

# **MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Wednesday 8 May 2002  
(*Afternoon*)

Session 1

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# CONTENTS

Wednesday 8 May 2002

## Debates

	Col.
<b>TIME FOR REFLECTION</b> .....	8617
<b>BUSINESS MOTION</b> .....	8619
<i>Motion moved—[Euan Robson]—and agreed to.</i>	
<b>MINISTER</b> .....	8620
<i>Motion moved—[First Minister]—and agreed to.</i>	
The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell).....	8620
Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP) .....	8621
David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con) .....	8622
The First Minister .....	8623
<b>JUNIOR MINISTER</b> .....	8627
<i>Motion moved—[First Minister]—and agreed to.</i>	
The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell).....	8627
Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con) .....	8628
Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West) .....	8628
The First Minister .....	8629
<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	8633
<i>Motion moved—[Ross Finnie].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Bruce Crawford].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[John Scott].</i>	
The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie) .....	8633
Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP) .....	8638
John Scott (Ayr) (Con) .....	8642
Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab) .....	8645
Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green) .....	8648
Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab) .....	8650
Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP) .....	8652
Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con) .....	8653
Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD) .....	8655
Mr Alasdair Morrison (Western Isles) (Lab).....	8657
Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP) .....	8658
Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con) .....	8660
John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD) .....	8662
Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP).....	8663
Dr Sylvia Jackson (Stirling) (Lab) .....	8664
Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD) .....	8665
Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con) .....	8667
Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP) .....	8669
The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Allan Wilson) .....	8672
<b>DECISION TIME</b> .....	8676
<b>WORLD ASTHMA DAY</b> .....	8683
<i>Motion debated—[Mrs Margaret Smith].</i>	
Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD) .....	8683
Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab) .....	8686
Shona Robison (North-East Scotland) (SNP) .....	8688
Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con).....	8689
Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab) .....	8691
Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD).....	8692
Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) .....	8693
Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP) .....	8694
Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con) .....	8695
The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Mrs Mary Mulligan) .....	8697



## Scottish Parliament

*Wednesday 8 May 2002*

*(Afternoon)*

[THE DEPUTY PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 14:30*]

### Time for Reflection

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** Good afternoon. The first item of business today is time for reflection, which will be led by Eildon Dyer, the press adviser for Christian Aid Scotland.

**Eildon Dyer (Christian Aid Scotland):** Good afternoon. What's in a name? If you have a name like mine—Eildon—you will know how important names are. I have had to go through life explaining that I am not Welsh, nor am I a man, and that I am in fact named after hills in the Borders. It could have been worse—I could have been called Buachaille Etive Mhor.

Not only that, I work for an organisation whose name I do not like—Christian Aid. Please do not misunderstand me. I am happy being a Christian and working for a Christian organisation. I am just about happy with the idea of aid. I would, however, prefer to work for an organisation called Christian Justice, which in fact is really what Christian Aid is all about.

Why justice? Because justice is one of the biblical imperatives to bring about the kind of world which God intended and which Jesus proclaimed. It was said of Jesus:

"Here is my servant ... he will bring justice to the nations ... he will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice on the earth".

Next week, around 10,000 people will take to the streets of Scotland to collect money for Christian Aid. The money will go in aid to some of the world's poorest people. Increasingly, many of those 10,000 people are realising that money is not enough. Essential though money is, what the poorest in the world need is justice. Many of those 10,000 people are realising that the structures that keep people poor, like unpayable debt or unfair trade, need to be changed.

One of the dictionary definitions of justice is

'the awarding of what is due'.

The focus of this year's Christian Aid week is world trade systems—systems that by and large do not give the poorest what they are due. Listen out, because the trade justice movement is

gearing up. Some of those 10,000 people may have something to say to you over the coming months and years.

Acting for justice demands that we be sacrificial. I will finish with a prayer on that theme.

Show us, good Lord  
how to be frugal, till all are fed;  
how to weep, till all can laugh;  
how to be meek, till all can stand in pride;  
how to mourn, till all are comforted;  
how to be restless, till all live in peace;  
how to claim less, till all find justice.

Amen.

## Business Motion

14:33

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S1M-3077, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revised business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees—

as a revision to the Business Programme agreed on 2 May 2002—

Wednesday 8 May 2002

after first Parliamentary Bureau Motions, delete

*“followed by* Executive Debate on Sustainable Development - Meeting the Needs”

and, insert

*“followed by* First Minister's Motion to appoint a Minister

*followed by, no later than 2.50 pm* First Minister's Motion to appoint a junior Scottish Minister

*followed by, no later than 3.05 pm* Executive Debate on Sustainable Development - Meeting the Needs”

Thursday 9 May 2002

after “Social Justice Committee Debate on the Voluntary Sector”, delete

*“followed by* Business Motion

*followed by* Ministerial Statement on New National Qualifications”

and insert

*“followed by* Ministerial Statement on New National Qualifications

*followed by* Business Motion”—[Euan Robson.]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Minister

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-3069, in the name of the First Minister, on the appointment of a minister.

14:34

**The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell):** I want to start by thanking Wendy Alexander for the contribution that she made to the work of the Executive and the Cabinet. [Applause.] I also want to extend my best wishes to her in the Parliament and in continuing to serve her constituents in Paisley North well.

In recommending the appointment of Margaret Curran, it is right that I should first of all say something about the appointment of Iain Gray as Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning.

Since the beginning of this Parliament, Iain Gray has consistently demonstrated his commitment to improving the lives of people in Scotland. He has an excellent track record in health, in justice and, most recently, in social justice. Throughout, his capacity to bring people together and forge the partnerships needed to deliver change has brought real improvements to people's lives. He has demonstrated both the leadership skills and an understanding of the Government's role that will allow him to consolidate and develop the relationships that we need with the business, education and transport communities to support our drive for an economically successful and prosperous Scotland.

Iain Gray understands that a strong economy is the cornerstone of a successful Scotland and that our work to invest in the education, science and transport infrastructures is critical to creating the environment in which business can grow. Building that framework, creating those opportunities and working to deliver our strategy for a smart, successful Scotland is the way in which we will secure higher growth, because that way we will put in place the foundations that businesses need to allow them to grow.

Margaret Curran has a lifetime's experience helping communities to support themselves and to grow. She chaired the Parliament's Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee and has always demonstrated her understanding for the concerns felt in our communities and, importantly, for the potential that exists in those communities to develop the talent and the opportunities of our citizens. I have no doubt that Margaret Curran will now take that lifetime's commitment and experience and turn her role as Minister for Social Justice into one that

drives forward the Executive's commitment to closing the opportunity gap across Scotland.

We must end the situation where at least 70 per cent, and perhaps as many as 90 per cent, of lone mothers want to work, but only 52 per cent are in jobs. We must turn around the position where men in our most deprived areas are twice as likely to die of coronary heart disease as men living elsewhere. We must end the scandal that 75 per cent of our young people in care will leave school without the qualifications that they need to build their futures. We must build a Scotland of opportunity for all, because we understand the central importance for our prosperity of achieving that goal.

Margaret Curran's appointment will bring energy and talent to the team of ministers who lead the Executive, and I am delighted to commend her appointment to the Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that Margaret Curran be appointed as a Minister.

14:37

**Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):** I wish to oppose the First Minister's motion to appoint Margaret Curran to the Cabinet. The appointment of ministers to Cabinet office should largely be about who can focus the Government's priorities in order to achieve the Government's objectives. The Executive tells us that one of its top priorities is social justice, but it has a very strange way of showing that.

Margaret Curran is now the fourth minister in three years to have responsibility for social justice and, as far as we know, at least the fifth person to be offered that post by a Labour First Minister. It shows a strange focus and a strange set of priorities that ministers change so often in office. I hope that the First Minister will tell us in summing up that he has given Margaret Curran a very specific task for her term in office to add to the list that he announced earlier. That task is that she has a duty to reduce child poverty, which has actually gone up in Scotland in the past 12 months, to the shame of the Labour Executive.

The appointment of Margaret Curran as Minister for Social Justice comes about only because of Iain Gray's appointment to the enterprise role, which arises from Wendy Alexander's resignation last Friday. One of the clear factors in that resignation was that Wendy Alexander had too much to do and too many responsibilities, and did not receive the support that she needed to focus on the formidable challenge of improving the Scottish economy. In the ministerial changes leading to the appointment of Margaret Curran, the First Minister should have taken steps to get the

focus on the Scottish economy right.

There are vital issues that must be tackled. Our economy grew by 0.6 per cent in 2001, below the trend of the past 10 years and below the UK level of economic growth. Manufacturing output decreased by 8.2 per cent in 2001, compared with the previous year. Unemployment is 6.6 per cent higher than it was a year ago, and we heard this morning that business failures are up 40 per cent on last year. In making this Cabinet appointment, the First Minister should have learned his lesson and not put as many burdens on another minister with responsibility for enterprise as the previous minister was not prepared to carry.

While observing the revolving doors through which ministers in the Scottish Executive regularly pass, nobody ever seems to count the cost of the changes. There are costs to the children of Scotland, who are left in poverty as a result of the Scottish Executive's confusion about social justice, and to the Scottish economy, as the minister with responsibility for enterprise carries too many burdens and cannot focus on the challenge of building the Scottish economy. There will be other costs. In the First Minister's summing up, I wonder if he can tell the Parliament about the cost to the taxpayer of the many ministers who have left the Scottish Executive in the years since 1999.

The Executive continues to spin, like the revolving doors through which ministers pass. The Executive should stop spinning and start to focus on delivering for the public, who elected members to the Parliament. The Executive should focus on making the Parliament and the country the best that they can be. That will not be the result of constant ministerial changes, but of the Government's addressing the challenges that exist in Scotland today.

14:41

**David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con):** Here we are again with another ministerial reshuffle. Sometimes, it seems that there are more drop-outs in the Scottish Executive than there were at Woodstock. We are stardust, we are falling is a song for Wendy Alexander, as the Cabinet bids her farewell and welcomes Margaret Curran.

The Scottish Executive is, of course, an equal opportunities employer—everyone gets a shot and everyone gets fired. After barely three years of the Parliament, only eight out of 55 Labour members have not held ministerial office, junior ministerial office or been the beneficiary of party patronage as a convener, deputy convener, ministerial aide, gofer or spear carrier. I have a list of the awful eight, but I say to Mr B, Ms C and Mrs L—I have changed the names to protect the identities of the innocent—that their time will come and that they

should not fear. They are not too incompetent to get a job in the Scottish Executive—ability is no barrier to advancement. There are still 358 reshuffling days before the next election.

Earlier this week, an opinion poll was published which said that 72 per cent of Scots rated the First Minister's performance as ranging from very poor to the dizzy heights of plain average. That will not be a surprise. However, to my great alarm, the poll disclosed that 3 per cent of Scots believe that I am the Deputy First Minister. That is a worrying statistic. It means that, as we speak, 150,000 people are walking around Scotland blaming me for Jim Wallace's mistakes. I would like to take this opportunity to state categorically for the *Official Report* that I take absolutely no responsibility for such failures.

More seriously, the motion represents an opportunity, which the First Minister has missed, to put into practice his favourite soundbite: "doing less, better". From day one of the Parliament, I have consistently said that there is absolutely no need for 20 ministers in the Scottish Executive. Adding those 20 ministers to the two ministers in the Scotland Office means that 22 ministers are undertaking the work that was adequately done by only five ministers at the old Scottish Office prior to 1 July 1999. The non-appointment of a successor to Ms Alexander and the allocation of her portfolios to existing members of the Cabinet would have been a welcome step in the right direction. Sadly, an opportunity has been missed and the desire to preserve the power of patronage has overridden the need to consider the public purse or the efficient discharge of the responsibilities of Government. We should certainly be doing a lot less and we should certainly be doing it far better. We could certainly do it with far fewer ministers.

However, having made that point it would be churlish not to acknowledge and thank Wendy Alexander for her contribution as a minister or to congratulate Margaret Curran on her preferment to the Cabinet. She has proved herself to be a spirited and combative contributor to debates in the chamber. My colleagues and I look forward to some robust exchanges.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call on the First Minister to wind up the debate.

14:45

**The First Minister:** The Presiding Officer caught me by surprise. I expected there to be other speeches. I am delighted to get the opportunity to respond to what has been said, however briefly.

It is very sad that, a week after calling on everyone else in Scotland to stop moaning, ginning

and whingeing, Mr Swinney chooses today to get back to his old habits and to moan and whinge about the current state of Scotland.

**Dr Winnie Ewing (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** That is called opposition.

**The First Minister:** Opposition can also be about ideas and vision. Some day we look forward to getting that, Dr Ewing.

For the good of the Scottish economy it is important to put on the record the recent reports published by a series of business organisations. The Bank of Scotland monthly report stated that manufacturing activity has risen for the third consecutive month. The Confederation of British Industry industrial trends survey stated that optimism was positive among Scottish manufacturers for the first time since January 2000. Lloyds TSB says that expectations for the six months to August 2002 are positive.

There are positive signs in our Scottish economy. We had an extremely difficult year last year, but Scotland's economy was robust enough to see us through that. It is wrong for members of the Parliament to talk down the economy and to run it down, in the chamber or anywhere else.

Predictions were made by the nationalists, week after week and month after month, that Scotland would be in recession by the end of last year. We were not; those predictions were wrong. The nationalists talked down the Scottish economy then and they are talking it down again today.

We need focus in the Parliament. I have been saying that for six months. Part of that focus is to have the key posts of enterprise, transport and lifelong learning combined to provide a focus to rebuild the Scottish economy, to get the skills in place and establish the infrastructure that we need. Business organisations throughout Scotland have welcomed that change and are working with us to secure the basis for the Scottish economy to achieve higher growth in the future.

I have to say, perhaps with some irony, that Mr McLetchie might want to remember that the same Mr Gray that he castigates today defeated him in Edinburgh Pentlands in the elections to the Scottish Parliament in 1999. I am sure that Mr Gray will do that again next year.

This is a strong team, which is presiding over serious progress in public services and in the economy in Scotland, but there is much more still to do. After today's debate, we will get on with doing it.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The question is, that motion S1M-3069, in the name of the First Minister, on the appointment of a minister, be agreed to. Are we agreed?



**Members: No.**

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

**For**

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)  
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**AGAINST**

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

**ABSTENTIONS**

Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 66, Against 27, Abstentions 15.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that Margaret Curran be appointed as a Minister.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the vote is valid. Parliament has agreed the First Minister's recommendation and he may now invite Her Majesty to approve the appointment of Margaret Curran as a minister. [*Applause.*]

## Junior Minister

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-3070, in the name of the First Minister, on the appointment of a junior Scottish minister. Members who wish to speak in the debate should press their request-to-speak buttons now.

14:50

**The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell):** The role of the deputy minister is vital to the relationship between ministers and the Parliament and in helping ministers to meet the responsibilities that they carry. Over the past three years, the excellent work that has been carried out by deputy ministers has made a real difference to the reputation of the Parliament, to the effectiveness of legislation and to Executive decision making.

Through his experience in the chamber and the contribution that he has made to the work of the Parliament, Frank McAveety is well placed to join the team of deputy ministers who serve us so well. Frank McAveety represents an area of Glasgow where health is a central issue and where the link between poor health and poor prospects is evident every day. It is a constituency where the number of people who are registered and claiming disability allowance is twice the Scottish average; where the number of live births with a low birth weight is twice the Scottish average; and where the levels of heart disease, stroke and cancer are higher than in the rest of the country.

When Frank McAveety was the leader of Glasgow City Council, he demonstrated his understanding of the critical relationship between the health of that great city's citizens and their economic and social circumstances. It is that understanding, combined with his ability to work with people and to focus on taking the action that is needed to solve problems and open up opportunities, that fits him well for the post of Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care.

Hugh Henry will bring to his new role as Deputy Minister for Social Justice that shared understanding of health and his experience as part of the successful team that has taken action, in recent months, to solve the problems at the Beatson cancer clinic, to reduce the level of delayed discharge and to raise the standards of care and cleanliness in our hospitals.

Frank McAveety will join our work to deliver improved health services in partnership with health workers, health boards and—most of all—patients throughout the country. He will join a health team

that is led by Malcolm Chisholm, which is committed to using the significantly increased investment that we are making to secure the health reforms that we badly need.

I am pleased to commend Frank McAveety's appointment.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that Frank McAveety be appointed as a junior Scottish Minister.

14:52

**Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con):** I cannot help feeling that, when he was informed of his appointment, Frank McAveety must have thought that he was listening to the last blast of music in the never-ending game of musical chairs that is ministerial appointments to the Scottish Executive.

I have no personal angst about Mr McAveety—he seems to be a harmless fellow. His appointment is no surprise, as he seems to possess the three attributes that are necessary to secure appointment to the Scottish Executive: a time-served council background; the friendship of the First Minister; and, most important, no visible experience of or connection with the portfolio in which he is to deputise.

I wish Mr McAveety no ill—I wish him well in his new office—but I fear that, if precedent is anything to go by, he will be in position for a relatively short time and we will all reconvene in the chamber to make the same speeches again.

14:53

**Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West):** I congratulate Margaret Curran on her appointment. If Frank McAveety is successful in being resurrected, I shall congratulate him too. He will not be the first Lazarus to have emerged from Glasgow City Chambers.

I would welcome a fuller explanation from the First Minister of the circumstances that have led to this ministerial reshuffle, which has been caused by the resignation of Wendy Alexander. I do not doubt Wendy's competence. However, some of the comments that have been made about her replacement, Iain Gray, have been completely over the top. If we are to believe some commentators, the Scottish economy has been delivered such a devastating blow that it is a wonder that it is not reflected in the stock exchange and the value of sterling. I somehow think that the stock exchange, the value of sterling and, indeed, the Scottish economy will survive Wendy's demise. Nevertheless, I would welcome an explanation from the First Minister—or indeed from Wendy herself at a later stage—of the

circumstances that led to her resignation and the implications, if any, for the Scottish economy.

We have been led to believe that there were complaints about Wendy Alexander being overburdened with ministerial responsibilities. We have also heard that Iain Gray will be burdened with various responsibilities as the minister with responsibility for enterprise, lifelong learning, transport and other matters. I notice that, when Wendy had Cabinet responsibility for transport, she invariably called upon her deputy Lewis Macdonald to respond to transport matters. I do not question Lewis Macdonald's competence, but one of the reasons why transport was not given a higher profile was that no one in the Cabinet was fighting hard enough for it. Similarly, one of the reasons why the Scottish Transport Group pensioners have been waiting so long for justice is that no one of Cabinet rank has been fighting hard enough for them.

I hope that the First Minister will take those matters on board and ensure that there is an equitable distribution of portfolios among his Cabinet ministers and that transport is given adequate recognition and priority.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Robin Harper. You have up to three minutes.

**Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green):** Oh, sorry. I did not want to speak.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** In that case, Robin Harper, you get nothing.

I call the First Minister to wind up the debate. You have three minutes.

14:57

**The First Minister:** I welcome Robin Harper's contribution. It was easily the best so far this afternoon.

It is clear from Annabel Goldie's description of Frank McAveety as "harmless" that she has never had to play football against him. I hope that she will be reassured by the way in which our new team performs and works for Scotland in the months ahead.

I must correct Annabel Goldie's comment about time-served councillors serving in the Executive. Apart from me, only one other ex-councillor serves in the Cabinet, and I do not think that Ross Finnie could be described as a time-served Labour councillor. Members from all parties who have council experience have an important role in the Scottish Parliament. For example, we must remember the contribution made by Keith Harding, David Davidson and others for the Conservatives; by Colin Campbell and others for the nationalists; and by former councillors on the Labour and

Liberal benches. Indeed, Dennis Canavan had a great career as a councillor before he became a member of Parliament. Such members' experience of local services and knowledge of the impact of legislation on those services make an important contribution to our work. That said, it is simply wrong to say that a precondition for serving in the Cabinet or on the Labour benches is that a member must have been a member of a local authority.

Before I turn to the points raised by Dennis Canavan, I want to congratulate him on becoming a father again. *[Applause.]*

With the creation of Scotland's transport delivery plan and the resolution of a key element in the delivery of the pensions for which the Scottish Transport Group pensioners have been waiting for so long, no one can doubt the priority that has been given to transport in the past few months. Recently, transport commitments have been vigorously developed in a number of other areas, and I congratulate both Lewis Macdonald and Wendy Alexander on the way in which they have carried out that work.

Dennis Canavan asked specifically about the press comments on Iain Gray's appointment. In my view, someone who gives up a career as a scientist to work in Africa and then comes back to this country to work in Oxfam shows more of a commitment to social justice and to making a better Scotland and a better world than most of us in the chamber can match. Iain Gray's record will be judged on the way in which he tackles his new portfolio in the months and years ahead.

I commend to Parliament the motion and the appointment of Frank McAveety. The appointment of Iain Gray, Margaret Curran, Hugh Henry and Frank McAveety to their new jobs will boost the Parliament, its reputation and our delivery of good public services in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The question is, that motion S1M-3070, in the name of the First Minister, on the appointment of a junior Scottish minister, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)

Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)  
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)

Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 60, Against 0, Abstentions 45.

#### *Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that Frank McAveety be appointed as a junior Scottish Minister.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I declare the result valid. Parliament has agreed the First Minister's recommendation. He may now invite Her Majesty to approve the appointment of Frank McAveety as a junior Scottish minister.

**Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Further to the point that Mr Canavan raised, will you confirm whether you have had a request from Wendy Alexander to make a personal statement? That would appear to be the right way to proceed as it seems strange that the chamber has been told nothing about the circumstances of her resignation.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** It might be the right way to proceed, but the member has not contacted me. It is up to the member to decide whether she wants to make a personal statement.

## Sustainable Development

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-3067, in the name of Ross Finnie, on sustainable development, and two amendments to that motion.

15:03

**The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie):** This is the third debate in the Scottish Parliament on sustainable development. In the first, Parliament decided to make sustainable development central to all its work. The Scottish Executive made the same commitment, and successive programmes for government have placed sustainable development high among our main objectives.

The document that we published last week shows how we have made a reality of sustainable development within the Scottish Executive. "Meeting the Needs... Priorities, Actions and Targets for sustainable development in Scotland" sets out a vision, priorities, actions, indicators and targets. That is a robust approach to sustainable development, which will work for most people, not just for those who have been involved in government but for those in civic society as well. In fact, sustainable development has now become so important to us that we have made it a key consideration in the current spending review. That is further evidence of our commitment and real evidence that our approach works.

"Meeting the Needs" declares that we subscribe to the goal of sustainable development as set down in the Brundtland report. We are part of the world movement for sustainable development. It is 10 years since the Rio summit set the world framework for sustainable development, which made continued development vital but made it contingent on social, economic and environmental considerations being given equal weight.

We remain part of that world movement. We have made social justice a main objective of the Scottish Executive programme. That matches the central theme of the world summit on sustainable development that is to be held in Johannesburg in August. At that summit, poverty and equity will be the key topics. In Scotland, we are not insulated from those issues. Too many still live in poor housing. There are people who do not enjoy the same opportunities as the rest of us and people whose lives are blighted by the legacy of our industrial past. We believe that sustainable development is key to remedying those injustices.

**Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con):** On housing and social justice, the minister is no

doubt aware that the consultation on the draft revised national planning policy guideline 3 on planning for housing indicates that local authorities should zone land for all identifiable housing needs. Can we take it from what the minister says that a full allocation of resources will follow to allow the full allocation of land for affordable housing?

**Ross Finnie:** In some cases, the land is in the public sector and in others, it is in the private sector. If that intervention is an incitement to the sector closest to the member's heart, I am sure that that sector is listening.

Our vision for the future of Scotland is based on three principles: that we should have regard for others who do not have access to the same resources and the wealth they generate; that we should minimise the impact of our actions on future generations by radically reducing our use of resources and minimising environmental impacts; and, most crucially of all, that we should live within the capacity of the planet to sustain our activities and to replenish the resources that we use.

If that vision is relevant, it is particularly relevant to the youth of Scotland, which is exemplified by the presence in the chamber this afternoon of the pupils of Colquhoun Park Primary School. They depend on the Parliament to take sustainable development seriously because they are the generation who will, in future, have to look after the mess that we might otherwise make of the resources that are available to us.

**Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP):** Not many members would disagree with the remarks that the minister has just made, so will he condemn utterly the US Government's actions in completely ignoring the agreements on environmental sustainability that were reached at Kyoto and elsewhere? Will he also condemn the contemptuous way in which the US Government has dealt with the international community in respect of that issue?

**Ross Finnie:** It is clear from my and the Executive's position on the Kyoto commitments that anyone, no matter who they are, who does not subscribe to the principles of the Kyoto agreement or to the principles of sustainable development is not acting in a way in which we would wish them to act. I will not get drawn into an international dispute about that, but I will make it absolutely clear what we believe to be the right course of action.

The principles that I have outlined are vital, but they must lead to action. The Cabinet sub-committee on sustainable Scotland has given much thought to how we bridge the gap between aspiration and action. We have concluded that, to give impetus to sustainable development, we need a practical set of issues to address. We have

adopted three areas of priority: resource use, energy and travel.

I believe that our resource use—which includes where we draw materials from, how we use them and how they go to their next use—is key to liberating people from the injustice of a poor environment. Landfill, quarrying and mining blight the lives of some of our poorer people. A sustainable approach to resource use can transform that scene. The way in which we generate and use our electricity is at the core of our push to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. Enabling people to heat their homes at affordable cost is a sustainability issue. Conserving fossil fuels by using renewable resources is a key element of that strategy.

**Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** In the light of what the minister has just said, is he prepared to say whether he considers nuclear power to be a sustainable source of energy?

**Ross Finnie:** As I have made clear on a number of occasions, what determines whether nuclear power is sustainable is what we do with the waste that emanates from the use of that power. The Executive's position is that it would not proceed with any extension of the use of nuclear power unless it was satisfied that proper, environmentally sustainable ways could be found to deal with nuclear waste. The question of how to deal with nuclear waste is inextricably linked to the extent to which nuclear power is used, and we will have to await the outcome of the report into nuclear waste to determine how we proceed.

As far as travel is concerned, the question is how we bring services to people; how people can have good lives without needing a car; and how we locate development to shape better communities. Those are key to sustainable development.

Our approach, which concentrates on resource use, energy and travel, is delivering sustainable development in practice. It deals with issues of equity across the world and between generations and brings together social, economic and environmental concerns.

Policy on sustainable development involves everyone in the Scottish Executive. We have developed our thinking through discussion with a wide range of interests. We have taken into consideration the views of the external members of the Cabinet sub-committee on sustainable Scotland, and that has given us different perspectives on how a sustainable Scotland might be achieved. More important, the document that we have issued was approved by the whole Cabinet.

Our commitment is in place and we believe that

we can now move forward on it, but we acknowledge that we need to be able to measure progress. Sustainable development can be difficult to pin down. While one action might seem to be in the right direction, it could have an adverse consequence in another. For example, we have stopped dumping sewage sludge at sea. That seems to be the right thing to do, but the energy involved in processing it adds significantly to our energy use and carbon dioxide emissions. We have to consider the balance, and that leads us to seek more renewable sources of energy supply.

We all know that improving the insulation of houses reduces people's costs and can hugely improve the quality of their lives. We also suspect that there is a limit to how far we can take simple insulation before the situation is overtaken by issues such as how we ensure an adequate amount of fresh air in homes and what the process might mean for asthma sufferers and people who experience difficulties with condensation. Such interrelationships are the essence of sustainable development and require a different approach to measuring progress.

In "Meeting the Needs" we offer a set of indicators by which we plan to measure progress on sustainable development in Scotland. There has been much debate about how many indicators we need to reflect the complexity of those interrelationships and the breadth of the topic. We have chosen 24 indicators as a starting point—and I wish to stress that "Meeting the Needs" is a starting point. The document does not claim to be the finished article. It is where we believe it is rational and sensible to begin. As we continue with our programme and with our commitment to sustainable development, so we will continue our programme of developing a range of indicators that allow us to measure properly and with confidence.

Those indicators will be improved. The health indicator, for example, is currently based on life expectancy, but is likely to change as current work on how best to measure health—as opposed to ill health—continues. We will add to and develop our range of targets. The set of indicators links directly to policies and programmes within the Government. As each policy and programme advances, we can expect the indicator that is set to advance, because there is no single goal for sustainable development.

Internally, the Scottish Executive has adopted a green housekeeping policy. The Executive is saving water and reducing its waste stream. It prefers recycled paper to be used, runs its car fleet on liquid petroleum gas, and all its electricity is from sources that are free from the climate change levy. We believe all that to be good for the environment and for sustainable development.

We have to move forward. We have made progress in our freight facilities grant scheme, which has allowed us to take off the road and on to the railways more than 21 million lorry miles every year.

Scotland is making sustainable development something that we have to turn into a reality. It is not a simple step to take. If we talk to anyone—in the United Kingdom, across Europe or in other parts of the world—they will tell us that the exercise is not an easy one.

If we can divert our society from the throw-away attitude of today to a realisation that every material has a continuing value, that will reduce the risk of blight in many areas. Almost nothing that we put in the bin is real waste. Putting it in the ground—as we do throughout Scotland—is tantamount to burying a natural resource.

It will cost money to change our ways. The infrastructure for waste will have to change and we are acting on that now. Our wider infrastructure will have to develop to benefit people who do not have access to a motor car.

**Mr Tosh:** What are the Executive's priorities for allowing the sustainable development of communities in south-west Scotland that do not have sewerage and water infrastructure? The minister should be aware of our correspondence on the matter. Is there any possibility of the Executive funding policies and initiatives to allow the economy of those communities to develop at a sustainable rate?

**Ross Finnie:** The member is aware of the correspondence that we have had on that point. The member is also aware that the Executive has committed £2.8 billion to improve our water supply. The initial priority for that spending is to ensure that the water supply is of the highest possible quality. That is the correct priority. Immediately after that, we will move—and we are moving already—to consider the issues that inhibit growth in areas of Scotland where the water supply proves to be a problem. The key priority is meeting the water quality standards that we have set for the water industry.

If we use that kind of priority, we can move on to build stronger communities with better services and recreation and without ever-increasing traffic demand. We can, we should and we must do so.

I ask Parliament to endorse our statement on sustainable development, "Meeting the Needs". The First Minister will carry that endorsement to Johannesburg in August. Showing our commitment to sustainable development will allow us to join the world group of nations that care about the lives of people today and the generations to come. I commend the document to the Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the Scottish Executive statement on sustainable development, *Meeting the Needs... Priorities, Actions and Targets for sustainable development in Scotland*, and the vision that it sets out for a sustainable Scotland in which the Executive conserves, protects and harnesses Scotland's natural resources and the talents of the people; believes that the statement marks an important step forward for sustainable development in Scotland; agrees that the indicator list provides a good basis on which to begin to measure progress, and believes that sustainable development must be a central principle in governing Scotland.

15:17

**Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** The SNP welcomes the debate. As our amendment states, we acknowledge that the publication of "Meeting the Needs" last week represents an important step forward. I am glad that the minister has said categorically that the document is only the starting point, because there is a fair bit to go.

We are concerned that, after all this time, the indicators are not more comprehensive and meaningful. They do not acknowledge Scotland's full potential and, as far as we are concerned, they lack ambition. Our approach is to acknowledge progress, but to be constructively critical where we feel that that is warranted. The targets might meet the ambitions of the Lib-Lab coalition, hemmed in as it is by UK positioning, but they do not nearly meet the ambitions that the SNP has for Scotland and, like the indicators, they do not acknowledge Scotland's full potential.

I will return to the targets later, but first let us look at the indicators. Indicator 1 is on sustainable prosperity. There is no mention of the tonnes of coal or gallons of oil that will be extracted from Scotland in the future, but those fossil fuels will impact on the warming of the planet. We will of course burn many of those carbon fuels here in Scotland but, given that we export a great deal of what we extract, the exports will have no bearing on Scotland's emissions of climate change gases. Just because we do not burn the fossil fuels, however, we cannot absolve Scotland of responsibility for the release of carbon dioxide that will inevitably follow. We owe it to future generations not only to look at what we do at home, but to examine the consequences of our actions internationally.

Indicator 2 is:

"Work: people as a resource".

It mentions unemployment, but there is no examination of the number of skilled and unskilled workers. We know that the lack of skilled workers is having a serious effect on the Scottish economy and that that is affecting the sustainability of small businesses in particular.

Indicator 7 deals with climate change, but it makes no attempt to measure the basics, such as the mean temperature, the rainfall from which Scotland suffers or the average wind speeds. It is incredible that it does not even attempt to measure the sea levels that will rise as a result of climate change. Instead, we are given the usual platitude that Scotland will somehow make

“an equitable contribution to the UK Kyoto target”.

I have often wondered exactly what that means and how the Executive might define the target for Scotland. Will the minister tell us today whether he intends, now or in the near future, to set separate targets for Scotland, given that the picture in Scotland on the output of climate change gases is very different from that in the rest of the UK?

Does the minister intend to divide up the various sectors and set separate targets for agriculture, transport and energy, for example, as happened in the UK strategy? Alternatively, does he think it appropriate that Scotland should simply muddle along? When we reach 2010, will he say, “We’ve done our bit,” irrespective of what we have done? That is what looks likely at the moment.

Indicator 10 deals with the biodiversity of Scotland but gives no indication of whether we will count the number of threatened species, the bird population or even the number of grey seals, which would be a good yet simple indicator for the health of our seas. There is no indicator for annual forest increment and drain, for cultivated and fallow land or even for a percentage of land that is organically farmed. It is also disturbing that there is no attempt to produce indicators for the amount of pollution or toxic contamination. It is in that area that the people of Scotland are suffering perhaps the greatest environmental injustice. Surely the minister should make some attempt—if not now, in future—to measure the emissions of volatile or poisonous compounds, pesticide use and sales, dioxin levels in breast milk—

**Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab):** I am impressed by Bruce Crawford’s suggested list of further indicators. It occurred to me that Michael Meacher published an extensive list of sustainable development indicators to cover the whole of the UK. Is Mr Crawford suggesting that we should adopt Michael Meacher’s approach, as it does not seem to me that the SNP is adding anything distinctively Scottish to the debate? Certainly, I have not reached the conclusion that independence would add anything to Scotland’s environment.

**Bruce Crawford:** Is following the UK’s targets adding something significant for Scotland, or is the Executive simply tagging on targets and using the tartan brush in areas such as recycling and renewables? Sarah Boyack can choose anything

from the basket of 150 different indicators that Michael Meacher produced, but I am looking at the indicators that affect Scotland and what we do here.

I turn to the Executive’s disappointing lack of ambition for Scotland and to the targets that it has set for energy. At long last, the Executive seems to be prepared to set targets for recycling. I welcome the statement in the document that a target for recycling waste will be set. However, the document does not say whether that target will be mandatory. Perhaps the minister will answer that point when he sums up. The document also states that Scotland’s current figure for recycling is 6 per cent. Unfortunately, that figure includes composting and energy recovery—the real recycling figure is only 4.5 per cent.

Scotland simply must catch up with her European counterparts. I would much rather that we did that because we want to than because the European Commission has forced us to. Switzerland recycles more than 50 per cent of its waste and the Netherlands and Austria recycle 40 per cent of their waste. There are good, international examples of what small, European countries can achieve if they put their minds to it. The setting of ambitious, mandatory recycling targets in Scotland would send the clearest of messages to local authorities, waste producers and waste management companies that landfill and incineration have a limited future.

**Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con):** Mr Crawford raised the issue of local authority involvement. In an SNP Scotland, who would direct that work? Would it be Government led or community led? If it were to be community led, where would the resources come from?

**Bruce Crawford:** I am quite clear about where the resources should come from. The situation in Scotland is ridiculous, with a landfill tax of £12 a tonne for biodegradable products and £2 a tonne for inert waste. We produce 50 million tonnes of landfill a year, the tax for which wings its way down to the London Treasury, where it is lost. That resource should be given directly to the Scottish Parliament for use in recycling and kerbside collection. That is the answer to David Davidson’s question.

The SNP would like an all-Scotland mandatory target on recycling of between 30 and 35 per cent by 2010. The Government-sponsored Waste Watch organisation has estimated that if recycling rates were increased to 30 per cent by 2010, 45,000 jobs would be created across the United Kingdom. That demonstrates that waste management in Scotland is an area in which the protection of the environment can go hand in hand with job creation to produce real, sustainable jobs. However, that will be achievable only if the



Executive takes recycling—particularly separation at source and kerbside collection—seriously.

**Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Does the member agree that there should be no targets for recycling without markets for the products?

**Bruce Crawford:** The absence of markets in Scotland is a problem, but we can establish markets by implementing a proper pilot to test kerbside recycling. By building up markets over a period of time, we will ensure that the jobs are held in Scotland.

Energy is perhaps our greatest area of concern. The lack of ambition in the target that has been set for the percentage of energy generated from renewable resources is nothing short of breathtaking, given our massive potential. The target is 18 per cent by 2010 and just maybe 30 per cent by 2020. That comes nowhere near matching the ambition that is required to ensure that Scotland becomes the green powerhouse of Europe.

**Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Bruce Crawford:** I am in my final minute.

Those targets are not ambitious enough to allow us to reap the sustainable jobs bonanza that can be secured. We must begin to shake off our attachment to putting a tartan brush on UK targets. We must set Scotland on a course to a clean, green, nuclear-free future for our kids.

As we all know, Scotland has 25 per cent of Europe's potential for renewable energy. The options for generating electricity from renewable resources are immense. The report that was produced for the Executive last year by Garrad Hassan said everything that needed to be said. It showed that a 60,000MW capacity could be made available, which means that Scotland could produce 75 per cent of the UK's electricity needs from renewable sources alone.

Although we want manageable targets, we want ambitious targets that are set to reflect Scotland's outstanding potential. The SNP seeks renewables targets of 25 per cent by 2010, 30 per cent by 2015 and 50 per cent by 2020. Scotland can achieve such targets if the Executive gets the message that renewables count for Scotland, shows some ambition and becomes hell-bent on turning Scotland into the green powerhouse of Europe.

I move amendment S1M-3067.1, to leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert:

"believes that sustainable development must be a central principle in governing Scotland; welcomes the Scottish Executive's statement on sustainable development, *Meeting the Needs... Priorities, Actions and Targets for*

*Sustainable Development in Scotland*, and further believes that, while the statement marks an important step forward for sustainable development in Scotland, further work is required to produce a list of indicators that is more comprehensive and meaningful for the purpose of measuring progress and that the targets' lack of ambition does not recognise Scotland's full potential and therefore will not contribute significantly to ensuring a sustainable future for Scotland."

15:28

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** It would be difficult to disagree with much of what the minister said. In broad terms, "Meeting the Needs" is another step in the right direction, but it is only another step in what is likely to be an eternal journey, in which the distance to be travelled lengthens every day.

The backdrop to the need for developing a sustainable future is simple. World populations are rising and will double this century. The resources of our planet are finite and are being used up more quickly than ever. Our water, energy, food, housing and medical requirements are outstripping our ability to meet them.

A worldwide sense of responsibility to cope with those problems and to leave something in reserve must be fostered. Our job as Scottish politicians must be to deliver a future for our country and for our children and to provide a reasonable and growing standard of living for ourselves. We must develop effective strategies nationally and internationally, which must be benchmarked against best practice around the world and built into our education system.

As individuals, we must look at every facet of our daily lives and must act—and must encourage others to act—more responsibly. We must take ownership of the problems that we face—not just current problems, but those that we will face in the future. By doing that, we will encourage a sense of community that is sadly lacking in much of Scotland.

We must consider the key priorities in the Executive's document—resource use, energy and travel. I welcome the statement that decision makers can consider priority areas in their own business and

"can progress sustainable development in a practical, down to earth fashion."

Many people want to deliver that but are unsure of what to do and of how to help. We must ask the Executive whether its document helps to deliver sustainable development

"in a practical, down to earth fashion."

The document lays before us 24 indicators of sustainable development, yet 13 of them are set without targets. That means that 54 per cent of the strategies have no delivery deadline. The fact that

none of the committed targets is costed raises the question when they will be costed and where the funding will come from.

Given that the Executive preaches so much about the need for innovation and is apparently so focused on science, one can only note and wonder at the fact that there are but two mentions of innovation in the whole long-term strategy. One must also note the Government's abysmal failure over the past five years in missing opportunities to promote recycling and to control waste production and pollution.

Can we take the document seriously, given the Executive's past inaction? Can we take the modest number of 24 performance indicators seriously, when England and Wales have already established 147? Who will deliver on those performance indicators? Will we still be standing here talking about the same thing next year?

Today, the Conservatives urge the coalition not simply to talk about the strategies, but to start delivering. The national waste plan needs to be finished sooner rather than later—it has been too long in the making. Will our local authorities receive enough encouragement through the £50 million that has been earmarked for the strategic waste fund over the next three years? Is it strategically sensible or sustainable to import waste from Northern Ireland into Scottish landfill sites? Is our fridge-recycling policy any further forward? If our used-fridge mountain is still growing, when will it stop?

Does the minister's statement give the lead and direction that local authorities are so desperately seeking? Does it put in place the imaginative spatial planning structures that are so essential for a sustainable transport policy, a built-environment policy and a real social justice policy? The Executive must answer those practical questions if it is to demonstrate a real commitment to addressing the immediate and long-term problems.

We must also ask whether the impending problem of climate change and global warming is being adequately addressed. Are our planning guidelines relevant to the predicted increased levels of coastal flooding? Do our marine and land-based conservation policies make sense in the light of the predicted rises in temperatures and sea levels in the next 80 years? Why does the document include no land-use indicator? Why are there indicators for biodiversity and sea fisheries but none for agriculture and forestry? Why have no targets been set for biodiversity, which we all agree is so important to Scotland's future?

**Sarah Boyack:** Many of Mr Scott's suggestions are helpful in the sense of providing constructive opposition, but his amendment claims that the

range of

"consultations, strategies, forums and plans may hinder the long-term delivery of ... sustainable development".

Surely the whole point of sustainable development is that it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. We need the strategic planning review, the economic strategies, the transport plans, the health plans and the crucial social justice ambitions, which have for the first time been properly plugged into sustainable development. Surely Mr Scott welcomes those things.

**John Scott:** If the member will bear with me, I will deal with that later in my speech, if I get there.

On energy, our policy is that we want greater use to be made of our natural renewable resources including wind, wave, solar and tidal energy and biomass production. We have enormous wind resources and any credible renewable energy policy must support their development. Of course, wind farms must be strategically and sympathetically sited, but one cannot have omelettes without breaking eggs. Wave and tidal energy, as well as photovoltaic and solar energy, can and will be tapped into.

All those developing technologies offer enormous business-creating—and therefore job-creating—opportunities. Scottish universities have estimated that that market will be worth up to £14 billion to the Scottish economy. I am very enthusiastic about those developments.

We need to set targets for the development of renewable energy. My view is that the targets should be significantly greater than they are at present. I agree with the Executive and with Bruce Crawford that targets for the proportion of electricity generated from renewable energy should be at least 30 to 50 per cent by 2020.

Other colleagues will deal with travel and transport, but I cannot miss the opportunity to say that, despite the minister's assurances at last week's question time, the Executive's prediction that road traffic levels in 2021 will have returned to what they were in 2001 simply shows that it is living in cloud-cuckoo-land. Whatever the Executive's best intentions, road traffic will continue to rise year on year. The sooner that that is acknowledged, the better. Steps can then be taken to deal with the problems, which will not be solved by the proposals in the transport delivery report. The report is not costed or funded and even the Executive realises that it will not deliver on its targets simply by investing in public transport. Indeed, one could argue that the transport delivery report offers only a traffic growth control policy rather than a traffic congestion reduction policy.

**Ross Finnie:** Have I understood the member

correctly? He has given a great litany of targets that he wishes to be increased. However, he wishes to abandon any target, measure or indicator of the growth in road transport. Is that the Tory position on road transport? It is an extraordinary statement. I think that the *Official Report* will confirm what I have just said.

**John Scott:** The *Official Report* will confirm that the Conservatives are about setting realistic targets. That is what is important and what is lacking in all the Executive's documents.

**Alex Neil:** Will the member give way?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Scott is in his last minute.

**John Scott:** Finally, I seek the minister's assurance that "Meeting the Needs" represents a development in policy and is not just an attempt to put something on paper before the world summit on sustainable development in South Africa in August. To me, the document looks like a rehash of the waste, energy and travel strategy of February 2000—a rehash with added indicators.

The real question is whether the document will make any difference or whether it will join the 15 other consultations, strategies, plans and forums that talk a lot but deliver little. I say to the minister that, if there is one appeal from local authorities, planners, land users, energy developers and environmentalists, it is for him to act now, do something constructive, stop talking and start delivering.

I move amendment S1M-3067.2, to leave out from first "believes" to end and insert:

"expresses its concern that the statement has not gone far enough, particularly in its indicator list given that, 27 months after first promised, 24 indicators have been selected but less than 50% have set targets; questions whether the indicator list therefore provides an adequate basis to measure progress; further believes that the inclusion of no less than 15 other consultations, strategies, forums and plans may hinder the long-term delivery of the new vision, and supports the development of a more focused action plan for the continuation of sustainable development in Scotland."

15:37

**Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to open the debate for the Labour party. I support the motion and the sentiments that lie behind it. We have merely paid lip service to sustainability for too long.

When we came to office, the Tories had a raft of commitments to European environmental legislation that they had failed to honour. We have had to play catch-up on the birds directive, the habitats directive, the urban waste water treatment directive and the biocides directive. When the

Tories left office, we found that we were recycling only 7 per cent of our household waste.

**Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP):** The figure was 4.5 per cent.

**Maureen Macmillan:** I am not going to argue about points.

John Scott's speech made a nonsense of what his party did when it was in government.

**John Scott:** Will Maureen Macmillan acknowledge that, when my party was in government, John Gummer was recognised worldwide as one of the leaders of the conservation movement?

**Maureen Macmillan:** All I remember about John Gummer is that he tried to force-feed a hamburger to his daughter when people were worried about BSE.

The motion sets out the Executive's vision of how to protect and harness Scotland's natural resources and the talents of the people. Although it is obvious that the Executive has the most important role to play in promoting sustainable development, local government, enterprise companies, environmental organisations and large and small communities all have an important part to play, too. Partnership working is integral to delivering sustainable development. That is why it was important for Highland Council to retain a planning role in the Cairngorms national park.

I note and welcome the targets and actions proposed for conserving fossil fuels and for expanding the use of renewables. I was pleased to see the First Minister opening the Vestas wind turbine factory in Campbeltown. That is a crucial development for Kintyre's economy and I hope that it will be replicated elsewhere. I wonder whether the fabrication yards at Arnish, Nigg and Ardersier could also be used to manufacture or assemble plant for renewable energy projects.

As the number of wind farms increases, I ask the Executive to ensure that they bring economic benefit to the local communities in which they are situated, as will be the case in the Western Isles. I welcome the First Minister's announcement that the Executive is considering setting a demanding renewables target of 30 per cent by 2020. I welcome the Executive's vision, which will mean that the Highlands and Islands are well placed to capitalise on the economic potential of such developments by using our natural geographical and physical advantages.

**Bruce Crawford:** Maureen Macmillan has welcomed much that the Government has done and much that the Minister for Environment and Rural Development has done. Did she welcome the minister's decision not to accept the Transport and the Environment Committee's

recommendation to dig up that unsustainable genetically modified crop trial at Munlochy?

**Maureen Macmillan:** Bruce Crawford knows my record on that matter, which is based on the democratic will of the people in the Black Isle rather than on—

**Bruce Crawford:** Is sustainability not also about consultation?

**Maureen Macmillan:** No. My record is based on the democratic will of the people in the Black Isle, rather than the scientific issues.

I will concentrate on two aspects of the strategy. The first is the importance of communities and people in sustainable development. There is a common misconception in some rural communities about sustainable development. Some people believe that preserving the environment will harm the rural economy. They are encouraged in that view by some farming interests and by the sometimes intolerant attitude of some environmental organisations. I believe strongly that sustaining remote communities is part of the sustainable development agenda. Some rural communities have been left wondering who is meant to benefit from sustainable development. Although we have a duty to ensure that future generations do not inherit a wasted landscape, we also have a duty to ensure that development decisions enable rural communities to thrive and grow today.

The indicators of sustainable development include the need to promote employment, which is important to the future of many remote communities. The absence of employment opportunities will be one of the biggest—if not the biggest—determining factors for someone who is deciding whether to stay in their remote community. It could mean the difference between a community living or dying.

In March, I attended the annual general meeting of the NADAIR programme—nature and sustainable development in the Argyll islands region—with George Lyon, in his constituency of Argyll and Bute. That programme has the sustainable development of the Argyll islands at its heart and is being delivered through partnerships between the local authority, the local enterprise company, the tourist board, Scottish Natural Heritage and others. That is evidenced by education programmes for young people about the local environment, better training in environmental tourism for tourism operators and dozens of other projects to enhance the natural and built environment, such as the reintroduction of the corncrake, the creation of pathways to Tìree's medieval chapels and the restoration of a croft house on Lismore. Those projects create jobs in themselves and enhance the tourism potential

of the islands; they need to be replicated elsewhere in remoter parts of the Highlands.

As John Scott said, woodlands and forestry are not mentioned in the sustainable development document. Last summer, I spent an enjoyable day walking in the Migdale woods with two nice young men. We ate egg sandwiches on the shores of Loch Migdale. It was lovely. I was impressed by the work that the Woodland Trust is doing. That organisation has asked me to raise questions about the Executive's strategy. Are there targets for woodland protection and creation and for the quality of and access to urban green spaces? The Woodland Trust compared the UK indicators for sustainable development with the Scottish ones. I would be grateful if the minister could explain why there is a difference between the UK and Scottish indicators and how the Scottish Executive proposes to sustain and enhance woodland.

I draw the minister's attention to certification schemes. The Forest Stewardship Council and the UK woodland assurance scheme provide opportunities for owners to validate sustainable management. I ask the minister to examine such opportunities for all public bodies that manage woodlands, to ensure that sustainable woodland management is part of the Executive's strategy.

I do not have time to go into detail on other projects. I welcome the national waste strategy, which I hope will at last change attitudes in our disposable society. In particular, I welcome the Executive's commitments to improving drinking water quality, the disposal of waste water and the river and coastal environment of this country. I welcome the Executive's vision for promoting sustainable development. I hope that, with the strategy, we will be able to make good progress on ensuring that sustainable development is at the heart of our policies.

15:44

**Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green):** Since the Rio earth summit 10 years ago, those who are concerned about the quality of life on our planet have called for Scotland to play its full part in achieving sustainability. When the Executive came to power in 1999, it ignored a report by the advisory group on sustainable development, and we were back at square one. Finally—10 years on from Rio and three years into the first session of the Scottish Parliament—the Scottish Executive has published its priorities, actions and targets for sustainability.

There is much catching up to do. The document is a very small slice of environmental apple pie. The green words that preface "Meeting the Needs" are surprisingly laudable, but closer examination shows that not much has changed yet. It is

disappointing that "Meeting the Needs" reveals the Executive's lack of great ambition to create a Scotland that is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The document will not create a sustainable Scotland. Although it contains laudable objectives and presents a commendable targets-with-indicators approach to measuring progress, an overall plan that sets out how sustainability will be achieved is lacking. The document is not a strategy.

Significant indicators are missing. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency published a detailed report on the status of Scotland's soils last year, yet no indicators are suggested for agriculture, land use or forestry, which members have mentioned. They are glaring omissions. Of the 20 or so indicators that have been announced, more than half have no associated target. For the indicators that have targets, the targets are often unambitious. There are no targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions, recycling waste, energy efficiency or improving biodiversity. The targets for renewable energy production and traffic reduction are set low.

We face a Scotland that is peppered with new incinerators, new motorways and even, possibly, new nuclear power stations. Scotland's natural resources will have been degraded and its impact on the rest of the world will be too great. We need a sea change in attitude from the Executive and particularly from the business lobby. For the sake of a prosperous future in the widest sense, we must turn our backs on the dinosaur attitude that achieving sustainability means that the economy will be hamstrung. The opposite is true, as some speeches in the Parliament have shown in the past three years. Sustainability can mean increased opportunities for jobs and a stable environment in which to base long-term economic and social prosperity.

There is hope. The concept of setting indicators and targets for sustainability is right. The new indicators might not be comprehensive and there might be few challenging targets, but publishing the document could be significant. That depends on the Executive's willingness to develop the indicators-and-targets approach into a strategy.

I do not think that I support the motion. The vision is clearer and "Meeting the Needs" is a step forward, but the document cannot be described as a good basis for sustainability. The reality is that it is a poor basis and, at best, it is only a basis. In the final year of this session, I will press the Executive to convene a forum on sustainability to devise a strategy for sustainability. That should fill the yawning gaps in its range of indicators and beef up its targets. I ask the Executive for a commitment that the First Minister will represent Scotland at the Rio+10 summit in Johannesburg later this year.

I support almost everything that Bruce Crawford said—especially his comments on waste management. I say to Jamie McGrigor that recycling firms will not come here until they know that the recyclates will be available for them to use. The horse must be available to pull the cart. The recycled materials must be available, and local authorities are responsible for that. They must say that they will go ahead before firms will develop the situation.

I support Maureen Macmillan's comments about woodlands, which are a favourite of mine.

**Mr McGrigor rose—**

**Robin Harper:** I am sorry, but I am in my last minute.

If the Executive has a commitment to the community, surely community council developments should be one of the indicators.

I would believe what the minister said about education if there were an institute in Scotland that correlated and developed environmental education. I would believe what he said in that respect if, after three years, the Executive had responded to the continued calls to do something about outdoor education and the training of outdoor education teachers.

15:50

**Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab):** I welcome the statement that has been made and the document that has been produced.

Sustainable development is an important issue for all of us in Scotland. It should occupy the forefront of the attention not only of Mr Finnie but of other ministers. Sustainability is one of the areas in which joined-up work and action can deliver significant results.

I also welcome the personal commitment of the First Minister in seizing on the issue and saying that it is one that he wishes to progress. That he has done so gives an important signal about the importance of the sustainability agenda to the Government and to the wider community in Scotland.

We should not forget that sustainability is not an easy thing to achieve. It is all very well to talk about sustainability and about how we are to improve the environmental accountability of what we do, but it can be difficult to deliver sustainability. That difficulty is highlighted by the specific example of traffic congestion. All too often, the measures that are taken to deal with traffic congestion result in worse traffic congestion. That is because of a lack of proper thought about the implications of actions and of a weakness in targeting. Effective performance measures need to

be put in place and we need to have action that delivers real and pragmatic outcomes.

With that in mind, I raise with the minister an issue under his direct portfolio that is creating considerable concern in terms of the sustainability agenda: the proposals that have been made for the water treatment plant in Milngavie. Members will know that I have been battering on at the issue for some time. I recently received the three independent reports on the proposals that were commissioned by East Dunbartonshire Council. Although the reports are balanced, all three highlight the lack of attention that has been paid by Scottish Water and the contractors to sustainability. It is clear from what has been written that options that are more energy efficient and significantly lower than others in terms of operational costs and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were rejected by Scottish Water and the contractors in favour of options that were less sustainable.

The basis on which the site selection was made excluded any performance measures that related to sustainability. Indeed, sustainability was not considered during the site selection process. That is an issue to which Mr Finnie must pay attention.

In analysing the assessment process, Arup, which is probably the most important and well-respected firm in this field, concluded that the assessment process was "littered with inconsistencies" and that key and important issues such as noise, traffic and construction disruption were ignored in favour of the contractor's objective of siting the water treatment plant on land owned by West of Scotland Water.

One of the choices that we face is whether we want to have a sustainable plant and a sustainable system, or the cheapest plant. If we want to have the cheapest, we can go down that route, but sustainability requires us to pay attention to the issues.

Arup stated that the system that is to be used is "confused, does not bear even basic scrutiny, and is not thorough."

Given the wording of reports of this kind, that is a pretty devastating outcome. The report also states:

"From a purely sustainable viewpoint, the balance between economic, environmental and societal impacts has not been demonstrated."

Sustainability may well be a priority, but what about sustainability in this case? Can we do something about that?

There are issues to do with how companies operate in that sector. They naturally want to do things in the cheapest way and they naturally want to cut their costs. The issue for us is whether we should let them. Do we say, "Just go ahead and

get on with it"? That is not the best solution for the plant in Milngavie. Sustainability must be the key critique and it is an issue that we will be coming back to because I will certainly be reminding Mr Finnie of it.

15:55

**Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP):** Sustainable development seems to be a topic on which there is general agreement about where we want to go but disagreement about the pace or direction to be taken. It is a broad topic and transport is fundamental to it. I appreciate that we have recently appointed a new Minister for Everything, as Mr Gray's post is euphemistically known. I have no doubt that he has a considerable amount to read up on, but it is disappointing that neither he nor his deputy could be here for the debate, because transport will be fundamental to what happens to achieve a sustainable future for our country.

As others have said, the combustion engine has been a great social liberator and, I would argue, an economic driver, but we cannot ignore the fact that it has come at an environmental cost. We must address that. We cannot leave it to laissez-faire, and nor do I accept the view that some people take, albeit genuinely, that we must seek to roll back history or travel back in time. The combustion engine is here to stay and we must try to harness it rather than allow it to take us over. That must be done for the best interests of the economy and taking cognisance of the best interests of the environment. That is why I do not criticise the Executive for the building of the M74 northern extension. I criticise the method by which it is being paid for and the manner in which it is being done, but I believe that its construction is necessary.

In Scotland, we have a problem not with car ownership but with car usage. We must seek to emulate the position in Germany, where there is higher car ownership per capita than there is in Scotland, but there is lower car usage per capita. That is because people have affordable, accessible alternatives. In this country, we have allowed ourselves to get into a situation where the car is not the method of transport of choice or a matter of luxury, but a matter of necessity. That is the case whether one lives in the rural countryside or whether one is a nurse who lives in West Lothian but has to travel for work to Midlothian. That happens all too often, and it is a matter not of apportioning blame but of trying to provide an affordable and accessible alternative.

Not all transport schemes have to be grandiose. I support the concept of trams in the city of Edinburgh, but it would be quicker and easier to re-regulate the buses, not only within the

boundaries and environs of the city of Edinburgh but elsewhere. It has become quite clear that the platitudes that the former minister with responsibility for transport and I were given by those in the industry have proved to be false. We must realise that we should re-regulate the buses, which would provide a cheap method of cross-subsidy to get a better bus system that would encourage people to get out of their cars and into public transport.

We must also address the question of structures. One of the fundamental problems that we have is the lacuna post devolution and following changes in local government. The fact of the matter is that our local government boundaries are too limited for many major planning and transport matters. A lacuna has developed and is creating a great problem. That is shown on the east coast by what has happened with Ikea, as well as on the west coast and elsewhere. Many matters need to be dealt with on a trans-authority basis as opposed to being dealt with on an inter-authority basis.

Those of us in the east of Scotland have looked with envy at Strathclyde Passenger Transport. Until such time as we have a transport authority that has powers in the broader travel-to-work area and involvement in scale in respect of planning, we will not be able to address matters.

I recently saw an article about the opening of a new factory unit, or technopole, out in Midlothian. I fully admire that and welcome the jobs going there, but a drive past makes it quite clear that the people who will be employed there will have to go there by car, because public transport routes are insignificant. Until we ensure that significant retail, industrial or employment developments tie in with transportation, we will not address the problems and will be left with the symptom of escalating car usage as opposed to the cure of well-structured public transport. I support amendment S1M-3067.1.

16:00

**Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I come at the debate from a Highlands and Islands angle and wish to stress the importance of biodiversity at local level. I looked up the meaning of biodiversity in a dictionary, but it was not there. However, bio means “of living things” and the dictionary added, in brackets, “including human beings”. That greatly pleased me. In layman’s terms, biodiversity means making the most of what is around us without spoiling it.

Why are there no biodiversity targets in the document? There cannot be a sustainable development agenda without biodiversity targets. The best way of ensuring sustainable

development is at the local level.

It will be marvellous if we maximise the available scientific information on the implications of new products of science and technology to enable all people to make choices in respect of healthy living, independence and sustainability. Getting that message across will be good for mankind and the environment. We certainly must act on such information at a Scottish level.

I am an MSP for the Highlands and Islands and am aware that ordinary people who are trying to earn a living or run a business are sometimes left out of the sustainability equation and are finding it harder to sustain their lives in remote areas. Those are the people who will protect or destroy what is around them. There must be sustainable jobs so that people can afford to enjoy living in the countryside. Any environmental plan for sustainability that is designed by those who are in power should put people and their employment first. A high employment rate is a key sustainable development objective, as it enables people to meet their own needs and create communities in our rural areas, which in turn create the culture that enriches our nation.

What is blatantly going wrong at the moment is that the Executive is not giving true, down-to-earth encouragement to the creation of such employment. A lot of bureaucracy and red tape and many rules are making it harder for entrepreneurs to set up and promote businesses in the countryside and to live there.

I will take the example of agriculture. Where have our valuable beef and sheep exports gone? Why is France allowed to get away with damaging those industries, which are vital to Scottish interests? What is being done in the fisheries sector to help that industry—which is again in the doldrums—apart from the decommissioning of fishing boats? Why does the Scottish Executive not interpret European directives in a way that helps our primary industries to maintain sustainability, rather than put hurdles in their way?

Recently, I attended a fisheries meeting in Gareloch to discuss problems relating to salmon farming and wild fish interests. Aquaculture—fin fish and shellfish farming—is a huge and growing part of the west coast economy, which needs encouragement. However, there is conflict between salmon cage farming and wild fishery interests, on which many people—such as those on Loch Maree—depend for their income. Action is needed to speed up giving fish farmers tools to deal with the sea lice problem that affects wild and farmed fish, so that both industries can live together and produce jobs.

Will the Scottish Executive produce a simplified regulation of aquaculture, such as that in Norway?

That would encourage an important Scottish industry to be prosperous and sustainable. In a prosperous industry, conservation and sustainability fall into place, whereas in an industry that is hanging on by its fingertips, sustainability is suspect and conservation will for ever be low on the agenda. A diversity of local industries is needed rather than monoculture.

Affordable transport, a good road infrastructure and reliable ferry services are vital to sustainability in the Highlands and Islands communities. We need an integrated policy and action that brings improvements. Ferries to islands such as Barra and Colonsay are woefully inadequate for people and businesses for large parts of the year.

Mr Finnie's motion mentions harnessing "the talents of the people".

Let us hope that he does that. Today, I met people who represented the Gaelic culture. Initially, they had hoped that the Scottish Parliament would support Gaelic. Alasdair Morrison's early speeches suggested that the sustainability of Gaelic was a key issue, but nothing has happened in the past three years and we have seen the disappearance of some 5,000 Gaelic speakers. Despite all the good words, no action has been taken to ensure the sustainability of Gaelic culture or the communities that produce it. They feel forgotten by the Executive, which seems to be obsessed with spin and has proved to be weak on the delivery of practical solutions.

16:04

**Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD):** Ten years ago, sustainability was focused on environmental issues. Today, economic and social considerations are included alongside those that relate to our physical environment and we talk about sustainable development, which is a much more holistic concept.

Our modern industrial world was built on progress at the expense of natural resources and from the exploitation of people. Is it fair for the developed world to say to the developing world, "Sorry. We are not going to allow you to behave as we did. These are the new rules"? The only way in which we can justify such a stance is to apply the new rules stringently to ourselves and to be prepared to pay a price for the commodities and goods from the developing world that allows them to meet the environmental standards that we demand and the social standards that we enjoy.

We are part of the 20 per cent of the planet's population who gobble up 80 per cent of its resources. We have to stop being so greedy and to learn to share. This document must be a step along our road to being less greedy. WWF describes the document as

"at least, and at long last, a starting point from which we can all - government, business, local authorities, the general public and environmental groups - work together to improve Scotland's record on sustainable development and on the environment."

There is, unarguably, a lot of room for improvement.

**Bruce Crawford:** WWF went on to state:

"There is a huge responsibility now to fast track action for Scotland to catch up on ten lost years."

What has happened over the past three years under the Executive is part of that 10 years.

**Nora Radcliffe:** What we do in the next 10 years is more important.

We continue to pour polluting chemicals into the environment and generate 9 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person per annum. We create waste with gay abandon, as if there were no tomorrow. Each year, we create 2 per cent more waste than we did the previous year. We know that we have to change our behaviour, but we will not do so until we have to; hence the need to pick out what will be tackled as first priorities, outline what action has to be taken and set targets that have to be achieved.

The list of indicators is a good basis on which to begin to measure progress. Some targets have been set, with others to follow in the near future. Government sets the parameters within which we operate. For example, amended building standards will deliver significant improvement in the thermal performance of new buildings. Why did we not do that years ago?

Recently, I attended a seminar at which a practising architect demonstrated how it was possible through design to achieve dramatic savings in the whole energy cost of a building. The factors include the orientation of the building in relation to the sun or prevailing winds; opting for the construction materials that are the least environmentally damaging, both intrinsically and in the distance that they have to be transported; cooling by ventilation rather than air-conditioning; and maximising the use of natural light. Those factors can make a huge difference in total.

If the building is a workplace, making it a comfortable, pleasant place in which to work pays measurable dividends in cutting staff absence. Government can encourage research to develop the tools to measure, and the models of how to achieve, those kinds of efficiency.

The document recognises the vital role of the planning system; that is another way in which Government can set the parameters within which sustainable development can be achieved. It is also for Government to provide the physical and regulatory infrastructure that will make possible



the development of renewable energy to Scotland's full potential.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by how much needs to be done, but the document outlines a practical starting point. It is a good beginning and does not pretend to be anything other than a stage in a process. I welcome and commend it and its necessary and, I hope, regular successors.

16:09

**Mr Alasdair Morrison (Western Isles) (Lab):**

The publication of the Scottish Executive's document on sustainable development indicators is certainly a welcome start. It will help to focus the mind—and it will help to focus the collective mind of the Scottish Executive—on what needs to be done if we are to live more sustainably.

Part of the problem with the term “sustainable development” is that people who are not keen on changing how they do things say that it is difficult to define and that, until we have the perfect definition, it would be a mistake to do anything. As Ross Finnie demonstrated in his opening speech, that is not an option. If that methodology had been applied to social justice, we would still be waiting for a social justice strategy. People would still be debating the purpose of having targets that show the current state of play on the number of children living in poverty and, crucially, what progress is being made to reduce that figure.

Independent discussion and validation of the targets is important. If the issue of sustainable development is couched in terms of saving the planet, those who are committed to the environment relate to it, but everyone else regards it as being far too remote and not a priority. “Meeting the Needs” begins to make those vital connections. As the minister rightly said, we will not be saving the planet if a large section of our society is living in hard-to-let housing, in communities that are ravaged by the impact of drug addiction and in families that are isolated by high public transport costs.

Sustainable development becomes newsworthy when people realise that the Pacific islands will disappear with the sea level rises that will result from climate change. However, it takes the statistics on the probability of flooding in Scotland to bring home to people that we need to reject the unsustainable direction in which we are moving. I received a reminder of that in regard to islands that are closer to home and far more spectacular than the Pacific islands. In the Western Isles, on the western seaboard of my constituency, there were record tides this year, which was very depressing for the people who live on those islands.

**Robin Harper:** Does Alasdair Morrison agree

with WWF that, if one indicator were to be added to the list of indicators, it should be an indicator of our overall ecological footprint, both on our local environment and on the world's environment?

**Mr Morrison:** The indicators that are listed and detailed in “Meeting the Needs” provide a welcome start. I endorse everything that is being done by the Executive in partnership with the United Kingdom Government and other UK Administrations. I hope that Robin Harper will agree that we need a range of targets to drive the changes in policy and that we must give the people of Scotland a better quality of life while making a contribution to wider global objectives.

There are, however, obstacles to change. Short-term costs are involved in doing things differently, but the indicators and targets are needed to focus attention on the bigger costs that will come from inaction. I warmly welcome the inclusion of social justice targets in the document. Regrettably, however, no similar range of economic objectives is set out. What we need now is work to run across our economic strategy to identify opportunities on which Scottish businesses can focus. Scottish Enterprise nationally is planning research and development work that will promote environmental technologies. It would have been helpful if we had heard some reference to that work, but perhaps the ministers will be able to address those themes at a later date.

If business is to meet the two targets on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that are set out in the document, we must have a coherent strategy. We already have the climate change levy. We need a Scottish perspective that will enable our smaller companies to become more environmentally friendly and more efficient. There are implications for industry in the targets on waste production, water quality, energy consumption and the number of employees who travel to work not using a car. What we need now is the work to deliver on those targets.

16:13

**Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP):** We talk a lot about sustainability. We talk about sustainable economies and sustainable communities. Jamie McGrigor talked about sustainable Gaelic and someone earlier mentioned sustainable Scotland. This is the third Executive debate on sustainable development in which I have spoken. It is ironic that every time there is a Cabinet reshuffle, we have a debate on sustainability.

Let us consider what sustainability means. The accepted phrase comes from the Brundtland report's definition:

“development that meets the needs of the present

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

It is up to us to ensure that future generations of Scots—whether they are lucky enough to be born here or sensible enough to move here—remain fit and healthy. To do that, we must first ensure that Scotland’s houses are fit for Scotland’s people to live in. That means that there must be dry, warm houses; therefore, we have to end fuel poverty. After three years of government in a devolved Parliament and the passage of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, in which many of us tried to push for a definition of fuel poverty, the Scottish fuel poverty statement is still out to consultation.

Despite promises two years ago from the then Minister for Transport and the Environment—promises which I believe were absolutely sincere—we are still consulting on the building regulations that relate to conservation of fuel and power. Furthermore, despite much lobbying from those in the know, the Executive has unfortunately shown no real willingness to make progress on the energy auditing of properties.

At this point, I would have expected Margaret Curran—or perhaps Hugh Henry in his new role—to jump up and down and shout about the central heating programme, but neither of them is in the chamber. However, it will take three years to get round to fitting radiators in properties where the elderly reside. We await with interest the further roll-out of the scheme to other sections of society and properties that have partial, obsolete or inefficient systems.

We also need to recognise that central heating alone does not solve fuel poverty. To achieve the sustainability that we all talk about, we need innovative approaches and close working between the housing improvement task force and the fuel poverty action group. Moreover, we must recognise that, if we are to achieve the 15-year target, the interim targets will have to be front-loaded.

Energy efficiency targets should also be introduced not only to measure progress on the main responsibility of fuel poverty but to deliver on wider issues that are relevant to the Kyoto protocol and the energy review. In order to achieve such targets, we must identify continuing resources for improvements in energy efficiency.

We must have joined-up policies across portfolios and incorporate fuel poverty into the wider poverty agenda and into all relevant areas such as health, building regulations, the environment and education. Given that no target has been set for the home life indicator in “Meeting the Needs”, an obvious first step would be to include fuel poverty in the social justice indicators.

We must be in the driving seat in delivering the

promises which the Parliament’s very existence makes to the people whom we were elected to serve. We should realise the vision of a socially just, forward-looking and economically advancing Scotland.

**Sarah Boyack:** Will the member give way?

**Linda Fabiani:** I am sorry. I am in my last minute.

Insulating Scotland’s houses, installing efficient heating systems and lifting Scots out of poverty are not an expense, but an investment. We can have a better Scotland under devolution, but the best Scotland can be achieved only by breaking the chains that bind us to the past. We cannot have true sustainable development without the powers to control the economy and the welfare system.

The Gaia principle on which the Rio declaration was based demands that we take responsibility for our actions. It is about time that Scotland did just that. By supporting Bruce Crawford’s amendment, we are at least one step along that route.

16:17

**Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con):**

As Linda Fabiani noted, this is our third annual debate on sustainable development and ministers have used the occasion—as they used the previous two—to introduce a wide range of interesting and valuable topics. However, we have set an interesting pattern, as in none of the three debates have we actually discussed development. Indeed, in his speech today, Ross Finnie did not get round to that issue. That is curious, because development is a major economic driver in Scotland and is critical in satisfying a huge array of human wants and aspirations. How we shape and frame development is vital to the quality of our society.

Most development in Scotland takes the form of housing, 30 to 40 per cent of which we build on greenfield land. I should point out that there are also industrial and commercial demands on our land supply. However, the document contains no sustainable development indicator on the use and reuse of land, which is a curious omission, given that the Executive has set targets for that.

The situation is all the more peculiar in view of the Executive’s emphasis on driving forward the pace and quality of local and structure planning and given that the draft national planning policy guidelines on providing land for housing are currently out for consultation. That consultation document mentions that there have been fierce debates throughout Scotland about the principles of land release and land use. Sometimes in the chamber we hear echoes of those debates

through petitions, questions and the occasional members' business debate. However, we have never actually debated the Executive policies that drive forward, condition and control development and all the human activities that stem from it. That seems to me to be a major omission not just in the Parliament's activity but in the way in which the Executive presents its policies to Scotland.

I would like to pick out three areas of some concern. Earlier, I touched on the issue of providing sufficient land for affordable housing. The new planning guidelines indicate that councils should meet that in full. However, without a commitment to resourcing housing associations—which, to resolve the minister's earlier conundrum, are in the private sector but are effectively supported by the public sector—to provide the housing that is needed, we will zone land for housing that will then be available on the open market to private sector housing even though we have housing associations without sufficient grant aid and, in many cases, without sufficient access to sites to enable them to take advantage of the grant aid that they have. That is not a factor that makes for the sustainable development of communities, whether urban or rural.

My second concern relates to the important development constraints that are shaping up in Dumfries and Galloway and East Ayrshire. Those are not just isolated circumstances: we are talking about a substantial part of Scotland in which industry and housing—locally generated and required—simply cannot find the sites. The planning policies for development provide for demand to be met in other areas if it cannot be met in discrete housing areas. Until the minister finds a way in which to lift the embargoes that are beginning to be formed in those areas and which are directing industry away from areas of need and people away from the areas in which they work, we will continue to create commuters and other effects that we say that we do not want.

My third concern relates to the way in which we continue to suburbanise much of our countryside. Recently, I read the Scottish Executive decision letter on the Borders structure plan, which envisages the building of 1,000 more houses in landscape of a high quality if we are able to build the railway line. The East Lothian Council website talks about releasing 5,000 plots along the A1 corridor to meet a demand that essentially stems from Edinburgh.

While I sympathise with the principle of developing along transport corridors, I must point out that almost every one of those sites in East Lothian is either prime agricultural land or of high landscape quality. When have we ever had a debate here or engaged with the people in that region about the principle of locating Edinburgh's

housing demand in that council area? I am not saying that it would be wrong to do so; I am saying only that we have not debated or addressed the matter. Perhaps there is a guiding, controlling, cross-cutting central policy and principle that is driving the plans forward, but surely, in a devolved and open Scotland, we should bring it into the Scottish Parliament to discuss it. We need to engage communities and get some political sustainability into our planning, economic and social sustainability.

16:23

**John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD):** I am sure that we all support the concept of sustainable development. If our aim is to support our communities and our country, we must encourage sensible and progressive development and ensure that new and existing technologies are used and adapted to meet the demands and aspirations of our people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Scotland is in a unique and strong position—I would call it a win-win situation—to take advantage of our abundant and constantly available natural resources to develop industries such as water, wind and wave power. If we are prepared to harness the great natural resource on our doorstep, we will certainly meet our targets on renewables by 2010 and help to meet the UK's Kyoto obligations.

To develop the sustainable industries in Scotland, we need to encourage a good domestic market for those industries. It is essential that we have support and encouragement from Government in that regard. If we had that, Scotland could become a world leader in renewable energy.

I do not need to tell anybody in this chamber that we start with a tremendous resource. We have the natural advantage. We have the necessary skills base, which has been developed through our involvement in heavy engineering, shipbuilding and the oil industry. Those skills are ideally suited to developing renewable energy and, more important, are available immediately. More important still, as I am sure everybody will agree, we are blessed by the innovative and inventive minds of our people, who have historically led the world in many professions and enterprises. There is no doubt about that.

Scots have been pioneers of renewable energy over many decades simply by their generation of power through the many hydroelectric schemes that we have up and down our countryside. Those schemes have done tremendous work supplying energy for remote and rural areas of Scotland. We must now extend that technology to harnessing

our tidal power. That is important. People miss out tidal power when they talk about wave power and other marine power sources. In tidal power, we have an endless resource that is constantly available.

We must grasp the opportunity of renewable energy now so that we in Scotland will once again be acknowledged and accepted as the experts and leaders in that innovative new enterprise. I am pleased to support the motion.

16:26

**Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I will make three or four points that have not yet been made. The first is about sustainability in Scotland. The size of Scotland's land mass and its level of natural resources in relation to the size of population that it needs to sustain give Scotland as a whole, and the Scottish economy in particular, a major advantage. However, the population forecasts for the years to come pose dangers for the sustainability of the Scottish economy. One forecast has it that the population of Scotland will go down from over 5 million to something like 3.8 million by 2066.

If that happens, the sustainability of the skills base of the Scottish economy will be called into question, as will the sustainability of many aspects of community life, simply because the reduction in population will mean a substantial increase in the ratio of those who need to be kept by the rest of society to those in work. The Scottish Executive needs to face up to that. It is an economic and educational issue—it is an issue of sustainability. It covers every area for which the Scottish Executive is responsible.

Secondly, I will pick up briefly on something that the minister said about nuclear energy in his opening speech. In reply to a question from Bruce Crawford, he said that we would need to make an assessment of the future of nuclear energy, which should be dependent on finding a way of recycling the waste safely. There is no doubt that nuclear waste is a key issue. However, the issue is not just the waste; it is the dangers of nuclear power while it is operational, particularly in such days of terrorist attacks. On a recent visit to Dounreay, I asked how safe our nuclear installations would be from a terrorist attack. To tell the truth, I was not wholly satisfied with the response. We must acknowledge that potential threat.

My third point relates to opencast mining. There is no doubt at all that one of the biggest blights on our environment is the concentration of opencast mining in a few geographical and local authority areas. One of the matters that I would like the Executive to examine is the possibility of placing a tonnage tax on opencast mining and using the

revenue for reinvestment in the environment in the communities and the wider areas that are affected. I understand that bonds and guarantees have to be given in the specific areas used in opencast, but those do not cover wider community interests.

I wish to make a point that supplements and, I hope, complements what Murray Tosh said about the development aspect of sustainable development. The environment, particularly in comparison with other countries, is one of our great assets. I do not believe that we are doing enough to develop environmental tourism. Alasdair Morrison was quite right to raise the subject of economic opportunities. I can think of the enormous opportunities that lie in his constituency, particularly in the area around the Minch, which has been neglected for far too long. A number of speakers have mentioned renewable energy, which is another major area.

The key thing is not to see sustainable development as a negative, a barrier or a constraint. It is all those things in many respects, but it also represents an enormous opportunity for Scotland, which we cannot afford to miss.

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** I can offer Sylvia Jackson the last two and a half minutes of open debate if she can manage to keep her speech to that time.

16:31

**Dr Sylvia Jackson (Stirling) (Lab):** Thank you very much, Presiding Officer. I very much welcome the document "Meeting the Needs". As I have only a short time to speak, I will cut to the chase. My main points relate to the section of the document on resource use, which covers waste. That is a particularly important issue at so many levels.

Take the amount of litter on our streets. Given the number of letters on the subject that reach my constituency office, I would say that it has almost become the number one issue with constituents. Can we not do something to make fast food outlets take responsibility for the packaging that is dropped near their premises? Can we not engage with supermarkets and manufacturing concerns and examine how to reduce the amount of packaging that they use? We could be doing a host of things in that regard.

I ask the deputy minister, when summing up, to tell us a little bit about the Scottish Executive's strategic waste fund, on which I know the area waste forums or groups are shortly to report. The work of the Forth valley area waste strategy working group is particularly well advanced.

I wish to emphasise some of the points that have already been made about the disposal of

fridges. What position have we reached in that regard? I took a computer down to our local tip, but there is no way of getting computers disposed of. What do I do with a computer? In asking that, I should add that the one in question cannot be used.

In a members' business debate some time ago, Allan Wilson made some very positive comments about the Scottish pollution inventory. Again, I wonder what position we have reached in developing that inventory.

Finally—and I declare an interest as a member of RSPB Scotland—has a slot yet been made for considering proposed wildlife legislation?

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you very much for keeping within the time, Dr Jackson. We now come to winding-up speeches.

16:33

**Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD):** This debate on "Meeting the Needs" has been useful. The document is important and represents a significant step forward, in that it puts sustainable development at the heart of all Government policies.

I noted Robin Harper's rather sceptical approach to the document. That was regrettable, as the document makes key commitments in three areas: resource use, transport and energy.

**Robin Harper:** Does Iain Smith agree that the transport policy will make absolutely no improvement to our current position? In other words, we will still be creating as much pollution from transport in 2020 as we are in 2002.

**Iain Smith:** The key point is that if we do not do something about the situation, and if we carry on as we are doing now, there will be a 27 per cent increase in pollution by 2021. A change from a 27 per cent increase to no increase—in fact, there will be a reduction if we go back to 2001 levels—is a significant improvement on where we are now. We cannot change the trend overnight. The situation is like a juggernaut speeding down a hill without any brakes and we need to do something to reverse it. To get back to where we are today would be a significant improvement on where we might be and that is very important.

On resource use, we must acknowledge the importance of the national waste strategy, the key point of which is that we must reduce waste. Sylvia Jackson made important points about that. We must then move on to consider how we reuse waste. Only then can we move on to consider recovery and recycling, which are important issues.

The Executive has made important

commitments on energy policy. Issues of fuel poverty have been raised and the central heating programme is progressing, which is important. The new building standards came into force on 4 March, improving the thermal performance of new construction by 25 to 20 per cent. This is about energy efficiency and reducing our use of energy as well as improving the amount of renewables that we use.

The renewables target is important, but I am a bit confused about where the SNP stands on it. In a debate in the House of Commons, Alex Salmond said that he was in favour of the target that the Scottish Executive had announced. He said:

"It should be possible to raise the contribution of renewables from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. over the next 20 years, albeit that it will be a tough target to meet." — [Official Report, House of Commons, 5 March 2002; Vol 381, c 225.]

However, Bruce Crawford tells us today that we must have 50 per cent renewables by 2020. I would be pleased if the SNP had at least some consistency in their policy so that we knew where we were. Of course, we would all welcome the contribution of renewables being increased, but we have to bear in mind the environmental consequences. Environmental considerations, such as those around sites of special scientific interest, present a barrier to around 60 per cent of potential wind energy. We must consider the knock-on implication of any policy on other aspects of the environment.

I do not want to waste much time on the Conservatives. I will not take any lessons from a party that managed to produce numerous policies on sustainable development, but did not implement any of them during its time in government.

"Meeting the Needs" is important in the way that it brings issues forward. It is about changing the way that Government operates and how we deliver policy. It is not just about the obvious policies of transport, energy reduction and renewables or waste minimisation, but about considering how we deliver our services in a more sustainable way in the long term.

In the health service, providing diagnosis and treatment closer to patients reduces the need for patients to travel, which is much more sustainable. Building a new high school in my constituency of North-East Fife would reduce the number of pupils who have to be bussed down to St Andrews or Cupar; that would be more sustainable. Keeping rural post offices open is more sustainable, because it allows people to access services without having to travel into towns. Those are important points to bear in mind.

The key point is that the Scottish Executive

needs to make progress. It needs to make proposals for how to implement the European directive on strategic environmental assessments. It is important that the Executive does that, because we should perform strategic environmental assessments of every Executive policy. I hope that the minister will say something about that in his conclusion.

16:38

**Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con):** The minister said at the beginning of his speech that he was making a robust proposal; he turned out to be making a robust defence of a very thin document with little ambition. Many members throughout the chamber—Robin Harper, John Scott and Bruce Crawford, for example—echoed that view.

“Meeting the Needs” might be a start, but it is a very small start and we are way behind the rest of the United Kingdom. That said, the major problem is that there is no overall plan or strategy. “Meeting the Needs” is merely another Executive-type document, which lists a series of things that the Executive might like to talk about and possible initiatives. There is no real meat on what the Executive is seeking to do.

John Scott asked, rightly, where the targets, dates and costings were. If this is a strategy that will be used to move forward on a vital area for Scotland, we must have something concrete to debate and decide upon.

**Sarah Boyack:** When John Scott was opening, I asked him to get to the point in the Conservative amendment about why having other plans, strategies, forums and consultations would hinder the progress of sustainable development. Neither John Scott nor David Davidson have mentioned that, but they have said that the document is too thin and suggested that we need more documents and policies. There is a huge contradiction at the heart of the Conservatives’ statements today.

**Mr Davidson:** Let me answer the former minister. Today, members throughout the chamber have complained that the document does not spell out the action plan or what the Executive is going to do.

A number of issues were not dealt with properly in the debate and we must return to some of them. I refer particularly to land use and the lack of comment from the Government of the day on agriculture and forestry. All Government agencies have some input to those essential areas.

Many members spoke about renewables and I agree that we have great resources. We also have tremendous academic support in that area. For example, a lot of good work is being done in the

Robert Gordon University and the University of Strathclyde on subsea turbines. That work has a long-term, sustainable future, to which, as John Farquhar Munro rightly pointed out, skills in the oil industry and elsewhere can be applied. However, we must ensure that we also have sustainable universities because far too many of them are in deficit. Alex Neil suggested that the population of Scotland would reduce. If it does, that part of the population which is in work must be upskilled rapidly, which will require sustainable investment in the university and research sector.

Integrated transport was mentioned during the debate, but much of what was said boiled down to a discussion on access to work. That important consideration was picked up by Murray Tosh—it was good to hear him make a speech in the chamber again—in his comments on development. Development is the way forward, but we must discuss what type of development is required and the ways in which sustainable development can be encouraged. Without wealth creation, we will not have social justice. Social justice is about access to services, employment and quality of life, and acquiring a skills base. If we deal with all those issues, we may get affordable, warm housing with appropriate ventilation. However, the measures that are outlined in the document that we are discussing will not achieve that aim.

Kenny MacAskill gave us a throwaway line about councils being too small and not working together. He ought to look at what happens in the north-east of Scotland, where the two major councils, the chamber of commerce and the enterprise company formed the north-east Scotland transport partnership, which I hope will deliver in the north-east. If Aberdeen gets its essential bypass, not only will that kick-start the economy by providing jobs, but the city will lose a lot of pollution through minimising congestion and fuel waste.

On the shift in transport behaviour, the strategy on sustainable development does not recognise that the car is essential for rural Scotland—it is not an avoidable choice, as it may provide the only means by which people can travel. As Iain Smith said, if we can take services to the people, we will cut down on those problems. It is impossible to meet the targets that have been set on travel distance until we address the issue of access to affordable transport in rural communities. Unless we recognise that a set of wheels with a petrol or diesel engine drives the rural economy, our rural settlements will be disadvantaged and people will shift away from rural areas and move into the cities. I am sure that that will be unhelpful to the sustainable development of cities in the longer term.

**The Presiding Officer:** Please close, Mr Davidson.

**Mr Davidson:** Maureen Macmillan hit out at the Conservative party, but she seems to have forgotten that the Conservatives signed the Rio declaration and that the agenda 21 programme in Scotland was delivered by the community council system when I was the founding chairman of that organisation. Community councils are still doing good work, but perhaps, as Robin Harper said, we should encourage them more. The Conservatives should be recognised for all that work. The Government has now been in power for five years. Will it take up the challenge and move on?

**The Presiding Officer:** Would you move on to a close, please?

**Mr Davidson:** I will close now, Presiding Officer.

We must not come back to this subject annually—for many members in the chamber, this is our third outing. We want the Executive to take something away from these debates and come up with an action plan, not another list of bits of paper.

16:44

**Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP):** It is significant that, irrespective of party, almost every member who has spoken in the debate has lamented the document's lack of specific targets. That lack of targets has also been lamented elsewhere.

There are 24 indicators and 12 targets, which amounts to a rate of 50 per cent—or half a vision. I suppose that half a vision is better than no vision at all. It is not simply making a party-political point to say that we could certainly do better than that. Without targets, one cannot measure what one is achieving and one has nothing to aim for.

I will quote from a few of our local organisations. RSPB Scotland stated:

"For any policy initiative to be monitored and implemented successfully, it needs to set targets to be achieved, and define indicators of how it will progress towards these targets."

I repeat that we have targets for only 50 per cent of the indicators.

WWF made a similar comment:

"There are few targets associated with each indicator—and some are unclear."

On climate change, Friends of the Earth Scotland said:

"Scotland will be unable to make an equitable contribution to the UK target unless there is Scottish data."

We will not obtain Scottish data unless we have a Scottish target to meet. Scotland could do a lot more on renewables if we exploited our huge

renewables potential.

**Maureen Macmillan:** Perhaps Fiona McLeod does not realise that Friends of the Earth has also said that the SNP, instead of developing serious strategies, is trying to score cheap political points by pretending to be the motorist's friend.

**Fiona McLeod:** Every organisation has points to make. I was not trying to score party-political points. The minister introduced the document by saying that it represents a beginning and that we have a way to go. I am suggesting ways in which the minister should be going.

The SNP accepts that there should be targets—

**The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Allan Wilson):** Friends of the Earth makes a relevant criticism about the lack of Scottish data. The member calls for more targets in the absence of that Scottish data, but how can credible targets be set in the absence of the relevant data?

**Fiona McLeod:** If the targets are not set, no one will collect the data—it is as simple as that. It is clear why we need targets. Targets are a mark to aim for, they offer an indicator for allocating resources and they are a mark by which to be measured. Government must set targets and aim for them. Without setting targets, the Executive has no obligation to allocate appropriate resources and its performance cannot be measured. It is essential that we set targets for Scotland.

This morning, Ross Finnie made it clear to the Transport and the Environment Committee that Scotland has specific problems in certain areas, for which Scottish solutions should be produced. The SNP would say that we should set Scottish targets to achieve those solutions.

The statement on climate change—that we will make an "equitable contribution"—is inadequate. Scotland should take its place on the world stage and get out there and do something. An "equitable contribution" to a UK target is not a visionary statement for a Scottish minister to make; it is a miserly statement.

I will suggest a specific target that the minister could set, which Sylvia Jackson has alluded to. In the Parliament, we have mentioned a wildlife bill several times. The last time that I spoke to Mr Wilson, the description of the timetable had changed from "soon" to "very soon". The minister should make an extra target by giving us a date—before 2003—for the introduction of a wildlife bill.

Robin Harper suggested that we need an overall strategy for Scotland, rather than the "Meeting the Needs" document. I will ask what might appear to be a naive question. I noticed that there is no indication that the document is printed on recycled paper.

**Ross Finnie:** It is.

**Fiona McLeod:** Thank you, minister; I am relieved to hear that.

We need an overall strategy, not merely a statement. The SNP would be happy to sign up to such a commitment. In government, we would aim to conduct an environmental audit, which would inform the task of producing a national environment plan. That would allow us to advance a lot further towards strategic environmental assessment and sustainable development, in accordance with EU directives.

I want to highlight the sustainability of Government and ministerial powers. At today's meeting of the Transport and the Environment Committee, we considered a statutory instrument in which the Minister for Environment and Rural Development was happy to pass back to Westminster powers over genetically modified organisms, air quality and ozone-depleting substances. If we really want sustainable development, let us keep Scotland's powers rather than give them away. The SNP would go one step further by ensuring that Scotland had all its powers.

**Ross Finnie:** Will the member read what it says in section 93(2) of the Scotland Act 1998? That section states that, when the minister enters into an agency agreement, he does not in any way give away his powers. When a minister enters into an agency agreement, the powers rest with the minister. That is what the act says. It would be gracious of Fiona McLeod at least to admit that.

**Fiona McLeod:** Gracious is my middle name—actually, it is Grace—but the SNP would certainly not give away administrative powers.

**Nora Radcliffe:** Will the member give way?

**The Presiding Officer:** No, the member is in her last minute.

**Fiona McLeod:** Sorry, but I am short of time.

If the minister is seriously saying that the ultimate decision rests with him, I will be delighted when he sustains that definition by saying no to GMOs and no to new nuclear build in Scotland. As the minister claims that he has those powers, he should sustain that claim by using them.

The only needs that the Executive's statement meets are those of new Labour. To paraphrase the Brundtland definition, the statement meets Labour's needs of the present, which are to get a good report card. However, sustainable development should be about a sustainable future for Scotland. We will not achieve that until we have an independent future for Scotland.

16:52

**The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Allan Wilson):** I apologise in advance that, in the 10 minutes that I have been allocated, it will not be possible for me to respond to every member's speech. My colleague Ross Finnie was counting the number of contributors to the debate and was up in the early 20s when he stopped. I am not sure whether that is a record, but I am happy to respond to all members in the fullness of time.

I will concentrate on two themes in my response to the debate. First, as David Davidson and others have mentioned, today is the third time that the Parliament has debated sustainable development. It is also the second time that I have responded to the debate in my capacity as a minister—albeit that on the previous occasion I was Deputy Minister for Sport and Culture. At that time, I emphasised the importance of people to the strategy. Fundamentally, I still believe that sustainable development should be a people-centred strategy.

I said then that we must progress the strategy, so the second theme to which I will refer is the progress that we have made. I was pleased to see that Friends of the Earth has repeated the report card on sustainable development, which was referred to by Fiona McLeod today and last February. Unless my memory fails me, we have received more smiley faces than we received last time, especially for environmental justice.

Environmental justice is the type of people-centred focus to which I have referred and to which the First Minister has attached such importance. Our statement on sustainable development is both about people and about making progress. I am sorry that so many speeches from the Conservative and SNP wings of the chamber missed that fairly central point.

"Meeting the Needs" is right for today. Our statement

"meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The statement emphasises the important social justice element of that programme. Without the social justice element and without bringing together our society's haves and have nots, we cannot hope to meet the sustainable development goals that we have set for ourselves.

John Scott, according to his amendment, wants more indicators except, it appears, for road traffic stabilisation. However, is more better? The UK has a set of 150 indicators, but they are difficult for non-experts to use. Ross Finnie and I believe in a people-centred approach. The 150-plus UK indicators already include Scottish data. That was the point that I sought to make when I intervened



on Fiona McLeod. We are part of the UK and we contribute to the UK indicators.

Our set of 24 additional indicators builds on that list and focuses on our priorities. Where we have set targets, we will set further targets if that is appropriate. The document is an important milestone and we will build on that and add to the indicators.

A couple of members made valuable contributions. Robin Harper asked whether an ecological footprint indicator should be added. I agree. We have already commissioned work on an ecological footprint for Scotland. That report is due in 18 months. As part of the cities review, we have commissioned work on the ecological footprint for each of our cities. Again, that is progress towards our common objectives. Murray Tosh said that there is no indicator on greenfield land. I agree that an indicator on the use of greenfield land for development might be a good idea.

I emphasise that this is our first set of indicators. We will add to it, amend it and consider it in the light of further discussion. The speeches of Murray Tosh and Robin Harper add to and inform that debate.

Bruce Crawford's amendment is interesting, because it clearly supports the Executive's motion and he said as much in his speech. He supports "Meeting the Needs" and our indicators, but he obviously wants more work on those indicators. That is what we have to do and that is what we will do.

We will set more targets and, as I have said, we will respond to the points that were raised in the debate. In particular, we will not be outdone on our ambition for Scotland—a sustainable future for our nation. That is the Executive's fundamental priority and what the programme is all about. We believe in sustainable development.

**Bruce Crawford:** Does not the minister realise that there are already 2,000MW-worth of planning permissions being actively discussed by local authorities and wind farm developers? That will take us way beyond the 18 per cent target long before 2010. Can the minister set a more ambitious target for Scotland so that we can realise our potential?

**The Presiding Officer:** Before the minister replies, I appeal to members who have just entered the chamber to do those members who have been here the courtesy of listening to the minister's reply.

**Allan Wilson:** Yes—they will be enlightened.

The Executive is driving the market in renewable energy promotion throughout the UK. We are about to consult on the targets. A lot of words have been bandied about in the chamber today

and previously—

**Robin Harper:** Does the minister agree that it is a little too easy for him to state that traffic will increase by 27 per cent by 2020 and then to do something about that figure, which has been pulled out of the air, rather than address the real problem that we have just now?

**Allan Wilson:** Nothing that we have done in developing the strategy, which I commend to the chamber, has been, or could be, construed as easy. When we consult as a unicameral chamber, as we must, we do so seriously and we take on board the views of those who make representations to us. We will therefore consult on the figure of 30 per cent; more might be possible. However, as we said in the energy debate, there are technical and economic issues and there are grid problems. We are ambitious. We will consult on that target and we will increase and improve on our targets where necessary.

Iain Smith asked when strategic environmental assessment would be introduced. I am told that work is under way to meet the target date of July 2004 for implementation of the European directive. I say to Iain Smith, and to the chamber, why should we not do better than that? Why should we not strive to improve upon that target? I give my commitment to the chamber that we will seek to do that.

**Alex Neil:** Will the minister give way?

**Allan Wilson:** No. I will continue with my flow, if Alex Neil does not mind.

Indicator 1 is a measure of carbon impact. There is an important point about indicators and targets that is worthy of further dissemination: if the world burns more carbon, the world value will go up. Our contribution is measured by indicator 1, which shows that we understand the linkages between the burning of fossil fuels and climate change. One of the successes of our "do a little—change a lot" campaign has been the raising of public awareness of that fact. There is good statistical evidence to support that contention.

I wish to say something briefly about national waste, which has been referred to. I want ministers to take powers to set mandatory local authority targets, as part of a new duty on local authorities to prepare integrated waste management. *[Applause.]* Thank you very much. It is not very often that I will be clapped by Robin Harper and Fiona McLeod. We hope to address that issue in the forthcoming local government bill. Sylvia Jackson asked pertinent questions about that matter. We intend to address those issues in the national waste plan.

Jamie McGrigor raised an issue that is dear to my heart: people and the involvement of local

people. We have debated that matter in this chamber. I have set targets for the Scottish biodiversity forum to take on board more people-centred policies. We inherited a situation from the Conservatives whereby they reneged on their European responsibilities to set up special areas of protection. We have righted that wrong, and we are progressing with that policy.

**Mr McGrigor:** Will the minister give way?

**The Presiding Officer:** No, Mr McGrigor. The minister is coming to a conclusion.

**Allan Wilson:** I turn to an issue that is dear to my heart, and that is social justice and sustainable employment. Sustainable employment will bring our poorest communities out of poverty. It links our economic agenda to our social justice agenda.

**Alex Neil** *rose*—

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Neil, no.

**Allan Wilson:** That means real jobs, using the skills of real people, and promoting lifelong learning to allow our industries to remain competitive, thereby ensuring that our people have sustainable jobs. Only this week, the First Minister was at Vestas, demonstrating the clear link between economic development, our economic strategy and our renewable energy objectives.

In “Meeting the Needs” we have set out our ideas and commitments. The document can be read and understood by anyone. The First Minister will take it to Johannesburg in August. That will be the sign that we are working with other countries across the planet to look to the future. That takes the debate beyond the constructs of the nation state to global co-operation. In that context, I make the philosophical point that nationalism as a philosophy stands against the tide of history and, more important, stands against a sustainable future. “Meeting the Needs” meets our needs. It meets the needs of the future. It meets the needs of Scotland. That is sustainable development. I commend the statement to this Parliament.

## Decision Time

17:03

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** We come now to decision time. There are three questions—*[Interruption.]* Order. Let us have a little quiet in the chamber. There are three questions to be put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S1M-3067.1, in the name of Bruce Crawford, which seeks to amend motion S1M-3067, in the name of Ross Finnie, on sustainable development, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (Ind)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

#### AGAINST

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 50, Against 62, Abstentions 1.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S1M-3067.2, in the name of John Scott, which seeks to amend Ross Finnie's motion S1M-3067, on sustainable development, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 McGregor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

#### AGAINST

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)

McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 19, Against 63, Abstentions 31.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The third question is, that motion S1M-3067, in the name of Ross Finnie, on sustainable development, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)

Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

#### AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (Ind)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 82, Against 30, Abstentions 2.

#### *Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament welcomes the Scottish Executive statement on sustainable development, *Meeting the Needs... Priorities, Actions and Targets for sustainable development in Scotland*, and the vision that it sets out for a sustainable Scotland in which the Executive conserves, protects and harnesses Scotland's natural resources and the talents of the people; believes that the statement marks an important step forward for sustainable development in

Scotland; agrees that the indicator list provides a good basis on which to begin to measure progress, and believes that sustainable development must be a central principle in governing Scotland.

## World Asthma Day

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr Murray Tosh):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S1M-2966, in the name of Mrs Margaret Smith, on world asthma day, which was on 7 May 2002. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. I invite members who wish to speak to press their request-to-speak buttons. As the chamber has almost cleared, I call Margaret Smith to open the debate.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament notes that World Asthma Day is on Tuesday 7 May 2002 when, in the United Kingdom, the National Asthma Campaign will highlight childhood asthma; is aware that over 113,000 (around 1 in 6) children in Scotland have been diagnosed with asthma and that the incidence is highest amongst children; commends the National Asthma Campaign Scotland for its work on childhood asthma, including its publication of the first childhood asthma audit and its programme of asthma information sessions for adults working in the early years sector; further notes the soon to be published Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network/British Thoracic Society guidelines for asthma and invites the Scottish Executive to devise a national asthma strategy to ensure that these guidelines are implemented across the country and matched by any necessary resources.

17:08

**Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD):** I thank colleagues of all parties who have supported the motion in my name to mark world asthma day, which was yesterday, although we are considering all week a range of issues that relate to asthma. Close to 50 per cent of MSPs who can sign motions have signed my motion, so perhaps the minister should note that that represents a great deal of concern throughout the chamber.

Why have so many members supported the motion? Like me, many have first hand and family experience of the impact that asthma can have on an individual and the quality of life of that person and his or her family. After some difficulty, my mother was diagnosed at 54 with late-onset asthma. I am happy to say she has it under some control through using inhalers night and morning. However, by her own admission, she is one of the lucky people—she has had few asthma attacks and her condition is responding to medication.

One of the main reasons why members signed the motion is that Scotland has more than 400,000 asthma sufferers, which is about 7,000 per constituency. The prevalence of the disease is on the increase. It costs the national health service in the United Kingdom an estimated £850 million a year, but that does not begin to represent its true cost to Scotland and its people.

We still do not know for certain what causes asthma. The scientific consensus is that the disease is genetically based, but that it has mostly environmental triggers, of which traffic pollution, smoking, damp conditions and dust mites are among the most common. Members can see from that list that the issue is not only for the Minister for Health and Community Care, but for the minister who is responsible for transport—along with everything else—and for the Minister for Social Justice.

Only last week, the World Health Organisation, in a report into childhood ill health and the environment, set out that childhood asthma was a “major public health concern in Europe”

and urged Governments to cut urban air pollution and reduce traffic levels. Research by the University of Nottingham seems to suggest that children who live near a busy road might be at increased risk of wheezing and asthma.

Meanwhile the Executive's recent fuel poverty statement notes that

“Children are particularly vulnerable to respiratory conditions such as asthma which have been linked to cold and damp homes”.

Proper ventilation is also crucial.

It is essential that the Executive does all that it can to reduce smoking, because smoke acts as a trigger for about 80 per cent of people who suffer from asthma. Asthma is also a crucial issue for the ministers whose responsibility is for education, because one in six children—or 113,000 children—is diagnosed with asthma at some point. According to the National Asthma Campaign, asthma is Scotland's most common long-term childhood illness.

The campaign's recent report “Sleepless Nights, Anxious Days” reveals that children and their parents often feel let down by the health and educational services. Parents reported problems in gaining accurate and early diagnosis, lack of support from schools, negative experiences at accident and emergency departments, substandard care from general practitioners and continuing anxiety about medication and lack of access to information.

The National Asthma Campaign and others were closely involved in the creation and administration of the guidelines on medicines in schools. I would be obliged if the minister would tell us what progress local authority education departments have made in implementing those guidelines.

I would also like to highlight the work of the National Asthma Campaign in its childhood asthma audit. Surely that audit will assist the Executive and local authorities in the provision of

services. Some of the statistics make sobering reading—more than 4,500 child hospital admissions last year were for asthma and most of those were kids under five.

Think about the worry and the concern, the anxiety and fear behind those statistics. Think of families living with attacks, constant medication and the worry of not knowing what long-term damage childhood asthma has done to their children's respiratory systems or whether their lives have been threatened by it.

Asthma affects the day-to-day existence of every family that has a sufferer. Those families have made it clear that they have experienced variable standards of care in the NHS. Many parents want greater teacher support from the education system. Parents have told of horrifying experiences that their children have had in schools. I was shocked to read in the report that I mentioned earlier a quote from the mother of a four-year-old. That four-year-old relayed the comment of a classroom assistant who had said:

"Even if he is blue and laying on the floor, until he goes ... unconscious I'm not allowed to say to him 'do you want your puffer'".

We must ensure that we have got right the regulations that cover the administration of medicines in schools. We must also ensure that school staff are given the necessary back up and training that enables them to feel able to do that part of their job.

It is crucial that children and adults are cared for by professionals who are properly trained in asthma care. However, at present, only one in five nurses who are running asthma clinics have the appropriate qualification to do so. Instead of GPs having the time to explain the condition to patients, they must squeeze their diagnosis and information into a short appointment. GPs believe that they need at least 20 minutes to explain properly a diagnosis to patients and their parents.

Last week, we debated the Executive's primary care modernisation group's report. The section on chronic disease management, which will greatly assist those with asthma, was welcomed by all parties in the chamber. That part of the report included measures such as: greater access to primary care team members within 48 hours; better liaison between primary care and the acute sector; and local plans for chronic disease management. All those measures will benefit those who suffer from asthma.

The sharing of best practice throughout the country, better training for a range of health and educational professionals, including pharmacists and teachers, and the greater involvement of groups will also contribute to better services. There is excellent practice in some parts of

Scotland. The Scottish Executive, through the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network and the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland, needs to establish minimum standards of asthma care. That way, patients and their families would know what to expect from the NHS throughout Scotland. Guidelines for managing asthma are soon to be published by SIGN and the British Thoracic Society, but it is clear that published guidelines are only part of the solution—guidelines must be acted on.

The Executive can put in place a number of measures. Health boards need to view asthma as a priority—currently, it is not—which will encourage them to provide services that do not exist at present.

A national strategy for asthma would raise the standard of care, but the Executive could also do that by recruiting and training more asthma nurse specialists and by giving local health care co-operatives the resources that they need to give local priority to asthma services. The Executive could also make Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education responsible, as part of its assessments of schools, for monitoring support for people who have medical needs. Last, but certainly not least, the Executive and the UK Government, working with organisations such as the National Asthma Campaign, can fund research into the cause of the disease. Better treatments, including non-steroid treatments, could be found and better services provided.

The ministers who have responsibility for health hear requests all the time from competing voices asking for even more support—tonight's debate is no exception. Every year, 150 Scots die from asthma. Every year, the lives of 400,000 sufferers will be made worse by passive smoking. Every year, the one in six kids who suffers from the condition will suffer attacks and lose time from school. Every year, patients and parents will struggle to secure good local services from trained professionals. All those issues and more are in the hands of the Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care and her colleagues. I ask her tonight to hear the voice of asthma sufferers, for once loud and clear, and to move forward with a national strategy and a clear purpose to tackle the disease together.

17:16

**Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab):** I congratulate Margaret Smith on securing the debate and particularly on highlighting childhood asthma.

I begin by recounting the experience of a young woman and her family. That young woman was diagnosed at the age of 10 weeks as suffering

from bronchitis. She was prescribed antibiotics and everything appeared to clear up. However, over the ensuing 20 months, she suffered continual colds and chest infections, on occasion being prescribed back-to-back antibiotics. Her mother was naturally concerned by the continual use of antibiotics and the effects that they had on her general health. Eventually, the GP was persuaded to make a referral to a paediatrician.

While she was awaiting that appointment, the child again presented with a heavy cold, and this time her breathing became very difficult, she became quite listless, and her lower limbs became cold and blue. The out-of-hours GP eventually arrived. He examined her and stated that she required to be admitted to hospital and that he would take her and the mother to the accident and emergency unit rather than inconvenience the ambulance service. When they reached the accident and emergency unit, the GP took the child immediately into A and E, bypassing reception, and connected her to oxygen. She was later transferred to the medical paediatric unit, which commenced oxygen therapy together with steroids and salbutamol. That continued for two days. Only then was asthma mentioned, and only in passing.

When the child was discharged, the mother was advised that a review appointment would be issued for six weeks' time, but the child was readmitted within four weeks. Eventually, there was a firm diagnosis of asthma. No support or advice was given to the parents, who had been advised that the reason why the GP had taken them to the hospital was because they did not have time to wait for an ambulance because the child's condition was deteriorating rapidly. Members can imagine how those parents felt, with a very ill child—an only child—and not much knowledge of asthma. After a further three admissions, it was agreed that the child should be introduced to a nebuliser at home. From then on, she experienced less severe attacks and the time between them increased. Eventually and much to their relief, her parents obtained an electric nebuliser; their legs were suffering from use of the foot pump.

Prior to starting school, the child was introduced to a preventive spinhaler, and a significant improvement was noted in her general well-being. However, that was jeopardised when she started school, because the educational staff were not prepared to supervise her medication and she suffered some setbacks. However, her health began to improve. By the age of seven she had gone for a year without having had an attack and her asthma medication was withdrawn.

She has never had to be prescribed drugs for asthma since, but she is aware that in certain

circumstances she must make it known that she is an asthma sufferer, which she had to do yesterday, when she sought mortgage insurance. Her experience started 18 years ago, but sadly, some young people and their families still face similar situations to that which my daughter and I faced.

The National Asthma Campaign asks for the same rights that other disease groups have. It wants a national strategy that directs national health service boards in the management of asthma. For too long, individual GPs have been left to develop—or not develop—their expertise in asthma.

My local healthcare co-operative has appointed a respiratory nurse to co-ordinate practice, develop services and work in partnership with the asthma liaison nurse to facilitate the interface between acute and primary care. One of its chronic disease management programmes is aimed at asthma—that does not happen throughout Scotland. That programme means that there is better recognition, diagnosis and management of asthma. In turn, the number of referrals to paediatric consultants has decreased.

Last week, during a discussion with Dr Michael Blair—to whom I owe a great deal and to whom my daughter owes her life—he spoke to me about the situation in Ayrshire and Arran. He brought me up to date and told me that the service is evolving into what we agreed looked like a mini-managed clinical network at local level.

However, there is still some way to go. The link with education staff is poor, but it is within our reach with the guidance that was issued in 2001, if we give teeth to that guidance. I urge the minister to consider ensuring that that guidance becomes part of the inspection process in pre-five schools and in all our schools. We owe it to our young people who suffer from asthma to provide a safe environment in which their lives are as active as their condition permits.

I support the motion.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I neglected to set a time limit, which is my fault entirely. I ask members to stick to about four minutes so that every member who wants to speak may do so.

17:22

**Shona Robison (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** I congratulate Margaret Smith on securing this important debate to mark world asthma day.

Yesterday, to mark world asthma day, I visited a new project that is being established at Ninewells hospital. I want to say something about that project. It is called asthma in retreat—AIR—and is a collaboration between the University of



Dundee's asthma research unit, the Tayside Institute of Child Health, the University of Glasgow and the royal hospital for sick children in Glasgow. It aims to create an educational tool that will be used with children aged between two and 16 years old and their parents who present to emergency departments in Glasgow and Dundee.

The education that is provided in the project will be guideline based, individualised and targeted at patients and their parents. The project is about attack management and prevention. I looked at the tool, which is multimedia based, and was extremely impressed. The children that I know are certainly more computer literate than I am. There is a touch-screen interface and children are shown using inhalers and other tools. It is important to overcome some of the fear that children might have, particularly of inhalers, which can seem very large and frightening devices to a small child. Those tools were shown in use and children spoke about their fears and how they overcame them.

The project will give children the confidence to manage their asthma, and it is hoped that emergency admissions will be prevented. It will also give confidence to parents for whom the process can be huge and fearful, as Margaret Jamieson outlined well. Often they do not know what to do. I hope that the tool will be available not just in a hospital context, but at a local level. Given the prevalence of asthma—one in nine children is being treated for asthma symptoms—we must look at the whole range of tools to ensure that we can prevent emergency admissions and encourage self-help as much as possible.

I will conclude by paying tribute to the staff involved in this innovative project, which I think is the first of its kind. I hope that the Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care will listen to some of the very constructive suggestions that have been made this evening and will respond in a positive manner to the issues raised during the debate.

17:25

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):**

I also congratulate Margaret Smith on securing this debate. One of the tremendous strengths of the Parliament is that we can use members' business to highlight an issue that is of serious concern throughout Scotland.

I welcome the fact that the motion emphasises that the National Asthma Campaign highlights childhood asthma. When I read the Scottish Parliament information centre briefing, I was shocked by the increase that it outlined in childhood asthma. It shows that for males aged up to four there has been an increase of 198 per cent over 10 years and for those aged five to 14 there has been an increase of 135 percent. For females

aged up to five there has been an increase of 295 per cent and for those aged five to 14 there has been an increase of 217 per cent. I realised why the National Asthma Campaign highlights childhood asthma.

It is shocking that more than 113,000 children in Scotland are diagnosed as asthmatic. Many of us tend to think that asthma is caused by pollution. However, I can tell members—Margaret Smith mentioned this—that there are very high asthma levels in the Isle of Skye, although there is certainly no pollution there. Much more research has to be done to find out the causes of asthma. Pollution may be a contributory factor, but it is certainly not the only one.

We discovered recently that children in the UK who are aged 13 to 14 have the highest rate of asthma symptoms in the world. However, in Scotland only four out of 15 health boards designate asthma as a priority in their health improvement plans.

I was pleased to look up "The Administration of Medicines in Schools." I thought that it was an excellent document but, as an asthma sufferer, I was surprised that only five lines are dedicated to asthma. There is also a note. Having been a lecturer for 20 years, I know that if someone had had asthma in one of my classes, I would not have found the five lines of great assistance. I realise that teachers cannot be experts in everything, but I do not think that there is quite enough information to help a teacher in a school when a child suffers from asthma.

I was surprised recently when I was out with the Inverness police. They had an asthma inhaler in the station. Doctors do not come out to the police station at night, so there was an inhaler that could be used by anyone who was asthmatic. The police were not trained, but at least there was something there to assist someone with asthma.

I congratulate the National Asthma Campaign on its excellent document, "Who Cares about Asthma in Scotland?" It is a first-class summary of the issues and highlights the great contribution that patient groups can make towards conditions in Scotland.

In response to a written question that I lodged about how the Executive

"plans to reduce the number of serious asthma cases presented at accident and emergency departments"—[*Official Report, Written Answers*, 28 September 2001; p 176.]

the reply mentioned the SIGN guideline, the Scottish asthma management initiative, a project called "Asthma Attack—Targeting Emergency Asthma Contacts in Children" and grant funding to the National Asthma Campaign Scotland. Those are all highly worthy, but I am concerned that there

is very little in the way of a co-ordinated and joined-up approach.

It took me almost 20 years to be diagnosed as having asthma, although I had described my symptoms. I can describe my experience from a patient's point of view. I went to the chest clinic and was told that everything was fine. I went to the ear, nose and throat department and was told that everything was fine. I went to the asthma clinic and was told that I perhaps had asthma.

I now have a speech therapist and find that speech therapy is of tremendous benefit to an asthma sufferer. I am looking not only for a co-ordinated approach with strategies, consultations and reviews, but a joined-up approach from the patient's point of view. Speech therapy could play a much greater role in helping to control not only adult asthma, but children's asthma.

17:30

**Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab):** I declare an interest as an asthma sufferer. As for speech therapy, that is why I went for singing lessons. My mother sent me to singing lessons to help my breathing. Like Margaret Smith, I am also the mother of an asthmatic, and I am a member of the National Asthma Campaign's advisory committee. I thank Margaret Smith for bringing this debate to Parliament.

Yesterday was world asthma day, and today we mark the event by a debate in the Scottish Parliament. That is no sign of victory, however. All the indications are that asthma is on the increase. There are now more than 1,500 children with asthma in the average constituency and the UK has the highest rate in the world of severe wheeze among children aged 13 to 14. Even if they do not have asthma themselves, most constituents have friends, family members or neighbours who have to deal with the problems that childhood asthma brings. There are few things worse for anyone than watching their child struggle to breathe.

There is still much to be achieved if we are to provide the help that the families of asthma sufferers deserve. We need earlier diagnosis. We also need better support in schools, through teacher training. All the people who are involved in schools, including the nursery nurses, janitors and auxiliary workers, need to know about asthma. I feel strongly that every child needs to be able to control their own asthma and that they should have the right to have their puffer in their pocket. That is important. As a parent, I went through all sorts of hoops to ensure that my child had the right to have her inhaler in her pocket. Without it, she would not have participated in sports and all the other activities that allow children to lead a normal life.

We must provide better information about self-management of asthma and we must deal with acute episodes better. It is too late to think about how to deal with the condition when a child or adult is ill in hospital. There are ways of avoiding some of the worst effects of asthma. We must also ensure that all GPs have a thorough and up-to-date understanding of asthma and that they devote enough time to addressing parents' anxieties about medication and to helping children and their parents to learn how to control the condition. Qualified asthma nurses play a key role in education and self-management.

The National Asthma Campaign is calling for minimum standards of asthma care so that people with asthma will know what rights they have and what they can expect from the national health service in Scotland. It wants more research to be undertaken into the development of asthma and its treatment and it is calling for the implementation of the 2001 guidance on "The Administration of Medicines in Schools".

Asthma should be a national priority, with health workers, teachers, local authorities and national Government working together to provide children with asthma and their families with a better quality of life. I congratulate the National Asthma Campaign on the work that it is doing to achieve that. It is raising awareness, educating the public and professionals and sponsoring research. The time has come for the Scottish Executive to adopt a national asthma strategy, and I ask it to look favourably on the soon-to-be-published SIGN guidelines on managing asthma.

17:34

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** I congratulate Margaret Smith on securing the debate. I am the parent of a former asthma sufferer. From the day on which he was born until he approached his teenage years, my son suffered from extremely bad asthma attacks. As my wife and I had a modern marriage, it was decreed that I should be the one to get out of bed and look after him in the terrifying wee small hours—members will know what I mean by that. As the asthma attacks were accompanied by panic attacks, one could see the gravity of the situation multiplying before one's very eyes. By the grace of God, I managed to develop a technique of giving him his puffer, calming him and bringing him back down to earth. Eventually, he would drift off to sleep. However, they were terrible years and the terror of dealing with the situation is still etched on my mind.

It was great that I was able to develop a certain technique, but I have often felt that it would be useful if parents could be given advice about calming a child down. As a result, I am greatly

heartened by the initiative that Shona Robison outlined and hope that such a service can be made widely available through real people such as nurses and GPs as well as through touch-screens. It could greatly benefit other parents. Although my son has grown out of the condition, I would not want any other parent to go through the same situation. Moreover, a very close friend of my mother's died of asthma when she was in her 50s, because the attack was so severe and help could not be found quickly enough. We must not forget that asthma kills.

Because the issue is about real people such as GPs and nurses, I want to use this opportunity to raise an issue of which Mary Scanlon is also aware. A number of GPs have recently resigned in Caithness—a GP has resigned in Lybster as have GPs in Wick who are husband and wife. Furthermore, one of the two Thurso practices has withdrawn from the accident and emergency service at Dunbar hospital. The situation is deeply worrying. It is not fair to press the minister on the matter in this debate, because she would need to go away and think about things and, in any event, it is only right and proper to take the matter to the health board first, to find out what is happening, but, as members might imagine, my constituents—not just asthma sufferers but anyone who faces sickness—are concerned about the situation. I make no apologies for making this point. Right now in my part of the world, there is a fear that asthma treatment is being rolled back. We do not know why that should be, and we will see what happens.

I am so glad that this excellent debate has come before the Parliament. As Mary Scanlon has rightly pointed out, such a debate dignifies the Parliament.

17:37

**Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow):** With 113,000 children involved in this issue, the debate is one of the most important ever held in the Parliament. I pay tribute to all the MSPs who have declared that they are asthmatic. We need only remember how much lung power is needed to be an MSP. In Cathy Peattie's case, she is also a singer. Cathy, Mary Scanlon and so many others have triumphed over the condition.

I am one of the many people with a relative who has died of asthma. Towards the end, she had to move abroad in an attempt to extend her life a little longer. I saw her when she was younger, gasping and fighting for breath, her face darkening. Somehow she managed to raise her family and was quite heroic. She came from Glasgow more than 50 years ago, but I see thousands and thousands of children in the city today in exactly the same condition. A teacher in the east end of

Glasgow told me that nine of the 25 children in her class carry inhalers.

Housing plays a part in all of this. For a start, it worsens what people are already suffering. The asthma of one of my constituents is so severe that every so often she has to be moved to Glasgow royal infirmary. Her 11-year-old daughter also has severe asthma. However, although her son also suffers from asthma, he manages perfectly well and hardly ever has an attack. Perhaps the secret is that the son lives with his father in what is called a dry house. It is clear that all sorts of pressures both inside and outside affect asthmatics.

Margaret Smith rightly mentioned the guidelines on the administration of medicines in schools. It would simply be terrible if teachers became nervy and frightened about helping as quickly as they might do because of red tape. The children in the same class could be taught about asthma and not to panic when they see someone having a severe attack.

There are mysteries about asthma that we have to solve. Some children with early and severe symptoms go on to develop persistent asthma; others get over asthma between the ages of three and six. We used to think that such examples existed only in our grannies' tales, but that is not true: the National Asthma Campaign confirms that. Why is that the case? Why does one child go on to have a life free of this horrible complaint while another is condemned to suffer for life? That is one of the mysteries that I hope that we can solve. Solutions must be found. Please support the motion.

17:41

**Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):**

I congratulate Margaret Smith on securing the debate and welcome the National Asthma Campaign's report, "Sleepless Nights, Anxious Days", which reveals that a lack of time and resources means that GPs in schools are putting children at risk.

More research is needed to explain all the causes of asthma. Mary Scanlon is right when she points out that, in the Isle of Skye and some other rural areas, there are low levels of pollution but high levels of asthma.

In September 1999, in one of my first speeches in the Scottish Parliament, I raised the issue of damp housing and asthma in connection with a debate on public health and the white paper, "Towards a Healthier Scotland". I said then that I would return to the subject over and over again and I make no apology for doing so. We know that 362,000 children in Scotland live in damp housing and we also know that a study of damp housing and asthma in Glasgow that was published in

1996 stated:

"The greater the severity of dampness or mould in a home the more likely the patient is to have severe asthma."

I was disappointed that the Scottish Executive's central heating scheme did not make children living in damp homes a priority, as it did for pensioners. I mention that because that was not the case south of the Border, where children living in damp homes were made a priority. We have still not got to grips with the problems of dampness, condensation and mould and the effect that they can have on people's health.

Many members have said that we need to have a minimum standard of asthma care. It is right and proper that we highlight that and I hope that the minister can address that tonight. I recognise that she cannot address the problems of damp homes but I am sure that she will lean on some of her colleagues.

Teachers and GPs need to be better trained to ensure that asthma is recognised and diagnosed at an early stage. They need to be given the tools and resources to allow them to deal with the problem.

I was moved when Margaret Jamieson highlighted the problems that she had with her daughter's asthma. The strength of the Scottish Parliament is that people from many backgrounds come to the Parliament with differing experiences and can, in debates such as this one, passionately bring to the attention of the rest of us the problems that they have faced.

I congratulate the National Asthma Campaign once again and urge the minister to respond positively to the debate.

17:44

**Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con):** I congratulate Margaret Smith on securing the debate. I also congratulate the National Asthma Campaign, with which I have been associated for some years. I should declare that I am a member of the club: I was a late-onset asthmatic. My asthma evolved out of a sporting activity up a large mountain. It can strike at any time of life.

It is shocking that one child in six is diagnosed as asthmatic. We do not have a national strategy and, even worse, we do not have any centrally held statistics, even though the biggest tool in the management of medicine today is trend analysis. During the first year of the Parliament, I was staggered to find that statistics were held only by health boards instead of being co-ordinated. We must start by rectifying that situation.

In carrying out a piece of research during the Parliament's first year, I wrote to all the education

authorities to find out what protocols were in place for teachers to manage asthmatic children. I was staggered at the range. When I went into the matter further, I was also staggered to find that, although the protocols may have existed in some form or another, they were not enforced and teachers were not given training. Teachers were in a dilemma about their responsibilities. They worried that they might get sued if they got something wrong or intervened in the wrong way.

Many teachers did not seem to understand that there are two types of treatment. One is what, when I was a pharmacist, I used to call the insurance policy, which minimises breakthrough attacks. The other is the relief treatment. I spent years in community pharmacy trying to run medicines management clinics for people in the community. What struck me most is that most health care workers in primary care do not have the necessary qualifications. That is improving, but it is happening slowly.

Parents are the greatest victims. They panic when their children suffer. I have three asthmatics in my family. We must have early intervention. A screening programme will pick up some of the allergic responses. We should also consider inherited traits, on which we are not doing enough work. Isolated work is going on, but a combined effort is needed.

The economic cost to the family income of work lost through asthma is immense. The disruption of education is immense. The fact that people cannot get involved in sport, which is part of their development, is frightening. The list goes on and on. I do not wish to paint a horrible picture, but the debate has been an opportunity to highlight some genuine concerns. I think that it was Jamie Stone who said that, throughout Scotland, there are sufferers of asthma in all age groups without exception. There is poor recognition of asthma. Accident and emergency departments do not always recognise the problem. People at work—even first-aiders—do not necessarily recognise the difficulties.

We must also teach self-management to give people the confidence to use their medicines. Medicines must not become a prop that sufferers use only when they are half dying in a gym because they did not want to lose face in front of their pals by puffing on an inhaler—they wanted to be brave and to keep going. We must accept that asthma is normal for some people. It must be identified in school early on so that the staff are prepared and the parents are given support.

One could blether all night about this important subject. The education of parents, primary care staff and children is a good starting point, but it must be accessible throughout Scotland. We must also have early diagnosis. There should be proper

support for medicines management and we must have a programme of follow-up consultations once someone shows the possibility of developing asthma.

17:48

**The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Mrs Mary Mulligan):** I start by congratulating Margaret Smith on securing this topical debate, which will be of interest to all who suffer from asthma, but particularly children and young people with asthma, their parents and those who care for or support them. World asthma day, which was yesterday, represents an opportunity for us all to review current thinking on the prevalence of, causes of and action necessary to deal with childhood asthma.

The incidence of asthma, which was a much less common condition even 50 years ago, has been steadily increasing in the developed world. That increase has been particularly noticeable among children. We know that the United Kingdom has a particularly high prevalence of diagnosed asthma. We also know that the incidence of asthma attacks is now some three or four times higher in adults and six times higher in children than it was a quarter of a century ago.

It is important to bear in mind the fact that the increase in asthma is not simply a Scottish problem. As Mary Scanlon and other members have said, evidence from the Highlands counters the common belief that asthma is primarily an urban problem. A rise in the incidence of diagnosed asthma is common throughout the developed world.

It would be wrong for anyone to suggest with any certainty what the causes of the increase in the prevalence of asthma might be. There is a widespread belief that our hygiene culture plays a part. Air pollution, ozone and the house dust mite are also thought to be contributory factors and I note what Tricia Marwick said about dampness in housing. However, she said that the Executive did not prioritise the installation of central heating for asthma sufferers. In fact, the Executive has made huge strides in investing in our housing stock and it will continue to do so, having regard to the exacerbation of problems suffered by those who have asthma. There is some evidence to suggest that lack of exercise and poor diet may also be involved, but there is no certainty about the reasons for that.

It is essential to bear in mind the fact that each child who suffers from asthma is an individual who needs to be treated in a way that reflects the circumstances of his or her own case. That is why I believe that asthma is handled most effectively at the primary care level, in the context of close co-

operation between patient support groups and health professionals. I acknowledge Margaret Jamieson's point that managed clinical networks are developing of their own accord as clinicians come together on the issue. I assure her that we will continue to review those developments and ascertain how we can support them.

The health plan, "Our National Health: A plan for action, a plan for change", highlighted children and young people as a new priority for the national health service in Scotland and singled out asthma as one of the chronic medical conditions whose sufferers need easy access to the care and treatment that they require, which is usually administered outside acute hospital settings. The health plan emphasises that the management of chronic conditions falls largely to patients, their families and supporters and that services must empower and support them effectively. It identifies the value of the close involvement of patient support groups in service design and delivery at both local and national levels.

We have already moved some way in the direction of those aspirations. A number of SIGN guidelines relating to the management of acute and chronic asthma are in place. The motion notes

"the soon to be published Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network/British Thoracic Society guidelines for asthma".

I understand that those guidelines are to be published this summer.

Asthma forms one of the chronic disease management programmes for which there is separate payment to GP practices. More than 90 per cent of practices receive payments; in return, they are expected to comply with a number of detailed requirements. The clinical resource and audit group—CRAG—has recently received a report from the Scottish asthma management initiative, which audits the management of asthma in primary care based on existing guidelines. The key elements of the audit have been used to establish criteria for clinical effectiveness in primary care and will inform advice on care management that is being developed for health care professionals.

A growing number of GPs have direct access to detailed lung function tests. In addition, and as the technology develops, spirometers have become portable and now form part of the equipment in some GP surgeries. Domiciliary oxygen therapy, along with the appropriate professional support, is available to those who require it. Peak-flow meters are now widely used by doctors and by patients themselves to monitor their asthma and to adjust their treatment as necessary. Modern inhalers have significantly improved the quality of care that is available to patients, both in preventing asthma attacks and in treating attacks when they occur.

Those changes will improve the management of asthma, but we need to work on the factors that cause asthma in so far as we can recognise them. Smoking cessation activities are expanding and exercise is being promoted. Substantial resources have been committed to such work through the health improvement fund. We are making progress and we are backing it with resources. Chronic disease management is one focus of the primary care modernisation group's recent report and there has been corresponding investment from the Executive.

I apologise for not having the most up-to-date information on the guidance to schools on the administration of medicines. However, I take on board the points that members have made and will seek to provide them with the up-to-date information that they have requested.

I would not like to close this evening without paying tribute to the work of the National Asthma Campaign Scotland, not just because representatives are in the gallery—we hope to join them later—but because of the positive working relationship that exists between it and the health department. My officials have regular contact with NAC Scotland to discuss areas of mutual concern. In the current year, we are funding a project of particular relevance to the motion—an asthma parents support project. I hope that the sound working relationship can continue, because it enables us to improve services for asthma sufferers in partnership with an effective and well-informed part of the voluntary sector.

The active partnership that we enjoy with the National Asthma Campaign and the greater understanding of childhood asthma issues that will result from world asthma day and, I hope, from the debate this evening will only benefit all those with asthma and those who support them.

*Meeting closed at 17:56.*

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