Official Report
Aithisg Oifigeil

Education and Gaelic Committee

Comataidh an Fhoghlaim agus na Gàidhlig

Tuesday 23 June 2026

Session 7

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Tuesday 23 June 2026

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EDUCATION AND GAELIC COMMITTEE
1st Meeting 2026, Session 7

CONVENER

*Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Katherine Sangster (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*George Adam (Paisley) (SNP)
*Duncan Dunlop (South Scotland) (LD)
*Patricia Gibson (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
*Laura Moodie (South Scotland) (Green)
*Angela Ross (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform)

*attended

LOCATION

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)

Scottish Parliament

Education and Gaelic Committee

Tuesday 23 June 2026

[The Convener opened the meeting at 10:00]

Interests

The Convener (Karen Adam): Good morning, and welcome to the first meeting in session 7 of the Education and Gaelic Committee. I take this opportunity to welcome all members—I look forward to working with you in this committee.

Our first item of business is for each of us to declare any interests that are relevant to the committee's work. Background information is provided in paper 1, which is on declarations of interest.

I have no interests to declare. I will now go to each member in alphabetical order.

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP): I have no interests to declare, other than that I have four grandchildren who are going through the education system, which I may mention during proceedings.

Duncan Dunlop (South Scotland) (LD): For transparency, I declare that I worked in the children's care experience sector. I ran Who Cares? Scotland for nearly nine years until mid-2020, and I did a lot of work on setting up the care review, which led to the Promise.

Patricia Gibson (Cunninghame South) (SNP): I have nothing to declare other than being an English teacher for 25 years. My membership of the General Teaching Council for Scotland is still active, but it is on the verge of lapsing.

The Convener: Thank you. Laura Moodie, who is a member of the committee, sends her apologies; she will be attending later.

Angela Ross (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform): I have a postgraduate certificate in education in primary school teaching with a specialism in geography. I taught in England under the English curriculum for about two years and then did supply teaching. I am also a shareholder, director and a person with significant control in an e-learning company that has existed for the past eight years. Prior to that, I was an instructional designer, which was about educating large organisations globally, mainly at the corporate level. My work also covered some academic areas, including teaching doctors at postgraduate level, and teaching for some schools, including things like maths in America in a Texas maths programme.

Katherine Sangster (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab): I have no interests to declare. However, like George Adam, I put on the record that I have four children, two of whom are still in the education system.

The Convener: Thank you. Maybe I should declare that I have six children, just to trump everyone. I also have two grandchildren who are in school.

Deputy Convener

10:02

The Convener: Our next item of business is to choose a deputy convener. The Parliament has agreed that only members of the Labour Party are eligible for nomination as deputy convener. As Katherine Sangster is the only Labour Party member on the committee, are we content to choose her as deputy convener?

Katherine Sangster was chosen as deputy convener.

The Convener: Congratulations, Katherine—I look forward to working with you.

Priorities

10:03

The Convener: Our final item is to discuss our priorities for the parliamentary session. I will go around the room and ask everybody to discuss what they would like to be on our work programme. There are no decisions to be made today, so this is just to give an indication of where our interests are. I will start with Katherine Sangster.

Katherine Sangster: One of my main priorities is the delivery of the 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare, which leads on from the previous committee's legacy report and my own campaign interests—it is really important. The committee will also be considering how the Government will deliver its manifesto commitment on childcare for children from the age of nine months to the end of primary school. It is important that we look at the issues that we have at the moment with that offering before we add to a system that is already, as parents are feeding back to us, slightly shaky, particularly with the cross-boundary issues that parents are experiencing.

The previous committee looked at behaviour in schools, and I would like to look at that again. I would particularly like to look at gender issues, including the behaviour issues that girls are facing in secondary school. I would also like the committee to look at the attainment gap and revisit the work that was done previously on that, as well as looking at the impact of child poverty on the attainment gap, which Duncan Dunlop has made a point about.

There are shorter-term issues, including learning about best practice from the breakfast clubs roll-out in England and, I think, Wales, before we look at what we are doing in Scotland. There is also the issue of mobile phones—a lot of councils have already banned mobile phones in classrooms, so we must ensure that practice is shared.

I would like to raise something immediate—please tell me if it is not relevant, convener—that I was contacted about last week. All 32 chief social work officers have released a statement that there is no accommodation for children who are in immediate danger, with social workers reporting that they are having to take the children home. The minister has responded, but that strikes me as something catastrophic that is happening in child protection. Is that a relevant issue for the committee to look at immediately?

George Adam: For me, a priority is to look at child poverty and the attainment gap and to take that a step further into further and higher

education. Where are we with places in higher education?

One of the issues that came out in the previous parliamentary session was how we train apprentices. There were issues with some of the trade bodies that are involved in that, which I found a bit strange when I talked to them. We should explore some of that, because there could be a space for colleges to do what they have done in the past and start going down the training route. That helps with the jobs market; it is not just about getting a degree and going elsewhere.

There is also the issue of additional support needs. Three of my grandchildren are at various stages on the spectrum. It is an ongoing issue, and there are challenges for teachers in particular. In the previous session, we heard teachers say how challenging the situation is for them in the classroom. We will have to address that issue.

On the whole, I do not doubt for a minute that the education landscape will keep us busy over the next five years. There will always be something going on, but those are the key priorities for me. Dealing with child poverty is the important thing for me, including how we make sure that everyone gets the opportunity to work their way out of it, no matter where they live.

Duncan Dunlop: I will raise similar issues to those that have been covered. On additional support needs, why has there been such a big increase and what can we do about that? I think that, now, more than 50 per cent of children are presenting with different levels of need. There has been a huge increase, and I am really interested to know why that has happened and what our solutions are. Just putting in a class teacher puts other pressures elsewhere.

Linked to that is the question of why we have dropped down international standards in certain basics of education, including maths and English, and where Scotland is sitting within that across the board. How do we respond to the changing dynamics of educating people to the fullest extent so that they are ready not just for the world of work but for the world?

That links to what we are doing on the live issue of university funding, as well as the viability of that whole sector, which then might cross over to speaking to employers about their needs and to creating apprenticeships, practical college courses or university degrees that marry up with their needs so that the system is as responsive as possible.

There is an issue with teachers, because we potentially have too many in arts-based subjects and not enough in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. We should consider how we can have a more responsive education system that ensures that we have the qualified people within it.

It will be no surprise to members that I am interested in where we have got to on the actions that we are taking to improve outcomes for people with care experience, including children. There has been a lot of noise around the Promise and what the nation's intent should be, but there has been a lack of clarity on the actions that should be taken. That area would benefit from coherent scrutiny by the committee.

Angela Ross: We want to focus on the curriculum for excellence, how it is being delivered and where some of the shortfalls are, particularly around the structure of the curriculum itself. I have a particular interest in that, given some of the previous work that I have done.

The national curriculum that is used in England is much more knowledge based, which is similar to the Scottish system that we used to use. We have gone to a more skills-based approach, which needs to be integrated as part of the curriculum. However, we need to assess what is working in schools such as Jordanhill school, which has done a good job of embedding knowledge back into the curriculum. It is about looking at where we can get merit from analysing that success.

However, we can assess progress and performance in schools only if we have the appropriate surveys and assessment structure in place. It is about understanding how we measure where our children are and what level they are at. There is possibly a need to look at ages and stages, which, when I have investigated it, is an area that seems to be a little bit loose. It is sort of the case that a child gets to their level when they get to it, which is fair enough. However, we need to be able to assess that as well as our international performance—that goes to Duncan Dunlop's point—so that we are able to critique where we are and how we are doing, because that will give us the feedback that we need to improve. How we can potentially improve on that is one area.

Another area to look at is joining the dots up an awful lot more. Our education system tends to be quite siloed, and people who are going through it need to see clear pathways. Although there needs to be flexibility to switch pathways, I would ask whether we can look at horizon thinking. Can we look at joining up the structure, so that when people progress, there are no cliff edges and there is clear progress? That might be going into further education opportunities, apprenticeships or university, but there should be an end goal, a career and an experience outside in life that people can embrace because they have chosen

the correct options as they have gone along. When I went through that experience, I thought, “I have finished school, now what? I have finished university, now what?” It did not seem very joined up, and we could do better in those areas.

On apprenticeships, we need to look at how we ring fence the funding for that and ensure that it is spent in the correct way. That might mean looking more at enterprise and commercial opportunities and perhaps ensuring that there is the opportunity to look at professional development in universities. Perhaps there could be a year in a university or college course when people were out working—doing a practical, physical job or a job in a professional sphere—to get experience and explore future work options. It is about joining up those activities.

STEM is important, but perhaps we should call it STEAM, because we want to include the arts and we want to encourage critical thinking. This is about how people think, rather than what they think, and how they can use that in life. It is about giving them the skills to be creative and explore innovation. Perhaps that means weaving innovation into our education system more, so that we are really thinking about the opportunities. As Scots, we are great at coming up with creative and innovative ideas; we just need the space to be able to do so.

The Convener: Thank you—that is helpful.

Patricia Gibson: I have jotted down a few ideas.

I agree that we need to be looking at the childcare offer. The commitment to deliver childcare for children from nine months until they reach the end of primary seven by the end of this Parliament is hugely ambitious, and the committee should periodically take stock of progress towards that. The scale of the commitment is so huge that we need to keep an eye on it.

We also need to look at college and university funding: what funding is being provided and how that money can be better spent in a time when resources are scarce. I am also thinking about apprenticeships. We need to remember that 98 per cent of our children in Scotland go on to positive destinations, so good work is already going on. However, we need to make sure that we get better value for money where possible.

I would like us to look at the poverty-related attainment gap. We could perhaps carry out visits to look at best practice, because some schools are doing excellent work on the poverty-related attainment gap.

10:15

We need to consider pupil support assistants who help children with special educational needs. We need to professionalise that work, because recruitment and retention is a challenge, and that situation does not serve the children well. There is a bigger space for specialist centres for children with additional needs who cannot be accommodated in mainstream settings. I understand why there is an inclusion agenda: including children with special educational needs in mainstream schools is an admirable aim. Ultimately, however, it fails the children, and it frustrates teachers, because they cannot deliver the kind of support that they need to provide. We need to have a serious think about that. We also need to consider behaviour, and how we can better support looked-after children.

I very much support the phone ban in schools, which I think is long overdue. As I said in the chamber, we need to consider how we support schools in enforcing the ban. As the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic told us, the ban will work seamlessly in some schools. However, in other schools it will be a real challenge—and some of that challenge will come from parents. Any system will have to have exclusions—and the cabinet secretary talked about that. However, we do not want there to be so many exclusions that it just becomes a tick-box exercise, and things are not getting done at all. That is a real danger. We will need to monitor that when the relevant bill is introduced.

I would also like us to talk about the impact that the private finance initiative has been having in our schools every day. In my constituency, PFI is costing around £30 million a year. That is £30 million off the top of two local authorities’ education budgets, before they have bought a jotter or a pencil. That is bordering on the criminal. It has cost our schools £9 billion so far across Scotland, and there is still £6.7 billion left to pay. That is not justifiable in any world. We need to revisit that and see what can be done to free us from the chains of that appalling legacy.

We also need to think about Gaelic education and about trying to make it more mainstream. Every child who wants to learn Gaelic should have the opportunity to do so, but that means training and delivering more Gaelic teachers in mainstream schools, which has resource implications.

I will end with this: Scotland is the only country in the world, as far as I am aware—somebody from the Scottish Parliament information centre might contradict me—where children do not learn about the history of their nation as a matter of course. I cannot understand why that is. Scotland gave birth to the enlightenment, but nobody in any secondary

school anywhere in Scotland will have ever heard of it. I am bewildered by that. Teaching Scots about their history should be a compulsory part of broad general education. No other nation in the world would understand why we do not do that.

There has to be a greater emphasis on life skills and financial education. We also need to take a closer look at curriculum for excellence in the round and consider how it is delivering the life skills that our children need.

In reference to what other members have said about evaluating what goes on in schools and how education is delivered, that is done as a matter of course in schools under "How good is our school?" which is the benchmark and the working document for every school.

I promise that this really is the last thing that I will say. Part of school education is learning about culture and being taught literature. I know that there has been a greater emphasis on teaching Scottish literature in secondary education. However, I do not think that it has worked well. The literature that is taught shows the underbelly of Scottish society, if I can put it that way. This morning I jotted down the names of 12 Scottish writers whose works would enrich any child's life. If we want to teach Scottish literature, we have to teach inspiring literature, rather than only talking about the underbelly of the nation. We are dealing with children, and we are trying to build positive outlooks.

The Convener: Thank you for that, Patricia.

I welcome Laura Moodie to the committee. Do you have any interests to declare?

Laura Moodie (South Scotland) (Green): I have no registered interests to declare.

The Convener: Will you set out what you would like the committee to focus on?

Laura Moodie: Thank you, convener, and apologies to everybody for my tardiness. I was struggling somewhat with the train system in the south of Scotland.

I was interested to hear what Patricia Gibson said, because I am particularly keen to focus on child poverty, which absolutely underpins the attainment gap—it is impossible to learn when you are hungry. We need to think holistically, so I would be keen to take a cross-committee approach to the issue with the Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee. We have targets coming up that we need to meet. The targets are being reviewed, but a big part of the role of this committee will be to look at the impact that those targets are having. Realistically, I do not think that the Scottish Parliament can make significant progress on closing the attainment gap unless we also deal with poverty.

I would be keen to look further into the experiences of people who have been in care and their interaction with the education system, particularly at the crucial transition stages. We need to ensure that care-experienced people are genuinely being supported by the Promise to move from secondary to tertiary education, especially, and onwards into adult life.

Paragraph 135 of the legacy report from the previous session commented about the time that has passed since we considered specialist education in Scotland, particularly the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and similar cultural institutions, such as Glasgow School of Art. It is high time that we looked at those, because they make an outsized contribution to Scotland's soft power in the rest of the UK and throughout the world. It would be fantastic to consider the impact of such institutions.

Overall, however, I have always been clear that I come from a very rural region. I live in a rural village, and I am particularly concerned about the impacts of rurality on equality in education. A lack of access to specialised teaching in schools takes different forms throughout the country. Some schools are excellent and offer, as best they can, a diverse curriculum. Other schools really struggle. For example, in a rural secondary with only one modern languages teacher, if that teacher is ill for an extended period, the consequence can often be that the school simply does not teach modern languages, or that they are taught by non-specialists, which is far from ideal.

A big piece of rurality is the issue of childcare. We have to find ways to create flexible, year-round childcare for everybody in this country, and that is simply not happening in rural areas. There are the practical implications of the cost of delivering childcare in rural communities, where there are fewer people per capita, but there are also the challenges of the job sectors in those areas, which often offer shift, out-of-hours, weekend or seasonal work. Many parents in my constituency, including my husband, chiefly work seasonally. His main jobs are over the summer, which is precisely when people need childcare the most, but there is very little provision available at that time. We need to look at childcare in the round and ensure that we hear voices from across Scotland. We need to consider provision, such as childminders and wraparound care, that goes beyond the local government-led, statutory nursery-based provision.

Duncan Dunlop: There is one issue that has not come up. I should have declared that I have a

masters in community, youth work and non-formal education.

There has been quite severe degradation of youth work provision across Scotland, particularly in terms of the formal activities that are delivered by local authorities. Many charities deliver provision locally, but they are always scrabbling for funding. Given the issues that we are aware of around additional support needs and the fact that a formal classroom setting is not the best place for some people to learn, youth work is a key resource. The skills that people learn through that can set them up for life, if they are not the most academically minded. We ought to be inquisitive about what is happening in that sector, so that we can ensure that provision exists across the board, and not just in certain pockets.

George Adam: Duncan Dunlop brings up a valid point, and our predecessor committee did some work on the issue a few times. We often talk about hard-to-reach children and families—although, actually, we do not use that language now. Nine times out of 10, they are the ones who do not engage with school and will not do well. However, some youth work projects are classic examples of ways in which they can get access to learning. For example, many football clubs run various training and teaching activities. They use football as a hook, but the young people end up engaging in the educational side, too. I think that the Spartans Football Club in Edinburgh is doing great work—the previous committee did some work on what it is doing, and we should explore that further, because I think that it has been more successful than we expect, and could point to a new and better way of working with some young people. The issue relates to the poverty-related attainment gap, because those young people are just not going to school, but they can end up getting involved in other things, such as the interesting work that is being done by the Spartans.

Laura Moodie: On that point about youth work, a lot of seasonal childcare in rural areas is provided by the youth work sector. Most of the parents I know are currently cobbling together a week here and a week there from various programmes. The youth work that is being done is fantastic, and, if we can find ways to support that sector, invest in it and ensure that it is as easy as possible for parents to get their kids signed up to projects over the summer, it could really make a difference to people.

Patricia Gibson: On what George Adam was saying about hard-to-reach children, I should say that schools are getting good at identifying children who do not go to school but who have a particular interest in a subject and matching them up with college courses that they can attend two or three days a week. Of course, they miss out on parts of the curriculum because of that, but they are engaged in something else, which means that on the days when they are in school they are much more engaged than they otherwise would be, because there is some part of their education that has tapped into their abilities and interests.

The Convener: It has been helpful to hear members set out a few of their priorities. I can see that there is an overarching desire to look for the best outcomes that we can achieve for the young people in our education system, and I think that we can start from that point and work from there.

I should declare that I have children with additional support needs, and that is one of my areas of interest. That issue is absolutely linked into the issue of behaviour in schools. When you talk to teachers and other people in public service, you can see that something has changed in relation to that issue in the post-Covid period. It would be good to look at behaviour in schools and to have streams within that to focus on the poverty-related attainment gap and additional support for learning.

A few members touched on how the curriculum for excellence is working and the positive destinations that we want our children to achieve. On the issues of behaviour in schools and ASN, if we looked at establishing clearer pathways for our children and young people into positive destinations, that could help to loosen up the bottleneck that leads to children being frustrated because they are not able to move on. Getting into the bones of those issues would help us to unpick the reasons for what is happening and allow us to think about what we can do to support our young people and teachers. Foundation apprenticeships are fantastic, but we need to consider widening them and looking at how they are working and whether we need to do more of that sort of thing.

I was particularly interested to hear what members said about youth work. Extracurricular activity is exceptionally important, and there is a lot of scope for work in that area that enables children to come together not only to socialise but to engage in subjects that interest them.

10:30

George Adam mentioned sport, including football. There is also music, art, drama and culture—all things that our young people have quite limited access to. I know what it is like when one of my children tells me that they have an interest in a new sport: I have to go out and buy all the gear that they need, and there will be a deposit and fees to pay. Before you know it, it has cost a couple of hundred pounds, and then they get fed up of it after six weeks. I am in a privileged position

because I can help my children to do that but, a good few years ago, I was not in that position. There must be so many families and young people who are unable to access extracurricular activities that they have an interest in.

It is all interconnected, and it is quite a wide ecosystem, as we know. The committee is able to look at an overarching theme, which might be behaviour in schools or attainment. We have some incredible schools that are doing fantastic work with project-based learning. The issue is that the rankings under the programme for international student assessment—the PISA rankings—do not necessarily show that good work and the positive destinations that those young people go on to, so it would be helpful to look at that.

We spoke about the attainment of our young people, but we need to consider how that is ranked. Mention was made of Scotland's attainment not being what it used to be, but I would like to understand more about how the ranking is implemented and what it is based on. Perhaps the processes for measuring attainment and how our young people are learning have been a bit disjointed, so I would really like to get into that aspect.

Support for teachers is a massive issue. Our teachers need more support in schools to help children with behaviour issues and additional support for learning needs. On flexible childcare, I come from a rural area, and I completely understand what was said about that. In looking at the national picture of childcare and the roll-out of childcare provision, we need to consider what that will look like for us and what part the committee can play to ensure that the provision is rolled out in the best possible way, so that people who are accessing it are happy with what it looks like but also so that the people who will deliver the service are fully equipped to do that. That will be a massive task, as Patricia Gibson said.

Those are just a few of my thoughts on the things that I would like the committee to look into. Cross-committee working will be really important in this parliamentary session, and I would like to do more of that. I have an interest in the proposed learning disability, autism and neurodivergence bill, which would absolutely impact on our education system. That relates to how our young people are supported through health challenges, and there will definitely be crossover with the work of other committees, so I would like our committee to work with others on that.

Would anyone like to add anything?

Angela Ross: On positive destinations, it is excellent that we have raised a few issues around youth education outside of schools and how we support our youth. I had an experience in a local shopping area, where young people were cycling bikes around a shop. I approached them and asked whether there was anywhere else that they should or could be. They talked to me for a while and, from what they expressed to me, I felt that they did not have any positive role models and did not have anything else to do. They had asked for a bike park nearby and they wanted something to put their energy into. I felt that they were possibly getting into a bit of trouble because they did not have a positive destination or somewhere that they should be going. Youth education is particularly important, and it might address some antisocial behaviour issues, so that is something to look into. Role models in different areas of society are really important for young people.

Katherine Sangster: To build on Patricia Gibson's point about teaching Scottish history in schools and children being able to learn Gaelic, it is also important to embed in the curriculum the history of the Scots language and how it has evolved. That could lead into Patricia's point about culture and expanding the literature that kids are learning about.

Patricia Gibson: Absolutely.

Duncan Dunlop: This links to what Angela Ross said, and it might fall under other committees' mandates. I worked a lot with young people who were considered to be in positive destinations. I am quite honest about this. Post-16, if someone is in education or employment, that is a positive destination. If someone is on a course lasting 10 or 12 weeks, that can also be classified as a positive destination, but it is not really, because what matters is what comes next. Is that course leading something that will give someone the prospect of sustained, progressive, positive activity, which ultimately results in them being economically active? Quite a lot of them are not.

If we look at the report of the Milburn review in England, we can see that the position is fairly similar up here—we are kidding ourselves if we think that it is not. There is an impending crisis in how our labour market will change, and our education system and support for young people need to respond to that.

It would be good for us to be inquisitive, in a different way, about what the solutions might be. I used to run schemes where I employed young people and then taught them how to work. That was because, if there was a training scheme but no job at the end of it, they did not always have the motivation to follow it through. What mattered was whether someone was at home, kicking them out of bed in the morning to ensure that they got on with it and embedded that learning.

All that we do must respond to a fast-moving economic and employment climate. Our

responsibility is to ensure that we do not end up with much of this generation being economically inactive. When someone gets beyond 23—to 25 at the latest—it becomes very hard to get them into work if they have not worked previously.

Patricia Gibson: That is sort of the point that I made, but I was not as specific as you, Duncan. I spoke about university, college and apprenticeship funding and ensuring that we get the best use of the money that is put into those areas. I do not think that there should be courses that are 10 weeks long. That is a nonsense—something meaningful will take longer.

It was remiss of us not to have mentioned—although you did, Duncan—that we have a group of young people who are either in work for a short time or fall out of the workforce when they are still quite young. By "quite young", I mean below 21. We need to provide more support in that regard.

However, it about how we spend the money. We cannot have somebody who leaves school going on a five-week course on, for example, bricklaying if, after five weeks, there are no bricks to lay or nobody to pay them to lay them. That is a really important point.

The Convener: On the point about languages, this is the Education and Gaelic Committee, obviously. Also, on the point about Scottish history and culture, we should definitely be looking at that.

In addition, we are talking about minority languages in Scotland. I should declare that I use British Sign Language to communicate with my dad, who is deaf. During my previous convenership of the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, we carried out post-legislative scrutiny of the British Sign Language Act 2022 and how it is delivering for people.

Our deaf children and BSL users have some of the biggest attainment gaps, so I would like to see BSL included as part of the work on ASN and attainment. Many people say to me, "I wish I could learn BSL." How do we ensure that that becomes part of the learning experience for our young people, while also opening up the world for deaf children and helping to improve attainment?

Patricia Gibson: I talked about life skills, and BSL is very much part of that. In case there is any misunderstanding externally, I should make the point that when we talk about putting Gaelic more firmly on the curriculum so that every child can access it, that is not about displacing European languages such as French, German or Italian, which are very important—they can work alongside each other.

Laura Moodie: It might also be worth looking again at our approach to English as a second language and thinking of that more holistically. Quite often, that is approached in terms of looking at migration and migrant languages. However, there are a lot of native-born Scots for whom English is a second language, whether their first language is BSL, Gaelic or Scots. Thinking again and looking a bit deeper at ESL education and how that is being taught and embedded throughout our education system could be quite interesting.

The Convener: Do members have any further points? No.

That was a lot—we heard some fantastic ideas. As I said, I can see ways in which we can join up many of these thoughts and develop a thread running through our work. We will discuss that further at our business planning day in August.

Thank you for your comments—they have been really useful. As I said, we will have detailed discussions at the business planning day, with a view to formally agreeing our initial work programme in September.

Do we agree to holding a business planning day and to delegate sign-off of the programme to me?

Members *indicated agreement*.

The Convener: Do we agree to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic to give evidence, once the programme for government has been announced?

Members *indicated agreement*.

The Convener: Thank you very much for attending your first committee meeting. I hope that you all manage to have a fantastic break over recess and come back fully refreshed. I look forward to seeing you at the business planning day in August.

Meeting closed at 10:41.

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