:41

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in this debate. I say to Richard Lyle that it is not about talking things down but about injecting a note of reality into our debates in the chamber. We all value our local police and I, for one, am grateful to all the police in L division for everything that they do in my local community. They are often the first on the scene, sometimes facing dangerous situations, helping to restore order and preventing crime. They make my local community feel safe and secure.

We need to make sure that they are adequately resourced to do their job, but I fear that the thin blue line is getting even thinner. I watched the creation of a single police force in the context of the impact that it had on my local community. Teething problems are to be expected in any major reorganisation—but then came the cuts, not just in my area but across Scotland. First, the jobs of support staff were cut. They did the valuable job of administration so that police officers were released to engage in visible policing instead of being anchored to their desks. Now, officers spend far too much of their time processing paperwork. Secondly, elements of the service were centralised. The cells were closed down in Dumbarton and officers had to travel further, to Clydebanks, using up valuable time that could have been deployed elsewhere.

There was even a proposal at one stage—absurd though it may seem—to merge two

divisions in my local area that crossed the Clyde, which would have resulted in a huge land mass to police effectively. The proposal made no geographical sense and it was completely arbitrary. After some robust local protests, the plans were abandoned. Then came the proposal to close down the Dumbarton office, with no alternative police station, and to sell the land for housing. Quite where officers were supposed to muster was clearly not even a consideration.

So, although I am not Police Scotland's number 1 fan, given that track record, I recognise that it needs to be adequately resourced if it is to do its job effectively. The SNP Government has singularly failed to engage with Police Scotland about the warnings over funding that it has been voicing, increasingly loudly, for some time. I understand that the chief constable, Iain Livingstone, reportedly told the Scottish Police Authority that Police Scotland's annual budget is £200 million less than it was when the single force was created in April 2013.

I will focus on the capital allocation of £40 million in the draft budget, which is significantly less than is required. That has been the pattern for the past few years. Last year, the police got half of what it needed. That is not a question of what would be nice to have. The capital is essential if we are to have an efficient and effective modern police force.

Things as basic as smartphones and body cameras are routinely available to police in England but are not being issued in Scotland, although that was planned. Underinvestment in the police car fleet is beginning to take its toll, with one car breaking down every day. The Scottish Government has just announced another £5 million of capital for the police, which is welcome, but it is a fraction of what the police tell us that they need. The Scottish Police Federation has told us about the strain that police officers are under, with two thirds of police officers saying that the lack of resources is causing them stress.

Police Scotland comes 38th in a list of 43 police forces in the UK for the amount of capital that forces are given. Just the other week, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice was on his feet denying that there is a problem with the condition of the police estate when, unfortunately, the ceiling fell down in his local station, leaving him a bit red faced and exposed. One would think that he would have learned his lesson and would come to the chamber with a more honest appraisal of the challenges that face the police. I regret the fact that the country has had to deal with a decade of Tory austerity, but I do not expect the cabinet secretary to take a blinkered approach to the needs of the police.

The cabinet secretary talked about the additional revenue and capital, but he should acknowledge that that falls well short of what is required. The capital is at least £50 million less than required, and the revenue is a lot less, too. If members agree with the chief constable that the budget is £200 million less than it was in 2013, no matter which way we spin it, that is a cut in real terms and cash terms.

We should all be concerned by the consequences of that, not just for police officers but for the communities that they serve. Crime is rising. Recordings of non-sexual violent crime are up over the past four years, while sexual crimes have increased by 8 per cent and are at their highest level since statistics were first recorded. At the same time, clear-up rates of serious crimes are falling, for non-sexual violent crimes and for sexual crimes. Indeed, for sexual crimes, the rate is now at its lowest since 1979.

I recognise that money is tight, but the decisions that we make in the Parliament have consequences for the police and for the communities that they serve. The cabinet secretary would do well to acknowledge that, rather than pretend that everything is wonderful when, in reality, the experience on the ground is very different.

16:47

**Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to commend Police Scotland for its service the length and breadth of our country. As the representative of Glasgow Anniesland, I have had the pleasure of directly seeing the positive impact of Glasgow north-west and Drumchapel police in protecting and providing a service to my constituents. Of course, it is not only in my constituency that I have witnessed the excellent service of police officers. Here in the Parliament building, workers and visitors are kept safe because of the dedicated work of the police and security services.

Across Scotland, our police force continues to work to reduce crime and increase safety. Over the past decade, Police Scotland, in collaboration with its partners, has reduced crime by around 42 per cent. That did not happen without money. Even with all the effort in the world, it could not have happened if there had been no resources. The reduction includes a significant reduction in violent crime, which has been reaffirmed by the most recently released statistics for the crime rates in Glasgow. Recorded crime remains at one of the lowest levels since 1974, and 77 per cent of adults say that they feel very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark. That is because of our police service. The money that

goes to the police service enables the people in it to deliver that service.

The most recent crime and justice survey showed that, in 2017-18, 12.5 per cent of adults in Scotland experienced crime, which is lower than the equivalent statistic for England and Wales. The majority of adults in Scotland find that local police provide a good or excellent service to their area. We have a police service that is trusted and liked. Moreover, it is essential to the safe and productive functioning of our society.

This country is kept safe by our police force, which needs the uprate in its budget that will be provided, and which I am pleased has been announced. I welcome that that funding has been allocated to Police Scotland, despite Scotland's discretionary resource budget from the UK Government for 2020-21 being 2.8 per cent lower in real terms than it was in 2010.

We have managed to reflect the importance of the police through an increase in funding, and Police Scotland's capital budget will be doubled this year. Notable figures in Police Scotland, the SPA, the Scottish Police Federation and the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents have all responded positively to the Scottish Government's budget proposals. Deputy Chief Officer David Page of Police Scotland provides one example of their welcome for the budget. He highlighted that the settlement

"includes an uplift of revenue funding"

of many millions of pounds, which is much higher than the police originally anticipated.

Calum Steele of the Scottish Police Federation has spoken of how the funding settlement provides additional options for the police force, which I will now focus on.

Our police force often goes above and beyond the call of duty. I know that we all have examples from our constituencies that spring to mind of where the police have made substantial contributions to our communities. Just yesterday, I heard a new example of the police force in Glasgow doing just that. *Holyrood* magazine reported that, through the delivery of a 12-month plan, police officers in Glasgow are to be trained to signpost drug addicts to places where they can get recovery support.

The plan aims to reduce drug deaths and it follows on from the tragic statistic that the area that is covered by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has the highest number of drug deaths in Scotland. It is a very serious issue. The engagement of front-line officers, who are often the first responders in drug-related incidents, could have a significant impact on turning the situation around. The measures are planned by Police

Scotland under the proposals of the budget that we are talking about today, and today's drug summit in Glasgow's Scottish Event Campus Centre shows collaboration between the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council in that regard.

Police officers, as first responders, have the potential to reach vulnerable people. It is quite probable that many such people would not otherwise know where to find the support that is available to them, particularly as they are often disconnected from the rest of society. The police will be bringing them back into society.

Created in collaboration with many partners, the delivery plan is an example of the lengths to which the police go to ensure the safety of all our citizens. It illustrates the complexity of the job of a police officer and how they are often required to go into unpredictable situations and offer solutions and security, while enforcing the law.

I welcome this year's budget proposals for the police, because they will make it possible for Police Scotland to continue to deliver the fantastic service that it provides for us all.

16:53

**Bill Bowman (North East Scotland) (Con):** I pay tribute to the police officers and staff who work daily to keep us safe. I also pay tribute to the memory of my father-in-law, who left Lewis to join the Royal Navy and fight in the second world war and who, on being demobbed, joined the police force in Fife and spent 30 years serving the community. My wife was born in the police house in Coaltown of Wemyss. Having been married for more than 45 years, a little bit of that police background has rubbed off on me.

I welcome the opportunity to speak in a debate on this important issue, and I thank my colleague Liam Kerr for securing it.

Although police funding—or, rather, the lack of it—affects the whole of Scotland, there have been incidents that are specific to my area—North East Scotland—that I will highlight in due course.

Over the past few weeks, unprecedented attacks by senior police officers have been aimed at the SNP Government about the funding of Police Scotland. Despite those astonishing and heartfelt interventions from senior police officers, the SNP Government is still not listening. The Scottish Police Federation, the Scottish Police Authority and the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents have all publicly stated their concerns about this year's budget, which still leaves Police Scotland short. Not only is the SNP putting the public at risk by not fully funding our police, but it is putting front-line police officers,

who risk their lives every day to keep us safe, at more risk.

**Humza Yousaf:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Bill Bowman:** The cabinet secretary has already had a chance to air his excuses.

Police officers cannot do their jobs without proper equipment, but the police estate, which includes cars, phones and body cams, is woefully underfunded. The Scottish Police Federation said in a letter to the Parliament's Justice Sub-Committee on Policing that

"More than 25% of the Police Scotland estate is graded as being in poor condition; 2/3 of the estate is over 40 years old, and 1/3 is over 70 years old."

Calum Steele, of the federation, told the sub-committee that insufficient funding impacted on everything from replacing uniforms to

"provision of fleet, buildings, estate and other infrastructure"—[*Official Report, Justice Sub-Committee on Policing*, 30 May 2019; c 3.]

and Chief Superintendent Ivor Marshall, then of the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents, warned that officers who are

"left working with sub-optimal equipment in sub-optimal conditions"—[*Official Report, Justice Sub-Committee on Policing*, 30 May 2019; c 3.]

are not as productive or effective.

Police Scotland is facing an unsustainable financial deficit, despite receiving more money than expected in this month's budget.

**Fulton MacGregor:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Bill Bowman:** I would like to make some progress.

As I have mentioned already, the shortfall affects Police Scotland's ability to maintain police stations and to replace or upgrade other equipment including cars and IT systems. As we have heard several times in the debate, that was more apparent than ever when the ceiling in Broughty Ferry police station, in my area, collapsed just hours after the cabinet secretary had dismissed criticisms of the condition of the force's buildings. The full extent of the damage at Broughty Ferry is not known, but the station is still closed. Following the incident, Tayside's divisional commander Chief Superintendent Andrew Todd said:

"I am grateful to officers and staff who continue to work tirelessly in challenging conditions".

However, the poor condition of the police station in Broughty Ferry is not the only concern in the area. In Dundee City Council, the community safety and public protection committee heard that

there was a 36.6 per cent increase in the number of police assaults in the last quarter of last year, over the previous year's figure, and that two of the 231 attacks were classed as serious.

Meanwhile, new figures have revealed that the police in Dundee and Angus recorded more than 3,300 incidents of domestic abuse in 2018-19. That means that there were more than nine such incidents each day in those council areas. Although Angus has seen a fall in the number of such crimes, Dundee's incident numbers are at a four-year high. Across Scotland, the number of domestic abuse cases rose for the third year in a row, to 60,641, which is a new all-time high. Those figures are likely only to get worse, as police funding continues to be insufficient.

Under the SNP Government, violent crime has been rising over the past four years, overall crime has been rising for the past two years and there are now nearly a thousand incidents of antisocial behaviour each day. Is it any wonder that confidence in policing has fallen, with only 57 per cent of Scots thinking that the police are doing a good or excellent job in their area?

Police officers and support staff are overworked, because almost every area of Scotland has had fewer officers on the front line since the SNP's police merger happened. The Scottish Police Federation has said that officers' workloads are harming their mental health. Police Scotland's chaplain has said that the SNP's underresourcing has left officers who are in his pastoral care "tired, frustrated and depressed".

As we have heard, Scotland's budget is increasing by more than £1 billion this year, and £96 million of that is Barnett consequentials resulting from police funding for England and Wales. The SNP therefore has no excuses. Only the Scottish Conservatives are standing up for our police officers and demanding a full and fair settlement.

I conclude by reiterating Police Scotland's chaplain's assessment of the current state of the force. The nature of his work surely means that his is a well informed and non-political viewpoint. According to him, our front-line officers are "tired, frustrated and depressed". We owe our police force—and the public—much more than that.

16:58

**Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** I welcome that the Tories have brought the debate to the chamber.

I would like more money to go to Police Scotland, to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, to local government and to every aspect of the public sector in our country. However, the farce of

the long-delayed UK Government budget making it harder for the Scottish Government to deliver its budget is there for all to see. That situation highlights another farce, in the form of the constitutional arrangements that the Scottish Parliament currently has to endure.

I welcome the fact that an extra £60 million is to be invested in Police Scotland. I say "Well done" to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party for securing a deal to get the budget passed.

So, despite the decade of Tory austerity, the Scottish Government has increased the police budget. However, I believe that Police Scotland has been underfunded—it has been underfunded by £125 million of VAT money, which has been kept in the bank account of the Tory UK Government.

We have heard from quite a few Tory MSPs today about Barnett consequentials. However, the approach that they have taken in that regard would mean that the UK Government's policies would determine what happened in this Parliament when, surely, it is up to the Scottish Government to determine how it wants to invest the money that it has. To the Tories in the chamber and the small band of their members in the country, I say that that VAT is our money—it is our tax and we want it back.

The Tories want more money to be invested through the budget, but they clearly cannot count. Their calls for £1.5 billion extra funding along with tax cuts for the wealthiest people does not tally with the extra £1.1 billion of additional resource that the Scottish Government has.

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** On money that is due to be paid back, would Stuart McMillan reflect on the more than £10 billion in fiscal transfer that is paid by the rest of the UK to Scotland? Would he like to give that money back?

**Stuart McMillan:** Under the current constitutional arrangements, sadly, we are part of the UK, but that money is actually our tax money, too.

The Tories have raised a number of issues today. As has been mentioned, Liam Kerr made a number of false accusations in his *Mail on Sunday* column. However, Mr Kerr needs to correct the record and to acknowledge that 30 per cent of our police officers are female, including Chief Superintendent Debbie Reilly, who heads up the Greenock office.

A second issue is fake news about rising crime. From 2009-10 to 2018-19, crime has decreased by 37 per cent in my area, Inverclyde, and by 42 per cent across Scotland as a whole. I know that

the Tories have a penchant for talking Inverclyde down, but it would be helpful if, when there is a positive story, they would acknowledge success.

The reduction in crime has happened because of a vast amount of work by our police officers, working in partnership with Inverclyde Council, other emergency services, the third sector and others. I am sure that the cashback for communities scheme has played a part: feedback that I have had from many organisations and individuals in my community is hugely positive about how the scheme has helped them to engage with younger people, and has helped to prevent young people from getting into a cycle of crime.

There will always be challenges that need to be faced in every aspect of the public sector. I am sure that every member can agree on that point. However, it is also important to highlight that policing in Scotland is performing well compared with England. Some members do not like hearing comparisons with England, but Gordon Lindhurst made such a comparison in his speech and during question time earlier today.

One of my proudest moments was while attending my sister's passing-out parade when she became a police officer in a force in England. Over the years, talking to my sister about events that she has been involved in has been fascinating and challenging in equal measure. The way in which some aspects of policing in her force differ from practices in Scotland is interesting and has made me glad to live in Scotland. My respect and support for our police officers has grown immeasurably as a result of those discussions.

It is a fact that there are more police officers than there were at any time during the previous parties' Administrations. Recruitment to Police Scotland continues to be strong. There are significantly more police officers than there were at any time before 2007. The total number of officers is 17,259, as at 31 December 2019. That can be contrasted with cuts of up to 20,000 officers in England and Wales over the past decade. Even if the forces in England and Wales were to replace the officers that they have cut since 2007, there would be only about 24 officers per 10,000 population, which is well below the rate in Scotland, which has 32 officers per 10,000 population.

**Liam Kerr:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Stuart McMillan:** I am sorry, but I am reaching the end of my time.

I am pleased that a budget agreement has been reached today. It proves once again that Opposition parties that engage genuinely in budget discussions with the Scottish Government

get results. The better together parties might want to consider that for next year.

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** We move on to the closing speeches. I ask Daniel Johnson to wind up for the Labour Party.

17:05

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** It can get confusing when we take part in debates on policing. We get all the numbers floating around—we have inevitably heard about 17,234 police officers and we have also heard about 1,000 police officers. However, I was confused last week when the First Minister said that police officer numbers have been maintained, because back in 2018, when numbers fell consistently below that level, Michael Matheson told me that those numbers were a matter for the chief constable and were nothing to do with the Government. I am confused because, when those numbers are cited, we never hear about the 2,000 police staff that have been cut. Surely the Scottish Government is not trying to have it both ways, blaming falls in police numbers on police officers but then taking credit for itself.

I am confused because, if we look at why the numbers have been restored, the chief constable restored them not—*[Interruption.]* The cabinet secretary said, "Brexitee." Indeed—he should be thanking the Tories, because if it was not for their constitutional chaos, the chief constable would not have had to make that unsustainable financial decision. Back in the autumn, he said that he had funding for only 16,500 officers. We should think about the decision that he must have had to make. To be frank, I do not know who is going to win the brass neck of the year competition—the Scottish Government for taking credit for the decisions that the chief constable is having to make, or the Tories for creating the constitutional crisis that led to the situation in the first place.

At the heart of the issue is a contradiction. Year on year, we hear about police numbers being up, but we also hear the same stories about the police being overstretched. Indeed, we heard today both from my colleague James Kelly and from Liam McArthur about the real, human impact of the underfunding and the consequences for police officers. Frankly, I find it surprising that the cabinet secretary is willing to trumpet and take credit for decisions, yet we hear not one word about the conditions found in our police stations, the shortages of equipment, the lack of breaks that is a regular feature of police officers' days, the mental health consequences for our police officers, the impact on morale, or the real pressures that our police officers are being placed under day in, day out. That is the reality of the lack of capital funding in our police force.

It is all very easy to talk about big numbers and what has and has not been funded. The reality is that a lack of funding means a lack of resources and basic equipment for our police officers. As many speakers have pointed out, Police Scotland has the fifth worst capital allocation of any police force in the United Kingdom. Let us put that in context. We would need to double Police Scotland's £1,500 per employee capital allocation in order to match the Greater Manchester Police capital allocation of £3,000 per full-time equivalent. We would need to quadruple it to match the Metropolitan Police allocation, which is a relevant comparison, because the Metropolitan Police is investing in a transformation programme. The Scottish Government is failing to provide the funds for such a programme even though the Scottish Police Service badly needs one.

**John Finnie:** I do not take issue with the figures that the member quoted, but does he think that there is a danger in appearing to suggest that Police Scotland is not capable of dealing with issues? Police Scotland has had a very successful track record recently in dealing with serious organised crime and a lot of internet crime.

**Daniel Johnson:** I thank Mr Finnie for that point. The Police Service of Scotland does a phenomenal job, but I think that it does that despite its funding allocation, and not because of it. If we look at many of those serious issues, we see that tackling them requires funding.

In an intervention, I mentioned the £300 million investment that Police Scotland needs simply to modernise its ICT. Again, we need to look at the detail. There are still eight crime-recording systems across the divisions in Scotland and smart devices are not routinely issued to officers. A single crime-recording system and smart devices are the basic and most fundamental requirements in running a modern police service: they mean that police officers do not have to return to the police station. For goodness' sake, it is only in the past year or so that police officers have been able to sign into their email regardless of where they are in the police estate—until recently, there were multiple email systems.

There are real consequences for local policing. The reality is that capital investment was needed to create a single police force. Over Police Scotland's seven years of existence, it has simply not had that capital investment, which has meant that it has not been possible to fulfil the promise made at the creation of Police Scotland. We were promised that a single police force would free up resources, would make savings and would not duplicate headquarters functions or specialist functions. However, the lack of investment means that we have lost up to 400 police officers from the local division level. Rather than freeing up

resources, resources have been sucked into the centre. Police officers are carrying out administrative functions and backfilling for staff, and they are carrying out executive functions at headquarters and assisting senior police officers. That cannot be right, but it is absolutely a function of the short-sighted capital underfunding of Police Scotland by the SNP Scottish Government.

I will briefly mention a point made by Johann Lamont. Such underfunding is not happening in isolation. There is serious chronic underfunding across our public services, and it is the police who step in and fill the breach. It is the police who fill the gaps in social work funding; it is the police who have to sit in emergency rooms; and it is the police who have to find missing people. Those are the consequences of underfunding in public services and of the crucial and critical underfunding of our police service in Scotland.

**The Presiding Officer:** All members who have contributed to a debate should be back for the closing speeches.

I call the cabinet secretary, Humza Yousaf, to wind up for the Government.

17:12

**Humza Yousaf:** I have enjoyed the debate and I am pleased that Liam Kerr brought it to the chamber. It has been an opportunity for those of us on the SNP side of the chamber to acknowledge that of course there are challenges. I think that I have acknowledged that not just in this debate but every time that I have been in front of the Justice Committee or the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing.

An important point that was made very well by John Finnie a second ago, and by Rona Mackay, Fulton MacGregor and Richard Lyle, is that, from the inception of Police Scotland to this day, the outcomes that the public really cares about—such as being kept safe—have been very positive.

The inaccurate suggestion that policing is in crisis is fundamentally wide of the mark. I know of senior officers' frustration when they hear politicians talk about policing being in crisis. When we do not selectively pick one year's statistics—or even quarterly statistics, as the Opposition sometimes does—the outcomes include a 42 per cent fall in crime since 2006-07. *[Interruption.]* I will come on to non-sexual violent crime in a second.

**Daniel Johnson:** Will the cabinet secretary give way?

**Humza Yousaf:** I will give way in one second, when I have finished with some of the numbers.

There was a shout about non-sexual violent crime from someone on the Conservative



benches. Such crime has fallen by 43 per cent since 2006-07, and homicide has fallen by 25 per cent—[*Interruption.*] I say to Mr Kelly that I am not selectively quoting; I am giving him the long-term projections.

I give way to Daniel Johnson.

**Daniel Johnson:** If what the cabinet secretary has said is true and police numbers are at a record high, why do one in three officers have mental health issues? Is that not the sign of people being overstretched and of capital and equipment being underfunded?

**Humza Yousaf:** I absolutely accept, as does the chief constable when I have spoken to him, that we can do more. We will look to do more when it comes to the mental wellbeing of our police officers. Let us not forget that they deal with a job that is unlike any other job. They deal with stress, conflict and tension, and they see things that we will never see in our lifetimes. Of course that can add to or exacerbate some of those issues.

I do not want to take away from Daniel Johnson's point. I am certain that, with the additional uplift that we are giving policing—particularly the additional uplift in resource—the chief constable will consider the wellbeing of his officers.

There has been a significant conversation—every speaker has mentioned this—about the funding issues around Police Scotland. When we stood in the Holyrood elections in 2016, which we won comprehensively, our manifesto committed to protecting the resource budget. I am delighted that, with the deal that we have struck with the Greens, we have gone above and beyond that commitment. We have not just invested an additional £100 million, as we promised when we committed to protect the police budget in real terms; we have gone to £140 million. We do not only talk the talk; we walk the walk.

There is a £60 million additional increase for Police Scotland in the 2020-21 budget. That is not a real-terms protection; it is a 5.1 per cent increase, and it helps us to maintain 1,000 additional police officers.

**Liam Kerr:** I presume that the cabinet secretary acknowledges that it is only a £33 million real-terms increase.

**Humza Yousaf:** As I have said, it is a 5.1 per cent increase. It is a £60.2 million uplift, which is £10 million more than Conservative members asked for. They asked for £50 million and said that they would vote for a budget that would increase police spending by £50 million. We have increased it, not by £50 million or by £55 million, but by £60

million. I thought that the Conservatives would welcome that.

**Johann Lamont:** In the interests of transparency, can the cabinet secretary tell us which budgets had to be cut to get that £60 million?

**Humza Yousaf:** Johann Lamont should not worry. The finance secretary will come forward with the detail of the budget tomorrow, and she can ask her that question.

I will come back to Labour's position on police finance shortly. In fact, I will deal with it now because I know that Johann Lamont and the Labour Party have an interest.

I believe that the Labour Party values the police; I do not doubt the commitment of anyone in the chamber to Police Scotland. We all want to see the police service being well funded, and in Labour's contributions to budget discussions, it has said that resourcing the police is absolutely vital and fundamental. It is funny that it claims to place such importance on police funding. I have looked over its public demands for the budget, and how many times was police funding mentioned? Zero. How much extra money has Labour demanded during budget discussions? Zero, nought, nada, diddly-squat. Although its members pontificate, rant and go red with bluff and bluster when they talk about police funding, they simply do not match that rhetoric with action.

Let us see how we compare with the Conservative Party in its management of policing. In Scotland, there are more than 1,000 additional police officers compared with the number that we inherited when we first came into power, versus a 20,000 cut in England in Wales. We also recognise the excellent work that our police officers do. We do not just talk about that; we have rewarded them with a 6.5 per cent pay increase, which was described by the Scottish Police Federation as the best pay increase in 20 years. In England and Wales, the Conservatives gave a pay increase of below 3 per cent—that is derisory in the utmost.

There are 317 police officers per 100,000 people in Scotland, versus 209 officers per 100,000 in England. Police public order and safety spending in Scotland is £478 per person, versus £420 in England.

**Liam Kerr rose—**

**Humza Yousaf:** I will come to Liam Kerr in a moment.

In an intervention on Rona Mackay, Liam Kerr suggested that more is spent per square metre on the estate in England. That is because every police force in England and Wales has probably had to sell off most of its estate.

Britain's largest police force, the Metropolitan Police, has run out of things to sell, having sold £1 billion-worth of property. I quote the Metropolitan Police Federation, which said that funding cuts have led the force to breaking point. It said:

"We've sold the crown jewels, so to speak. We've run out of things to sell."

That is really worrying.

**Liam Kerr:** Will the cabinet secretary address another statistic: that non-pay spending in Scotland is 12.5 per cent of the revenue budget whereas the UK average is 22 per cent?

**Humza Yousaf:** I am happy to stand toe to toe with Liam Kerr any day of the week when it comes to our record on police spending versus his party's derisory and abysmal handling of the police service in England and Wales.

Tories say—and have said in this debate—that they should be congratulated on their investment in policing in England and Wales, as is demonstrated by the recruitment of 20,000 police officers. I ask members to imagine a party wanting a pat on the back simply for repairing the horrific damage and decimation for which it is responsible. The Tories are like the arsonist who expects praise for burning down someone's house but—hey—at least they brought a fire extinguisher with them.

We should never ignore or talk down the incredible job that our police officers and staff do. John Finnie was correct to say, as other members did, that the police retain a remarkable level of public confidence. The Scottish crime and justice survey shows that a majority of the public believe that Police Scotland does a good or excellent job. Richard Lyle was right to say that people feel safe in their communities and neighbourhoods, and Fulton MacGregor referenced statistics in that regard.

Richard Lyle mentioned the HMICS 2018-19 annual report, in which the chief inspector said:

"we continue to be impressed by the determination of officers and staff to delivering an effective policing service to the communities they serve."

This has been a robust debate, in which members—certainly of my party—have been able to articulate our investment in our hard-working police officers. I am delighted to commend the amendment in my name, which acknowledges challenges but also, I am delighted to say, acknowledges that we are investing in our police officers and police service. If we continue to do that, we will continue to see the lowest crime rates on record. I hope that members will back the amendment, which demonstrates our continued belief and investment in our police service in Scotland.

17:22

**Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):** The motion on which we will shortly vote is concise, straightforward and unambiguous. Above all, it is accurate. The 2020-21 draft budget leaves Police Scotland millions of pounds short in carrying out the vital work that is needed to keep our communities safe. It is therefore disappointing that the SNP and, in particular, Labour—albeit that there were excellent speeches from Johann Lamont and Jackie Baillie—lodged amendments that, rather than addressing the issue, indulge in political point scoring. It is disappointing that much of the cabinet secretary's rhetoric in his closing speech was in the same vein.

During the speeches in today's debate, a vivid and deeply concerning picture has emerged of a dilapidated estate and a vehicle fleet that is long past its sell-by date. We heard that the modernisation programme that is essential to ensuring that Police Scotland's officers are equipped to do the taxing job that we ask of them has been, at best, put on hold and, at worst, scrapped altogether.

At the outset, I want to establish why the funding of Scotland's national force is so important. We are fortunate to live in a democracy in which we enjoy fundamental freedoms: the right to go about our lawful business without threat; freedom of speech; and the right to express our views at the ballot box and reject the Government of the day—whatever its political persuasion—if it is failing to deliver. Those freedoms have been hard won and should never be taken for granted. Underpinning them is the rule of law. When that breaks down, those freedoms are under threat.

In carrying out their role as enforcers of the rule of law, serving officers have the power to lawfully deprive citizens of their most fundamental freedom—their right to liberty—but with special rights and powers come responsibilities. Unlike most other public services, the police workforce cannot withhold its labour to protest about the appalling state of the buildings in which they work and their lack of adequate equipment and IT to do the challenging job that is expected of them to the best of their ability.

When the chief constable is compelled to speak out—an unprecedented move, as Liam McArthur said—and describes the capital allocations for buildings, fleet and IT as "derisory", given the size of the force, the First Minister and her Government should listen. Various cabinet secretaries for justice have boasted that the creation of a unitary force has made Police Scotland the second largest force in the UK, but the chief constable has pointed out that Police Scotland is being forced to "make do and mend" with its current capital allocations, which are among the lowest in UK

policing on a per capita basis and lower than those for many other public bodies in Scotland.

When both the chief constable and the Scottish Police Authority reveal that the current policing budget is unsustainable and that Police Scotland is heading for a crisis, the First Minister and her Government must not only listen, but act.

**Humza Yousaf:** There is now an additional 30 per cent uplift to the capital budget. Will Margaret Mitchell answer the question that none of the other Conservative speakers has answered? Why would £50 million of additional funding for the police be adequate for the Tories, while £60 million is inadequate?

**Margaret Mitchell:** The £50 million is on top of the £96 million of policing consequential from the Barnett formula. I hope that by the end of the debate the Government will confirm that those will be passed on.

It is deeply concerning that, as a direct consequence of underfunding, Scotland's police officers have little hope of maintaining a level playing field when competing with the state-of-the-art equipment available to the criminal world, let alone of endeavouring to be one step ahead. Smartphones can be provided only to some officers, with the result that most officers have to return to the station to spend time filing computer reports. That time could and should be spent on the front line and on addressing other core police activities.

In England and Wales, body-worn video cameras are issued to officers and considered to be basic equipment to assist in safeguarding officers' health and safety. In Scotland, the cabinet secretary says that there is a need for a wide-ranging debate about the ethics of their introduction and he expects the issue to be considered by an independently chaired ethics advisory group. Dither and delay come to mind. That is despite the fact that one of the key recommendations from Dame Elish Angiolini's independent review into complaints handling, investigations and misconduct was that Police Scotland officers should be equipped with body-worn video cameras.

**The Presiding Officer:** Will members please keep the noise down?

**Margaret Mitchell:** I turn to police vehicles. More than half of Police Scotland's fleet is currently operating beyond its replacement criteria. The draft budget allocates a ring-fenced £5 million to invest in greener vehicles to replace those that are more than five years old or have done more than 125,000 miles. That is at least £8 million short of the funding that would be required to achieve that aim. Meanwhile, the police fleet consists in large part of old diesel vehicles.

The First Minister never tires of talking up her Government's commitment to achieving ambitious reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and has been a staunch defender of the introduction of a punitive workplace parking levy that will supposedly help her to achieve that aim. At the same time, she cannot fail to be aware that those old diesel vehicles are driven throughout Scotland's streets, towns and villages, emitting toxic fumes, on a daily basis. Frankly, it is jaw-dropping hypocrisy, which should be properly ridiculed and condemned at a time that Scotland is hosting COP26 in Glasgow. The Scottish Government has an opportunity to try to salvage some credibility in advance of the conference in November by prioritising sufficient funding in the draft budget to replace those ageing diesel vehicles.

During the debate, members have described the dire working environment in which police operate due to the ageing estate. Significantly, it is in that totally unsustainable environment that vulnerable people are interviewed and are expected to have confidence in a modern police force's ability to successfully investigate their issues. Be in no doubt that there is a human cost to the underfunding, which was highlighted by the chief constable when he said that current funding settlements will directly affect Police Scotland's ability to keep Scots safe. He raised the prospect of police being compelled to stop investigating some crimes as a result of the looming financial crisis. In effect, the most serious crimes will be investigated, but lesser crimes, for example scams that target the elderly, may not be.

When John Finnie and I, as the respective conveners of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing and the Justice Committee, along with the cabinet secretary, attend the SPF annual bravery awards, we are humbled and inspired in equal measure by the bravery of our front-line officers. Every year, we commit to give them our full support, but the cabinet secretary's warm words will not suffice. It is time for the First Minister and her Government to give that support, and they can start by confirming that the draft budget will be reviewed and Police Scotland will receive every penny of the £96 million of the UK Government's policing Barnett consequentials, in addition to the extra money that they have managed to find through a deal with the Greens.

Quite frankly, Police Scotland and its dedicated workforce deserve nothing less. Local communities need to be assured that Scotland's police force is sufficiently financed to meet the challenges of a modern police service in the 21st century.

## Business Motions

17:33

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of two business motions. I invite Graeme Dey to move business motion S5M-20996, in his name, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, which sets out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 3 March 2020

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Each for Equal, Celebrating International Women's Day 2020

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 4 March 2020

1.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

1.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Communities and Local Government; Social Security and Older People

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Scottish Rate Resolution

*followed by* Education and Skills Committee Debate: STEM in Early Years Education

*followed by* Legislative Consent Motion: Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 5 March 2020

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 Parliamentary Corporate Body Questions

*followed by* Portfolio Questions: Finance

*followed by* Stage 3 Proceedings: Budget (Scotland) (No.4) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 10 March 2020

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Stage 3 Proceedings: Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 11 March 2020

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; Rural Economy and Tourism

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 12 March 2020

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 Portfolio Questions: Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Animals and Wildlife (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 2 March 2020, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[*Graeme Dey*]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** I invite Graeme Dey to move business motion S5M-20997, in his name,

on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on the stage 2 timetable for a bill.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 20 March 2020.—[*Graeme Dey*]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:33

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of two Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Graeme Dey, on behalf of the bureau, to move motions S5M-20998, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, and S5M-20999, on suspension and variation of standing orders.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Direct Payments to Farmers (Legislative Continuity) (Scotland) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2020 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that, subject to its agreement to the general principles of the Budget (Scotland) (No.4) Bill, for the purposes of consideration of the Bill at stage 3, in Rule 9.16.6 of Standing Orders -

(a) the words "or 3" be omitted, and

(b) the words "Notice of any amendment at Stage 3 shall be given by lodging it with the Clerk no later than 4.30pm on Wednesday 4 March 2020." be inserted at the end.—  
[*Graeme Dey*]

## Decision Time

17:34

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The first question is, that amendment S5M-20979.3, in the name of Humza Yousaf, which seeks to amend motion S5M-20979, in the name of Liam Kerr, on Police Scotland underfunded in the draft budget, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (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)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)

Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

### Abstentions

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)

Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 58, Against 54, Abstentions 6.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-20979.2, in the name of James Kelly, which seeks to amend motion S5M-20979, in the name of Liam Kerr, on Police Scotland underfunded in the draft budget, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)

Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

#### Abstentions

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)

McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 26, Against 85, Abstentions 7.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-20979, in the name of Liam Kerr, on Police Scotland underfunded in the draft budget, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (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)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

#### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

#### Abstentions

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)



Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 58, Against 54, Abstentions 6.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament values the hard work of police officers and staff in keeping local communities safe; welcomes the ongoing work by Police Scotland to develop a workforce strategy that will inform the workforce mix, including specialist staff and community police officers required to deliver the 10-year policing strategy, *Serving a Changing Scotland*; recognises that this workforce requires capital investment, including to green the police fleet and to deliver a transformed police service; further recognises the exceptional and unprecedented demands currently facing policing in Scotland, including planning for a no-deal EU exit and COP26; supports the return of the £125 million of VAT previously paid to the UK Government, and recognises that discussions on the draft Budget 2020-21 are ongoing.

**The Presiding Officer:** I propose to put a single question on the two Parliamentary Bureau motions, unless any member objects.

The question is, that motions S5M-20998 and S5M-20999, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Direct Payments to Farmers (Legislative Continuity) (Scotland) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2020 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that, subject to its agreement to the general principles of the Budget (Scotland) (No.4) Bill, for the purposes of consideration of the Bill at stage 3, in Rule 9.16.6 of Standing Orders -

(a) the words “or 3” be omitted, and

(b) the words “Notice of any amendment at Stage 3 shall be given by lodging it with the Clerk no later than 4.30pm on Wednesday 4 March 2020.” be inserted at the end.

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

## National Parent Forum of Scotland

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The final item of business is a members’ business debate on motion S5M-19270, in the name of Jenny Gilruth, on the National Parent Forum of Scotland’s 10th anniversary. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament congratulates the National Parent Forum of Scotland, which is marking its 10th anniversary; acknowledges the valuable contribution that the forum provides to support parents in Glenrothes and across the country to get involved in their child’s education; commends the partnership between national and local government, along with other stakeholders involved in education and child wellbeing issues, which aims to ensure that parents play a full and equal role in education, with the aim to help all children maximise their full potential through school life, and wishes the forum continued success.

17:39

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** Many people in the Parliament think that Jenny Gilruth and I are the same person anyway, so I do not think it would have mattered who opened the debate. However, it is only right that I explain that, although this is Jenny Gilruth’s debate, I am opening it on her behalf following her very deserved promotion to a junior minister role. I wish her all the best, and I hope that I can do the debate justice in her stead.

I thank everyone who signed Jenny Gilruth’s motion and those who have remained in the chamber to speak in this evening’s debate.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland—the NPFS—is a group that is fully comprised of volunteers who are

“the independent voice of parents in Scotland, represented and effective.”

The forum has a membership that is made up of volunteer parent representatives from each of the local education authority areas in Scotland, and it is led by parent volunteers who are elected from the network of representatives. It supports parental involvement in education by providing a parental perspective at the national and local levels, and it supports parents to play an active role in their children’s education.

The forum works in partnership with national and local government and other organisations that are involved in education and child wellbeing issues to ensure that parents play a full and equal role in education. The overall aim is to help every child to maximise their potential through their school life.

The purpose of this debate and the motion is to mark the 10th birthday of the NPFS. The 10th anniversary year has been very busy. The highlights include a parliamentary reception in June to celebrate the beginning of the anniversary year; a question-and-answer session with the Deputy First Minister in Perth in October, at which parents could directly ask him questions about education; and the launch of several titles in the NPFS's "In a Nutshell" series, such as "Senior Phase in a Nutshell", "Wider Achievement in a Nutshell" and "CfE in a Nutshell". There were also six focus groups in January this year, at which parents across Scotland contributed to a report to feed into Angela Morgan's independent additional support for learning review.

Those are just some of the NPFS's achievements over the past year, but it is worth reflecting on some of the key features that have developed across the education landscape over the past 10 to 15 years. It is important to note, too, that much of the positive practice has been developed from the bottom up by headteachers, teachers and families.

First, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 set up parent councils. It also created the concept of the parent forum and placed legal duties on the provision of information to all parents.

Secondly, there is the parental engagement driver in the national improvement framework. The NIF has included a specific driver on parental engagement since its inception, in 2016, which has helped to drive several national improvement activities and has reinforced the role of parental involvement and engagement in the practice and approach of schools.

Finally, the Scottish attainment challenge and pupil equity funding has helped to encourage and support a strong focus on relationship-based practice and family and community engagement.

There has been a lot of good work in the past decade, a lot of which the NPFS has been integral to.

Moving on to what it is achieving now, I must mention "Learning together": Scotland's national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021". That plan, which was published in 2018, provides a national-level policy plan for parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning. It was a joint collaboration between the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government, and it contains 52 actions across five key themes. The NPFS is tasked with monitoring the progress of the plan.

I will not list all 52 actions, but the plan says:

"The guiding vision is that every parent and family should be supported to be involved and engaged in their child's education throughout their learning journey."

The plan's aims are to

"ensure that parents are supported to be fully involved in the life and work of their children's early learning and childcare setting or school; ... encourage and support collaborative partnerships between practitioners, parents and families; ... get the right support in place so that parents can engage in their child's learning; ... expand access to family learning opportunities which meet participants needs; ... improve the quality of all communication between practitioners, staff, parents and families, and; ... improve the skills of leaders, front-line practitioners and support staff."

The plan has already seen results. It has helped to strengthen statutory guidance on the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, and a parental involvement and engagement census was launched last year. It also includes a local authority implementation statement, which has been an important point of reference in the development of local authorities' own parental involvement and engagement strategies.

In looking at what the NPFS hopes to achieve over the next decade, the empowerment system will be a key area of policy focus. That system seeks to ensure that parents, children, teachers and all those who are involved in children's education are valued for the different parts that they play. As well as giving recognition to those groups, the system seeks to guarantee that parents and carers have the resources that they need to assist them in engaging with children's learning and that they are recognised as the primary educators of their children.

In essence, the system tells parents and carers that, when it comes to their children's education, they matter to their children and to schools and that they should be included in any decision making that will affect their children.

I congratulate the NPFS on 10 years of hard work, and I congratulate Jenny Gilruth on bringing the debate to Parliament today. Looking forward to the next 10 years, I am sure that the NPFS will be vital in the decade ahead.

17:45

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** I, too, congratulate Jenny Gilruth on securing the debate and on her promotion to her ministerial portfolio. I also congratulate my colleague from the Education and Skills Committee, Gail Ross, for stepping in so brilliantly to lay out the chamber's approach to the debate this evening.

This is my seventh year as an elected politician, so I have not been in this Parliament for as long as the National Parent Forum of Scotland has

existed. However, I previously served on the Education and Culture Committee, and, in this parliamentary session, I convene the Education and Skills Committee, so I know how much the National Parent Forum of Scotland has contributed to the policy making, decisions and inquiries that take place in this Parliament as well as about the fantastic work that it has done to make sure that families, parents and carers are represented whenever we consider the education system in Scotland.

I thank Joanna Murphy, the chair, and all the volunteers, who do an amazing amount of work to support parents and carers across Scotland and to help people to understand our curriculum. Because of the way that Scotland works, it is almost a unique relationship. The forum has been able to engage with education authorities across Scotland and work in partnership with national Government. The forum communicates across all levels of the child's experience and focuses on ensuring that we achieve the best outcomes for our young people and students in Scotland.

I often turn to the impressive "In a Nutshell" snippet publications, which are available on the forum's website free of charge to parents and carers. In a way that is—in a nutshell—accessible and free from jargon, they cover myriad areas of information about our curriculum, the experience in Scottish schools and everything that people can expect from the education system. They are such a good resource for Scotland. On just one page from the website, I see "Learner Journey in a Nutshell", "Empowering Parents and Carers", "Senior Phase in a Nutshell", "Wider Achievement in a Nutshell" and "CfE in a Nutshell". That is all vital information to help people's relationship with and understanding of the new curriculum.

One "In a Nutshell" publication, "Transitions for Armed Forces Families", highlights why it is so important that the relationship exists. I would not naturally have considered or realised that such transitions were a problem. However, because our curriculum is focused on each school, for families that have to move around, through work or involvement in the armed forces, that approach can make it difficult to slot into a new experience in a new school. The document lays out all the questions that parents and carers should and can ask when they make the decision about what is best for the children that they look after. Although that is a niche problem, the parent forum—as it does with everything—has turned it into an opportunity to provide information, advice and support for people. Because it knows the parents and it has that engagement, the forum raises such issues, which we might not have considered but which families across Scotland face.

I thank the NPFS for its 10 years of hard work and engagement in that area, and I look forward to working with the forum in the future.

17:50

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** I thank Jenny Gilruth for securing the debate. I am very sad that she is not able to participate in it—I can see her sitting there wanting to get stuck in—but Gail Ross has done a marvellous job of stepping in. For the record, I never get mistaken for Jenny Gilruth, much to her benefit.

This is the first time that I have spoken in the chamber since I was given my new role as education spokesman, and what better way to start my journey. We are talking about a very important issue. I did not have a huge amount of time to prepare for the debate, but I used the little time that I had to look into the work of the National Parent Forum.

For most children, their parents are their first teachers. Even when children begin schooling, parents still have a hugely important role to play in a child's learning. Research suggests that parental engagement is directly related to a child's educational outcomes in their respective institutions. When parents are engaged in their child's school life, students will get the home support and knowledge that they need not only to finish work and assignments in the class but to develop a home-based and lifelong love of learning.

The timing of the debate is interesting. Any of us who are engaged on social media will know that this week has been active, with parents feeding back on various goings-on in our schools in Scotland. That reminds us as politicians that parents' views are important in such debates, whatever side of the arguments we are on. Now is not the time or place to get involved in those specific arguments, but I stress the importance of listening to parents, which is paramount.

Since its inception in 2010, the NPFS has made huge strides to help parents to engage with and understand educational processes by hosting information days and conferences and by keeping parents up to date through online channels. It supports and encourages parents to play an active part in their child's education. I have looked at the NPFS's "In a Nutshell" series, which is on its website. The series is available for any parent to access and offers excellent advice.

There are challenges for parents, such as the on-going changes to childcare funding, navigation of the educational process, those relating to applications and skills, and changes to the curriculum. Given that the education system has changed so much since I was at school, it is

important that we have organisations such as the NPFS that help parents to understand the structures and to navigate their journey, so that they feel that they can play a full and active part in their child's education. Clare Adamson gave a good example, and I will give a similar one. At a recent visit to RAF Lossiemouth, I met a group of parents who had specific needs and requirements, given the nature of how their children are taught and how they learn. That dialogue between the local authorities, the Scottish Government and those parents is key, and I believe that the NPFS plays a vital role in facilitating it, much to the benefit of parents in specific circumstances.

However, parents should not only help their children to progress on their educational journeys, but play a key role in informing them, which is why the NPFS should be the independent voice of parents in Scotland. It is clear that its stakeholder outreach allows it to do that. That work involves holding focus groups the length and breadth of the country, supporting local parent councils and having local representatives in almost every council area in Scotland. It is important that the NPFS is a mouthpiece for parents and helps to bring families into the conversation about their children's future.

I appreciate that time is of the essence this evening. I apologise to the number of members of the public who got in touch with me quite late in the day to raise specific issues. I say to them, if they are watching, that I will be in touch, but I want to paint an overall picture.

In the past decade, we have made significant strides in ensuring that parents have a say in their child's education. We need to work together to maximise the opportunities. To that end, in my new role, I look forward to working with the education secretary, his ministers and his civil servants, and with any member who will work collaboratively to ensure that parents play a key role in the education that their children receive.

Presiding Officer, thank you for allowing me to participate in the debate. I wish Jenny Gilruth the very best in her new role. I look forward to joining the Education and Skills Committee and to working with my colleagues in the chamber.

17:55

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** I do not want to find myself on the list that I believe exists of those who mix up Gail Ross and Jenny Gilruth, so I congratulate them both: Gail Ross on stepping up to the plate in this debate and Jenny Gilruth on stepping up to the ministerial plate and on having lodged the motion.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland regularly engages with the Education and Skills Committee

and, as the convener indicated, committee members who are in the chamber will be familiar with the excellent work that it does. I am pleased to participate in the debate and to take the opportunity to celebrate the real progress that has been made in parental involvement and engagement since the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 and the establishment of the NPFS in 2009.

The need to engage and involve parents to a greater extent in our education system has long been acknowledged by successive Governments and education secretaries and the NPFS has certainly been instrumental in driving that engagement forward over the past decade.

If we look back to 2005, the then Scottish Executive conducted a survey that found that 70 per cent of parents said that they had never volunteered to help at their children's school despite around half indicating that they would be willing to become more involved. The survey also highlighted the particular challenges in engaging parents from a disadvantaged or minority ethnic background, which were the most underrepresented groups when it came to involvement.

Since the establishment of the NPFS, the situation has substantially improved. Results from the more recent parental involvement and engagement national census that was conducted in the summer last year found that 67 per cent of primary school parents and 48 per cent of secondary school parents were satisfied with how their school engages with them. Over half of parents at both levels said that they would like to be more involved in school life than they currently are. We can see that improvements have been made, but there is undoubtedly some distance still to go.

While I was looking up the details of my local NPFS representation, I noticed that there is a vacancy in my constituency of East Lothian, so I intend to use the debate to encourage a local representative to come forward and to get involved with the forum's essential work. That work, in partnership with national and local government and other organisations involved in education and child wellbeing, has helped to increase the role that parents play in education and the forum has used its platform to identify key issues in education and to provide parental representation and engagement whenever necessary.

The aim of the forum is, of course, to help every child to maximise their potential throughout their school life and, as other members have said, the NPFS has produced some excellent resources for parents, including its "Empowering Parents and Carers in a Nutshell" guide. As the guide puts it, empowered parents are an

“equal piece in the jigsaw”

alongside teachers, support staff, learners, local and national Government and associated education partners, all of which, by working together on a level footing, can improve children and young people’s outcomes.

As Gail Ross indicated, parental engagement is recognised in the national improvement framework as one of seven key drivers in achieving excellence and equity. The Scottish Government has certainly recognised, to its credit, that the engagement of parents and families can help to raise attainment for all and help to ensure that every child has an equal chance of success.

In particular, we know that parental engagement is a key component of narrowing the attainment gap so, if we are serious about that, we should ensure that parents, teachers and others work together, as that can and will help to improve outcomes for children and young people.

I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the debate, and I wish the NPFS continued success in its next decade.

18:00

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** I thank Gail Ross for introducing this members’ business debate on behalf of my colleague Jenny Gilruth, who, as the Minister for Europe and International Development, was unable to do so. I take this opportunity to congratulate Jenny Gilruth on her appointment. Having lodged the motion and then secured promotion, she has done the decent thing and sat beside me throughout the debate. I also congratulate Gail Ross, who stepped into the breach and, as always, magnificently introduced the debate.

During my tenure as education secretary, I have had a great deal to do with the National Parent Forum of Scotland, and I hope that the organisation knows the degree of significance that I attach to its contribution and its input to the debate that we have on all matters relating to education.

In June last year, I was delighted to accept an invitation to speak at a parliamentary reception to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the National Parent Forum. The impact that the forum has had on policy and practice, on our schools and on the wider landscape of education cannot be overstated. Representatives of the forum give up their time, often on top of work and other commitments, to ensure that the voice of parents is heard at a national level.

I have engaged with National Parent Forum representatives from around the country at various events on Saturdays, when people are free from their other obligations, to consider issues relating to the education of young people. I attended one event on a Saturday in the council chamber in Inverness, which I have just remembered is where Gail Ross was formerly a member. On that occasion, I travelled from my home in Perthshire, which took me about two hours, but the gathering was attended by representatives of schools from across the Highlands, most of whom had taken longer to get to Inverness for that discussion of education issues than I had taken to drive from Perthshire.

I use that to illustrate the fact that members of the National Parent Forum are active in their localities and are representative voices for a range of individuals who are involved in the work of our schools. The forum members can articulate those messages to the Government at national level. The passion and dedication with which those individuals serve is one of the best examples that I have seen of community and citizen empowerment. I thank each and every one of them for ensuring that the voice of parents is not just heard but acted on.

Before I mention some of the achievements of the National Parent Forum, I want to thank the forum members who have joined us in the public gallery and those whom they represent. In particular, I thank Joanna Murphy, who is the chair and who will be standing down at the forum’s annual general meeting in June. Joanna Murphy has been involved in parental representation in education for many years, since she first joined her children’s school board in 1999. Since 2015, she has given energy and drive to the National Parent Forum. I thank her warmly for the enormous contribution that she has made to the formulation of policy on education in general and on parental involvement in particular. I also record my thanks to Iain Ellis, who was the chair of the National Parent Forum when I became the education secretary in 2016.

The important work of the National Parent Forum is about ensuring that the voice of parents is heard in an influential way in the formulation of policy. Over the past few years, the forum has taken part in more than 50 national policy groups, including—to mention just a few—the Scottish education council; the education leaders forum; the school empowerment steering group; the initial curriculum for excellence management board and, more recently, the curriculum and assessment board; the developing the young workforce national advisory group; the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender inclusive education implementation group; the Doran national strategic

commissioning review group; and the Dyslexia Scotland council.

The forum has also shaped policy by undertaking a review on behalf of the Scottish Government of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, which led to a series of recommendations that are now being taken forward in the Government's three-year national action plan, "Learning together".

Those examples illustrate the influence on the Government of the work of the National Parent Forum over a number of years. I warmly welcome the involvement of the forum.

The forum's involvement is used to shape policy, but it also reinforces a fundamental issue that I signal tonight, which is the warm welcome that our education system expresses for the involvement of parents in their children's learning. It is a fundamental requirement of the education of children and young people that their parents are fully and actively engaged in their learning.

In that respect, we are in a much stronger place now than in the past. I recently talked to a long-standing teacher who told me that, when they arrived at their first teaching post about 40 years ago, there was a sign just beyond the school reception that said, in very bold letters, "Parents: no further". We have moved a great deal from that position to a point at which

"there are high levels of trust and positive relationships between schools, parents and partners",

as Education Scotland said in the thematic review that it published in June 2019.

I signal the Government's enthusiasm for supporting the process of parental engagement to ensure that, for every step of the educational journey of children and young people, the voices of parents not only have an influence at an individual child level but, through the forum that collectively represents those voices, shape the direction of policy as we go forward. Members from across the political spectrum have welcomed the involvement of the National Parent Forum and remarked on the strong emphasis that we place in the national improvement framework on the role of parents in supporting the development of education. I reinforce those sentiments and commit the Government to working positively and constructively with the National Parent Forum to ensure that the role of parents is entrenched in the way in which we take forward the education system in Scotland.

I thank Gail Ross for opening the debate so powerfully with the material that she contributed, and I thank members of all shades of opinion for their contributions to the debate. I reaffirm the determination of the Government to work closely

with the National Parent Forum of Scotland to ensure that the voices of parents are heard loud and clear, and to shape Scottish education accordingly.

*Meeting closed at 18:07.*

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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