

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 21 February 2007

Session 2

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DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER—Nicol Stephen MSP

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DEPUTY MINISTER FOR JUSTICE—Johann Lamont MSP

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DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE—Robert Brown MSP

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DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM—George Lyon MSP

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MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE—Mr Andy Kerr MSP
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE—Lewis Macdonald MSP

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21 February 2007

Scottish Parliament

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

Time for Reflection

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): Good afternoon. The first item of business is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is the Rev Joe Kavanagh of Mearns parish kirk, Newton Mearns.

Rev Joe Kavanagh (Mearns Parish Kirk, Newton Mearns): As a minister, it is my privilege to get close to people in all sorts of situations in life. People let you in, and they share their hopes and dreams and their joys, sorrows and pain with you. At times, as you listen to people, you find yourself thinking new thoughts, seeing aspects of life in a new way and discovering a new understanding because, through their experience, they have discovered what you have not. Listening is really important, not only because in times of anxiety, difficulty or darkness people need someone to really hear them, but also because it is as we listen that our thinking can be turned around and our lives can be challenged, and sometimes even changed. That certainly has been my experience. My theology, if you like, in some ways has been changed through encountering others in real need, as has my approach to ministry.

We all have beliefs that inform our approach to life, whether it be a theology, a political ideology or a life philosophy. We are in many ways inheritors of a received wisdom that has shaped life in the past and which gives us the basis for living in our present, but we must in some sense never be shackled to that wisdom in whatever form it comes. New wisdom is required for new situations, particularly in relation to people's need; where people of today are concerned, we might have to dare to think differently. To a degree, our beliefs and practice must be shaped by experience, and that experience is both our own and that of others when we let people's lives touch ours.

Someone once said that the church at times answers questions that people are not asking, but then that is true of so many organisations and institutions. We need to listen to what people are saying, especially those of us who see ourselves as servants of the people, and then, hearing what is really being said, be willing to change our views, our direction and the ways in which we seek to serve.

Jesus's ministry was very much related to the needs of the people. He saw what was happening in the lives of those around about him—much of which was due to tremendous upheaval created by the powers that be—and to people in all their need he made his response. Jesus did not minister in a vacuum; he did not blindly follow a theology or ideology. No; in fact, some would see him as breaking the rules, going against convention or departing from tradition. Why did he do that? Not for the sake of it or to be radical, but to mend people's broken hearts and lives.

From a faith perspective, life is about God's love for people and their love for one another. It is about relationships that seek the best for people. So, at the heart of our living must be people, who are far more precious than any ism or ology.

Community Safety

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-5608, in the name of Johann Lamont, on community safety.

14:35

The Deputy Minister for Justice (Johann Lamont): Today offers an important opportunity to discuss and debate community safety and the challenge that antisocial behaviour presents to community security and well-being. Four years ago, we pledged to build safer and stronger communities—building on the experience that we had all shared as MSPs in the first session of Parliament—and to put tackling antisocial behaviour at the top of our agenda. We listened to the people of Scotland, who made it clear that improving community safety and tackling antisocial behaviour were what they wanted from us and expected us to deliver on.

I start by putting some things in perspective. Crime in Scotland is falling. Last year, 20,000 fewer crimes were recorded by the police; housebreaking was at around half its 1997 level; and robberies were at their lowest level for 30 years. Scotland is becoming a less violent place. With 1,000 fewer victims of serious violent crime last year, violent crime is at its lowest level since devolution. Homicides are their lowest level for 15 years.

We are seeking to tackle long-standing social problems such as knife carrying, and more than 12,500 weapons were taken off the streets during our first national amnesty. Record numbers of police officers are helping to prevent and detect crime; there are nearly 1,500 more officers now than there were seven years ago. The police and other agencies are using new powers and resources to help people stand up to antisocial behaviour.

We are taking assets seized from criminals and reinvesting them in our communities; £2 million has been invested this year in areas that have been hard hit by serious violent crime. Much-needed reforms in our courts are working for victims, witnesses and jurors. There were fewer adjourned cases, less time was wasted in courts, and more than 16,000 fewer witness appearances were needed for the most serious cases.

It is important to acknowledge such progress as we acknowledge the further challenges that we face. The message from that progress is that we do not need to feel hopelessness in the face of crime in our communities: there are things that we can do, and it is possible to turn things around. The view that problems are with us and we must

simply tolerate them is one that can be challenged.

Before moving the Executive's motion this afternoon, I will highlight in more detail the substantial progress that we have made in delivering on our pledges. I will also talk about the future and about what more needs to be done.

Investment in the police service in Scotland is at a record level. Since 2003, we have increased annual funding by £156.5 million to £1.1 billion in 2006-07. Police officer numbers rose to a record level at the end of 2006. Those police officers are making a valuable contribution to making our streets and communities safer.

Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): Sir Willie Rae, who is the secretary of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and the chief constable of Strathclyde police, spoke at a joint meeting of the Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee when we discussed budgets. He made the point that current funding takes into account the fact that a number of policemen are going to retire over the next couple of years. He said that there was no follow-on funding so he expected that police numbers would fall. Is he correct?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before you respond, minister, I remind members that mobile phones have to be switched off and not just switched to silent.

Johann Lamont: An important discussion and debate is to be had with the police about resources and how they are deployed, and about the challenges in the spending review for further resources to be made available to the police. In the work that we have done already, we have been smart in liberating the police from some duties that they did not need to do, so that they could tackle the really critical issues in local communities.

Resources are increasingly targeted at the areas in communities that need them the most. We are achieving results. Initiatives such as safe city centres are returning our streets to our law-abiding citizens.

We backed our antisocial behaviour legislation and wider work to promote community safety with funding of £130 million over four years for community safety partnerships to enable a wide range of local services, including community wardens, antisocial behaviour investigation teams, mediation and witness and victim support. We provided additional money for noise teams and youth justice, and £1 million was made available for additional closed-circuit television projects, to help combat and detect crime.

By the end of 2004, every council area in Scotland had at least one community warden team working with local people in hard-pressed neighbourhoods, to prevent and tackle antisocial behaviour and to improve the local environment. More than 550 wardens are now patrolling our streets to help make them safer.

We know that local agencies are increasingly making use of the powers available to them under the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004, which I have to say was passed in the face of overblown and rather desperate opposition at the time. By the end of last September, there had been 13 dispersal orders, 21 closure orders, 1,908 noise warnings, 118 fixed-penalty notices for noise, 170 vehicle seizures and 1,900 vehicle warnings. It is clear that we are taking firm action to tackle antisocial behaviour and, critically, responding to people who, in the past, would have been told that nothing could be done.

Following a successful 12-month pilot in Tayside, when more than 3,000 fines were issued, we announced last week that police throughout Scotland will have new powers to issue fixed-penalty notices for minor incidents of antisocial behaviour, saving them time and reducing the burden on the courts. Fixed-penalty notices are immediate and visible justice for victims and keep officers out on the beat longer. Indeed, the Tayside pilot showed that it was possible to have 1,300 extra hours of police time, with officers out doing what we want the police to do, yet the Tories have taken a dismissive approach to a process that has been welcomed by local communities.

We are taking unprecedented steps to tackle the mindlessly violent acts that blight too many of our communities. We know that real change will take time, but we have made significant progress over the past year. The first national knife amnesty, intelligence-led police enforcement campaigns and the steps that we have taken to strengthen the law are some examples of our direct action to tackle the problems head on.

We acknowledge that drugs and drug misusers have a serious impact on our communities.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): Did I hear the minister say "the first national knife amnesty"? Does she not recall Peter Fraser introducing one back in the mid-1990s?

Johann Lamont: I can go back and check the comparison that Phil Gallie is making. Perhaps the Tory years were so troubling to me that I have tried to wipe them out.

Phil Gallie: It would be nice to have accuracy.

Johann Lamont: I am quite happy to be corrected on that point. However, while the Tories were introducing an amnesty, they were creating

such terrible mayhem in our communities without addressing the issue of crime that it has taken devolution and the measures that we have introduced, in terms of both investment and police powers, to address the challenges for our communities.

I realise that I have entirely run out of time, but I want to flag up issues around drugs and my recognition of the challenges posed by those issues. I commend the drug dealers don't care campaign and Crimestoppers. The campaign empowers communities by allowing people anonymity in reporting problems with drug dealers. We must recognise the critical work that it has done in communities. We have listened again to the challenges that people face when they are frightened by the crime that goes on around them. We must recognise how those communities are liberated when people are able to give information anonymously.

We know that people want to see crime fall, offenders punished and individuals take responsibility for their own actions. We have listened to those concerns and are delivering reforms and results that demonstrate that we are on people's side. We are doing practical things as a consequence of our commitment. We know and understand the challenges. We talk and work with people in communities who tell us how those challenges are experienced locally. We know that more action is required and we will not hold back until we win back respect at the heart of Scottish communities.

We have agreed that, from the next funding round in 2008, we should amalgamate community safety and antisocial behaviour funding streams and work with community safety partnerships to agree how that funding should be developed and supported for communities. We will continue to listen to what people tell us needs to be changed and to work with people in communities who are determined that safety and security should be our first priority.

I move,

That the Parliament acknowledges the good progress being made towards making our communities safer; notes that crime is falling and violent crime is at its lowest level since devolution; welcomes the record numbers of police officers now helping to prevent and detect crime; notes that antisocial behaviour legislation has made a real difference, with effective use being made by the police and local authorities of new measures contained in the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004; welcomes work by community safety partnerships to focus resources on tackling crime and disorder in response to local community needs, and supports the Scottish Executive's determination to keep working with communities and to make further progress with its partners towards ensuring that decent and law-abiding people can feel safe in their homes and on their streets wherever they live.

14:43

Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP): We concur whole-heartedly with a lot of what the minister said. Clearly, a variety of action requires to be taken, whether through legislation or local initiatives. We have supported such initiatives, sometimes through our council representatives and sometimes by assisting organisations—Executive or otherwise—to do their job.

Notwithstanding the fact that the election is beginning to concentrate all our minds, it is important that we get matters in perspective. There is clearly a great problem in Scotland. Occasionally, the debate about antisocial behaviour and crime oscillates between the perception that we reside in Valhalla and the perception that we reside in a living hell, when the truth, as with many things, is that we are somewhere in the middle.

There are problems with serious and organised crime and with violent crime, notwithstanding the statistics that the minister set out. We accept that the statistics show a decline in crime in many areas, but in some areas there has been a greater number of homicides. That clearly needs to be addressed.

That said, we have to recognise that, for the vast majority of people in Scotland, life is actually tolerable and pleasant and that it is only in certain blighted places, as the minister knows from her constituency, that life is made a living hell. It ill serves us to allow ourselves to be portrayed as some version of Beirut, as the recent United Nations report did. We need to ensure that we debate such matters.

One of our major problems is not so much crime as the fear of crime. However, to individuals, perception is reality. There is no point in any of us—regardless of our political hue—saying that the crime statistics are going down if people believe that there is a clear problem. It is fundamental that we address that problem.

This debate is about community safety, which is, perhaps, more to do with antisocial behaviour than serious and violent crime, although the two are related. However, we must recognise that some antisocial behaviour is not criminal. A great deal of it is criminal, of course; we have laws against such behaviour, and we expect them to be enforced by our police and other authorities. However, there are other elements of antisocial behaviour that, while not being unlawful, are unacceptable—in Scottish terminology, we would describe it as downright ignorant behaviour. If someone fails to take their turn cleaning the stair—whether they are in a student flat in Edinburgh or in a council scheme in the west of Scotland—that can make life intolerable for those who have sought to

maintain the ethos and the sanctity of an area. We need to strike a balance in that regard.

Some matters need to be dealt with by legislation and the enforcement of laws. For example, children—not just youths—are able to acquire alcohol, which results in bad behaviour. The laws relating to underage drinking need to be enforced.

As I said, some elements of antisocial behaviour are criminal and some are not. In that regard, as the minister said, the important issue is one of respect. I have said previously that I support that agenda. We have also talked about individuals taking responsibility for their own behaviour. People have to realise that actions have consequences and that ordinary people—not just politicians—are tired of excuses for patently bad behaviour. If someone does something, they must face the consequences of their action and understand that, frankly, we will not be satisfied with hearing some excuse about what provoked or caused it.

However, we must recognise that, in Scotland, drink, drugs and deprivation fuel a great deal of those actions. That does not excuse them, but there is a clear and consequent relationship between those factors and bad behaviour and criminality, which we must address. There is no one simple legislative solution. No Administration can bring in a single act that will eradicate those problems; a variety of things must be done across the board. In some areas, legislation will be required; in other areas, such as health, work will have to be done around education and intervention.

We believe that the fundamental requirement in relation to securing trust and promoting responsibility is a visible police presence in our communities. That deters criminals and restores the confidence in the police and the judicial system that many people have lost. We might be able to bandy about claims of record numbers of police officers, but our police have responsibilities that they did not have before, not least in relation to terrorism, sex offenders legislation and a variety of other issues. Further, we have the problem of gapping, which is caused by officers being recruited but not coming on stream. Together, those factors have resulted in our having a less visible police presence than ever before.

That is why the Scottish National Party agrees with many of the comments that were made by the minister. We fully accept and have supported some of the legislation that has been passed and many of the actions that have been taken. However, the fundamental way of bringing about the level of community safety that our people want is to have a visible police presence that will deter crime and reassure our citizens.

I move amendment S2M-5608.1, to leave out from “acknowledges” to end and insert:

“recognises the concern and anxiety in our communities caused by both low-level antisocial behaviour and serious and violent crime; appreciates the increased burden placed on our police forces by new legislation and additional requirements; believes that the best way of tackling both serious crime and antisocial behaviour is a visible police presence to reassure the public and deter criminals, and therefore commits to the recruitment of 1,000 additional police officers for our communities.”

14:49

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con): Were the motion that is lodged in the Deputy Minister for Justice’s name to be taken at face value, one would be forgiven for thinking that real progress had been made and effective measures taken to restore public confidence in the criminal justice system and to ensure that decent, law-abiding people could feel safe in their homes. Sadly, the reality is somewhat different. A less rosy but decidedly accurate picture of the problems facing people in Scotland is contained in the amendment in Annabel Goldie’s name. It details the full extent of the problems and outlines the measures that must be pursued to ensure that people have the protection that they deserve and are entitled to expect.

How on earth can the minister possibly believe—and ask the Scottish Parliament to support—the assertion that good progress is being made towards making our communities safer when only one in four crimes is reported to the police? The surgeries of MSPs and other elected members are full of constituents who complain that they have simply given up reporting disorderly and criminal behaviour, either for fear of reprisals from the perpetrators or because they are totally disheartened by and disillusioned with the lack of effective sanctions and the response to their complaints. I can only imagine how delirious those same constituents will be about the coalition’s latest policy announcement on fixed-penalty notices, which will now be issued for a wider range of crimes, including: drunken rioting in a pub; breach of the peace—such offences have risen by 26 per cent since the pact came to power in 1999; and vandalism, incidents of which have increased by 57 per cent in the same period.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (Sol): Will the member take an intervention?

Margaret Mitchell: I regret that I will not have time to take any interventions. If I have time later on, I will come back to the member.

Better still, ministers have reserved the right to add to the list of pay-as-you-go criminals at any time. It is difficult to see how those on-the-spot fines will do anything other than inconvenience the

criminals. They will certainly do nothing to make communities safer and merely serve to downgrade offences that the public rightly regards as serious incidents of antisocial behaviour. Such incidents are rife in our local communities. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Mitchell, I can allow one intervention.

Margaret Mitchell: I am sorry, Presiding Officer, but I need to press on.

The pact’s past record in addressing more serious crime is no more encouraging. Drug crime is up 5.7 per cent in the last year alone and 46 per cent since the pact came to power—*[Interruption.]* I have made it clear that I am not taking any interventions. The number of persons recalled to prison from supervision on licence is up a staggering 317 per cent over the same period.

There is no prospect of improvement in the statistics as long as the pact refuses adequately to address automatic early release and drags its feet over its commitment to provide a directory of available drug rehabilitation centres in Scotland. Instead, the minister is content to continue the rhetoric about providing record numbers of police officers to prevent and deter crime. The coalition can never hope to be taken seriously in that regard when it continues to squander precious resources on community wardens rather than full-time police officers. It is utter madness to continue to spend limited funds on employing four community wardens when we could have three full-time police officers for the same price. Laws are meaningless without proper enforcement. Without adequate numbers of police on the beat to detect crime and offending, the antisocial behaviour legislation will remain the proverbial damp squib.

I urge the minister to consider parenting orders: a provision in the antisocial behaviour legislation that she has so far ignored but which could make a real difference. When I last asked her, none had been issued in Scotland. Each incident of youth disorder should be properly recorded and the parents issued with a warning, so that when a pattern emerges, parenting orders are automatically available and used. That would ensure that parents are held properly accountable for the supervision of their children. Crucially, that would not only protect an increasing number of children from the dangers to which they are currently exposed in the community but would stop antisocial, disorderly behaviour deteriorating into serious crime.

I move amendment S2M-5608.2, to leave out from “acknowledges” to end and insert:

“notes, in relation to community safety, that since 1999 crimes and offences are up, that according to the Scottish Crime survey only one in four crimes is reported to the

police, that drug crime has increased 5.7% in the last year, that automatic early release of prisoners is not being adequately addressed and that there is a crisis of public confidence in the criminal justice system, and calls on the Scottish Executive to increase police numbers to improve levels of community policing, to bring forward an expansion of drug rehabilitation facilities and to restore clarity and honesty in sentencing in order to improve community safety and rebuild public confidence in our criminal justice system."

Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I seek your guidance. Is it in order for a member taking part in the debate—and, indeed, moving an amendment—not to take interventions when they have more than enough time so to do? Is that not the reverse of debate?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is entirely up to the member who is speaking whether they take interventions—perhaps members should remember that.

14:54

Mike Pringle (Edinburgh South) (LD): All residents of Scotland want to live in safety—that is for sure—and to have privacy, free from harassment and nuisance. All parties that are represented in the chamber will recognise that we need to try to achieve that. The question of how we do that, however, is not about who can sound the toughest or who can demonise our young people the most. What we need is a set of policies that invest in young people, reduce reoffending and put more police on the streets to tackle criminal and antisocial behaviour by people of all ages.

Let me answer some of the nonsense that is put about concerning the Liberal Democrats' position on antisocial behaviour. Parties represented in this chamber that produce literature with phrases such as

"soft on thugs, soft on drugs"

should, frankly, be ashamed of themselves. I absolutely reject that sort of pathetic name-calling approach to tackling antisocial behaviour. To tackle antisocial behaviour, the police and local communities need politicians who work together in communities, rather than politicians who resort to point scoring.

This Executive, with the Lib Dems at its heart, has delivered a record number of police, with more police officers now than ever before—up 31 per cent since 1999. The Tories cut the number of police to 14,323 in 1995, compared with the 16,175 that we have now. We now have record clear-up rates, up from 31 per cent in 1993 to 46 per cent in 2006. There has been a fall in crime: the total number of crimes recorded by the police

decreased by 5 per cent between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

We have taken action to improve the rights of victims by rolling out the victim information and advice service across the courts and introducing the victim notification scheme for victims of serious crime. Annual youth justice funding has been increased from £3.5 million in 2000 to £63 million in 2005. We have increased the criminal justice social work budget: we have increased funding for criminal justice social work services from £44 million in 2000 to £88 million in 2005.

I will highlight two superb examples of community safety partnerships, which the Executive created, working extremely well in my constituency. First, the local partnership funded a police youth action team, which works with young people in the south of the Edinburgh, trying to turn kids away from what is termed antisocial behaviour. The partnership runs a superb games club at Moredun library, which has been hugely successful in reducing the number of reports of antisocial behaviour. I held a surgery in the area yesterday, and quite a number of people mentioned how much quieter the area was since the games club had been set up.

The second example is an excellent bottle-marking initiative. It was started in the Borders, and I persuaded the police to trial it in south Edinburgh. The initiative involves the police working with local shopkeepers to mark with ultraviolet pen drinks that are usually bought by or for young people. The police can confiscate any alcohol that they find and trace it back to the shop. They have discovered that, mainly, it is not the young people who buy the alcohol, but irresponsible adults who buy it for them. Those are the people who we must crack down on.

Turning to the Scottish National Party amendment, I am pleased that the SNP has now adopted one of the five points of the Lib Dem action plan—only days after we announced it—by promising to recruit 1,000 extra police officers. I add that Alex Salmond himself has condemned Executive achievements in increasing police numbers to record levels.

The motion recognises the work that has been done by the Executive in tackling crime and the perception of crime in our communities. We need to go further, however, and as well as having 1,000 extra police, we want tougher community sentences to reduce reoffending, a crackdown on knife crime, with seven-year maximum sentences, and the involvement of young people in local youth panels so that they can change their behaviour and that of their peers.

The former Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, has supported our acceptable behaviour contract

plans; in Lib Dem-controlled Islington, he said that they were better than antisocial behaviour orders. We need to encourage our young people; we do not need curfew orders for everyone under 15, as is the policy of members of the Labour Party—talk about a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

In our party, we are proud of the role that our young people play in society. Yes, there are problems, and early intervention and working with those young people is crucial. In the end, that is what will make our communities safer.

14:59

Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab): I welcome this opportunity to debate community safety. Our approach as a Labour-led Executive has been generally welcomed by my constituents. However, we still have some work to do to meet the needs of all communities.

I conducted surveys in my constituency last summer, and I held a series of meetings during the winter months with people who said that they had issues with antisocial behaviour. That partnership approach resulted in a final meeting last week. I will highlight some of the issues that were raised. I am grateful to Cathy Jamieson for giving her time to attend—in a non-ministerial capacity—the final meeting.

The biggest concern that my constituents expressed was that they never get feedback when they report something to the police or the council. They do not know whether an acceptable behaviour contract, unacceptable behaviour contract or a prosecution has resulted. They, as I do, want to know why we do not keep communities informed about what is being done to pursue the people who affect communities with their antisocial behaviour. I believe that community reparation orders are a way in which we could inform communities. Part of such orders could stipulate delivery by the offender of notices to identified households to inform them of the punishment that had been determined by the court or the children's panel. That work should be done in daylight in visible clothing. If that means a dayglo pink jacket, so be it.

Communities could be asked to identify the areas in their neighbourhoods that they want to be improved or restored. That information could be supplied to the courts, which would use it in determining what work should be undertaken. The information would also be included in the community reparation order notification. That would go some way towards rebuilding communities' trust that something is being done and that justice is on their side.

Much has been said about the causes of antisocial behaviour—I believe that the main

cause is alcohol. In my constituency, as in any other, issues need to be addressed in respect of the off-sales sector. In my constituency, some off-sales outlets operate the challenge 21 campaign, which involves test purchasing. Some have signed up to the bottle-marking pilot scheme, which was introduced last month by Strathclyde police and East Ayrshire Council—I admit that they nicked the suggestion from Edinburgh—and some use colour-coded carrier bags to identify the shop of purchase. However, a number of outlets continue to do their own thing. We need to take tough action against those who flout the licensing laws. They need to understand the impact that their actions have on residents. It is not rocket science to work out that, if they sell quarter or half bottles of tonic wine or other alcoholic fruit-flavoured wine, the target audience is under-18s.

Our community wardens should have the power to challenge and pursue people who purchase alcohol for under 18s from off-sales outlets. There should also be greater examination of such outlets when they are licensed. We cannot ask police officers alone to undertake the duties—that is not what our communities want or need. We, as the Labour Party, should commit to having community wardens in every community in Scotland. We should extend their powers to include monitoring of off-sales shops and to giving them powers in relation to truancy, speeding and parking, to name but a few. We might even consider renaming them “police community support officers”. We should never forget the impact that community wardens have made in communities throughout Scotland and we should celebrate and build on their success.

15:03

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): There is a great whiff of electioneering, which is a pity in a debate that should be much more consensual.

I will focus on low-level crime and the fear of crime, which my colleague Kenny MacAskill mentioned. We all know the realities of the groups of people on the street who are bevvied up, who batter the wing mirrors off cars, and who are noisy and threatening, and we all know their loci—the streets, and empty store car parks and municipal car parks. We all have in-trays full of constituents' concerns about such matters. Mobile phones allow such groups to be mobile, which wastes police time because the police must chase a moving and ever-dispersing target. Communities are frightened to come out, to speak and to report incidents because they are understandably afraid that they will be victimised or their property damaged.

The SNP supported the introduction of ASBOs. They have their place, and those who issue them

mean well. However, we know that for some hoodlums—I will use that word—ASBOs have become a badge of honour and a rite of passage. To an extent, Parliament must draw back from having the highest expectations of ASBOs. They have their place, but for some individuals they are not a cure.

People's perceptions also mean that decent youngsters become stigmatised. The noisy and boisterous group on the corner will probably be considered to be part of the problem and youthful exuberance will become as feared and intimidating as the real McCoy.

I will give a brief map of the problems, the solutions to which are complex. Drinking, which has been referred to, and to a lesser extent drugs, make people lose their inhibitions and increase aggression. Fire-water fires people up. The ringleaders are the real baddies who lead groups. They have lieutenants and camp followers who gain some community recognition for being part of the team. Boredom is ever the cry of the young, and always will be, and disconnection from the community is another factor.

No simple solutions exist. We agree with some solutions that have been offered. Fixed penalties have their place, so why waste police time with drunken louts on a street corner when a fixed penalty can be issued to get that sorted? Money would be spent on penalties rather than on buying more drink. I commend the marking of bottles and whatever else it takes to stop proprietors selling drink to underage purchasers or to adults for people who are underage, as Mr Pringle said. We must have severe penalties for that.

As for education, I have previously mentioned the up to you project in the Borders, which is a mentoring project in which pupils of Peebles high school go to feeder primary schools to discuss issues with primary 7 pupils. That works for the primary pupils and the secondary pupils, who are properly trained. The project is now to be extended to Penicuik.

The minister mentioned CCTV, but that must be used in a discriminating fashion so that it picks out ringleaders and does not catch in the net the innocent or those who have just gone along for the excitement. They should be separated out and the penalties should be different. I suggest simple measures such as better lighting in some areas, so that people cannot move about in the dark.

As for boredom, the selling-off of playing fields and community centres must stop. Young people must be engaged so that their energies are properly used.

The disconnection from the community is part of life: it is part of being an adolescent. People grow apart from their communities as they grow apart

from their parents and they return as they mature. Sullen teenagehood will always exist, but it must not be destructive teenagehood. In that regard, the comments that my colleague Kenny MacAskill made about deprivation need to be addressed properly.

As I said, no party-political solution exists. If the debate becomes just a tub-thumping exercise or a bidding war, we will do communities no service whatever.

15:08

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): Christine Grahame referred to consensus. I identified with that last week, but I will not identify too much with it this week. However, I identify with Margaret Jamieson's comments about dayglo clothing and I welcome her aboard—Michael Forsyth made such proposals in 1996, when she and her colleagues ridiculed them.

I am a bit disappointed by Johann Lamont's motion. I remember her vigorous words back in 1999 and afterwards about many issues and I do not believe that we have reached the rosy state that she suggests that we are in.

I have listened to the woes of constituents from the Minister for Justice's constituency of Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, from Girvan in the south-west to Muirkirk in the north-east.

Cathy Jamieson (Minister for Justice): Does Phil Gallie accept that constituents who approach me and who have community wardens think that wardens do an excellent job of dealing with the problems of antisocial behaviour? Will he dissociate himself from the comments of Margaret Mitchell, who seeks to put 500 people throughout Scotland out of their jobs?

Phil Gallie: I regret that not one of the minister's constituents who have come to see me has mentioned community wardens. They have referred to matters such as bail legislation, which the minister and her colleagues passed, under which people who have committed serious crimes are back on the street within minutes of being charged. That is the kind of thing that people care about.

I have been to schools in the minister's constituency and I have found that the pupils are extremely concerned about antisocial behaviour. Indeed, the minister and I have shared platforms with pupils who have talked about their concerns, but community wardens were not mentioned once. Pensioner groups express concerns to which Johann Lamont's motion does not refer—we must address those concerns.

Margaret Mitchell was right to say that only one in four crimes is reported to the police. What about

all the crimes that are not reported? Such things matter.

Members have talked about people purchasing alcohol for youngsters. Complaints about people doing so have been made time and again in the past 10 years, but we have not advanced one bit towards addressing that problem, although it is well worth addressing.

Members would be shocked and dismayed if I did not refer somewhere along the line to the effect on our justice system of the European convention on human rights. Our system was once well respected throughout the world, but it has recently been turned on its head. I accept that the Tories were at fault in introducing a halfway term for prison sentences, but we recognised our misdemeanour and tried to address it in 1997. However, the Labour Party in Government and the Scottish Parliament have failed to address that misdemeanour.

The Scottish National Party's amendment hits on one or two useful issues. For example, it is right to address the burdens that the Scottish Parliament has imposed on the police. However, I say to SNP members that the police have usually gone along with Parliament's placing additional burdens on them, and that they have added to those burdens. Perhaps the SNP's amendment is not quite what it seems.

Annabel Goldie's amendment, which outlines the realities of the justice situation and antisocial behaviour in Scotland, is worthy of members' support.

15:12

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Perhaps this debate is generating more heat than light not only because we are so close to an election. It is understandable that debates on the prevalence of crime and antisocial behaviour and the resources that are available for policing always result in the kind of arguments among the main parties that we have heard.

Whatever our policy differences, we should all accept the part that social and environmental changes play when we consider the prevalence of crime and antisocial behaviour in society. We should consider not only the party politics of the current Government or previous Governments. All Governments will find such problems difficult to solve. When it came to power in 1997, the Labour Party recognised in its early rhetoric the difficulty of solving those problems when it used the slogan, "Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime." However, more action has been taken to be tough on crime than on being tough on the causes of crime.

In the past four years, there have been times when I have felt that Jim Hacker and Sir Humphrey Appleby are still with us. The arguments that have been used have boiled down to the old chestnut: "Something must be done. This is something, therefore we must do it." I say to the minister that politicians of all parties too often give in to their instinct for a knee-jerk authoritarian response, which may be good for headlines but will not be tough on the causes of crime. Many of the new measures fail to address those causes. Indeed, the tools that can successfully address the causes of antisocial behaviour and low-level crime were already available before the new legislation, although more resources were needed.

What was principally needed was not new enforcement. For example, the Executive's target to reduce the number of persistent young offenders has not been met; indeed, we have seen an increase. We need to recognise the impact not just of legislation, but of the social and environmental factors that prevent success.

Kenny MacAskill mentioned poverty and deprivation. Like him, I argue that although those factors should not be seen as excuses for bad behaviour, there are clear connections. I refer members to the words of Kathleen Marshall, the commissioner for children and young people in Scotland, in talking about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to the convention, children and young people have a right to

"a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development."

Social exclusion by reason of poverty militates against that. If our society does not provide free or affordable facilities for the development of children and young people, we will pay more in the end financially and socially. We should all recognise that.

Johann Lamont: Does Patrick Harvie accept that those who argued most strongly for the Parliament to take action on enforcement were the deprived communities in which people were under the cosh—communities that were being destroyed because the police were not prioritising their demands and interests? It is in response to their needs that many of the measures on antisocial behaviour have come about.

Patrick Harvie: I appreciate that argument from the minister, which I have heard several times. However, I argue that, although police priority for the issue was needed, new enforcement measures were not required for that to happen.

I move on to the environmental aspects, in respect of which the same authoritarian actions often take place. The urban built environment can

have a profound impact on people's behaviour. We commonly hear politicians calling for more use of closed-circuit television in problem areas, despite the fact that the United Kingdom as a whole uses more CCTV in public areas than any other country on Earth. Changing the built environment through, for example, better public lighting can have a far better impact on people's behaviour.

I will close with another comment from Kathleen Marshall. In looking at play, structured activity and all the other activities that should be available, she said that

"there should be some time and legitimate space for unstructured fun; for 'hanging around' with friends and potential friends."

That is something that young people have a right to—it is wrong to label it all as antisocial behaviour.

15:17

Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab): The trademark of this Labour-led Executive is that it has been willing to show leadership on the problem of antisocial behaviour. Far too many people have been on the sidelines of the argument concerning the various legal remedies that we have provided; for example, the SNP on the issue of dispersal orders. Its attitude has been, "Let's look and see how dispersal orders turn out, and then we'll decide whether we support them." We were willing to show leadership and say that we support the possibility of enforcement through dispersal orders. The Tories opposed the dispersal orders that have been successful throughout the country. We have been willing to use enforcement where necessary and to stand up and be counted on behalf of our communities in ensuring that various remedies are available to our constituents in the many areas concerned.

Through the debate on antisocial behaviour, and the dispersal orders that have been successful in the Dennistoun area of my constituency, I have learned about the challenges that we face with persistent offenders and the lack of disposals that are available to deal with those individuals. That is not something that members will have heard me debate as often as maybe I should have in the chamber. I have been enthusiastic about debating the enforcements that should be available, but I have been less enthusiastic about looking at how to deal with the perpetrators. However, that is the next phase of the process. We must ensure that the despair that is felt among the various authorities that deal with young people, especially young males, is dealt with, and we must be more creative in the disposals that are available.

I raise one potential controversial possibility in the belief that we must show leadership in at least

debating the issue. I call on the minister to consider using the armed forces to provide some kind of structure for those young people. Christine Grahame might say, "Oh dear" but those young people are facing spending the rest of their lives in Barlinnie. I am not saying that the armed forces should necessarily be a long-term solution, but we should at least debate giving those young people the option as a short-term solution. There is a debate to be had in communities throughout Scotland on how we deal with those young people.

I feel despair for young people because I do not think that we have spent enough time talking about how we can intervene in their lives, which lack structure and positive solutions. I ask for that debate to be had today; it is a serious issue and we have to debate it throughout Scotland.

Many people who went through the antisocial behaviour debate will have to eat humble pie. I looked at the *Official Report* of stage 3 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Bill. Douglas Keil, I think of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, was quoted as saying that police officers will not use dispersal orders and that they would not be very helpful to the police. He also said that the police have enough legal remedies available to them at the moment. That is not representative of the views of every single community police officer whom I have met during my 13 years as an elected representative. Police officers have now moved on and they recognise that a menu of options is available to them to deal with the challenges that face our communities. Now is the time for the authorities to deliver those enforcement options and to ensure that we give the majority of good, hard-working young men and women in our communities a future that they can look forward to.

I welcome today's debate and the leadership that has been shown by the Labour-led Executive.

15:22

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (Sol): First, I apologise to the minister for not being present in the chamber for the start of her speech. I was being lobbied by a group and was delayed.

I will refer to leadership, on which Paul Martin finished his speech. If Paul Martin was referring to some form of conscription, I would argue that any conscription in this country should be into—

Paul Martin: Will the member give way?

Tommy Sheridan: Sure.

Paul Martin: I will confirm my point. I am talking about persistent offenders who have no future, and about the armed forces making available some sort of structure that could ensure that we give those offenders some kind of future and some

structure in their lives. That would be better than Barlinnie.

Tommy Sheridan: I thank Mr Martin for whatever clarification that offered. I argue that the only conscription that we should be considering for our country is conscription into full-time education so that we can give as many young people as possible the chance to realise the potential that every single one of them has. That means good employment potential—apprenticeships as well as education.

I want to touch on one aspect of antisocial behaviour in my limited time and I want to ask for the leadership from the minister that Mr Martin asked for. In 79 per cent of the acts of vandalism that were recorded in 2005-06, air-guns were used. In the same year, in 57 per cent of offences of minor assault, air-guns were used and in 75 per cent of offences of serious assault, air-guns were used. Since 1999, there have been 1,154 air-gun injuries and, tragically, three fatalities—two in Glasgow and one in Bathgate. A growing proportion of all offences involving firearms is related to air-guns. In 2004-5, 43 per cent of all firearms offences were related to air-guns and in 2005-06 that percentage rose to 58 per cent.

It is quite clear to me and, I argue, to the overwhelming majority of people in Scotland that the problem of air-guns has to be tackled in the context of our overall approach to antisocial behaviour. A couple of years ago many promises were made that the issue would be tackled, but unfortunately those promises have not been fulfilled.

Three weeks ago, System 3 published the results of an independent opinion poll of more than 1,000 Scots. The poll asked the people of Scotland whether they support or oppose a ban on the sale of air-guns in Scotland. Eighty-two per cent of Scottish people said that they support a ban. Only 8 per cent opposed it; the remainder were “don’t knows”. Significantly, in cities such as Glasgow, 93 per cent of people support a ban on air-guns. In the youngest and oldest age groups—18 to 25-year olds and over-65s—the proportion of people who support a ban is 85 per cent. Among the working class—the so-called D and E group—86 per cent support a ban.

I plead with the minister to be prepared to show leadership on the question and to say loud and clear that Parliament supports a ban on air-guns and that, if Westminster is not prepared to act, the Scottish Parliament will pass legislation banning their sale.

15:26

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): I have managed to agree with part of all the speeches

that members have made—although it is stretching things a wee bit for me to say that about the two Conservative speeches. I also disagree with some comments, but it is encouraging that all members spoke honestly and had constructive things to say.

I am happy to support the motion. It is right that ministers should take pleasure and pride in elements of their policy that are working. All members will agree that the situation is patchy. In some areas the local authority, the police, the voluntary sector and so on are dealing well with disorder, but in other areas we are not doing so well. However, the ministers can take due credit for what they have done. They have set out the coalition position.

Members may have noticed that an election is looming and the parties in the coalition have recently been doing more to set out the policies on which they will fight the election. The Liberal Democrats have stressed that there should be more community police to prevent crime and disorder and to deal with it when it happens. There should be more police on the street to work with and to sort out young people. Instead of sending people to jail for short periods—which is a complete waste of everyone’s time and energy—we should have serious community disposals for them. I do not mind whether people who serve community sentences wear bright clothing, but such sentences must be seriously monitored and policed and must involve real work to improve things for the community; they must not be a soft option. That is a better approach that would release within the prison system time and energy to sort out longer-term prisoners, so that there was a chance of rehabilitating them.

We want to involve young people more in helping to deal with the problems of other young people. We should learn from systems that seem to work in other places, where young people act as a court or as assistants in judging how young people who are misbehaving should be dealt with. We should listen more to what young people have to say about their communities. As a nation, we are not good at listening to young people. Many of them are really on the ball; they are much more streetwise than I am and know what is wanted in their areas. If we work with them, we can provide them with much better chances for employment, recreation and so on. We need to take a positive attitude towards young people. Obviously, we need to deal with the minority who misbehave, but the majority of young people would strengthen our arm—they do not want to treat the misbehavers softly.

One way of creating a society in which there are fewer problems is to involve young people and another is to deal with the people who create the

problem, as the motion suggests. We have to pull both aspects together. I hope that there will be consensus on the subject in whatever Parliament emerges after the election and that we get stuck into the problem even more than we have done so far.

15:30

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): The Deputy Minister for Justice started her speech with the good news that crime is falling, and it is, under certain headings. However, when there is a 5.7 per cent increase in drug offences and a massive increase in the number of sexual assaults, no one can relax.

The minister claims—correctly—that witness appearances are well down, but prosecutions are well down, too. The message seems clear: police funding has increased, but there are still serious problems when we require the police, as I found out a couple of weeks ago when it took the police 16 minutes to answer a 999 call in the course of a violent incident.

There is not a lot of joy around. What has the Executive done about it? It introduced antisocial behaviour orders in the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004, which the Conservatives supported. As I recollect, we disputed only one section of the bill—that which allowed the police to move people out of an area.

In 2004-05—the most recent year for which statistics are available—169 ASBOs were issued. Those who were convicted of breach of ASBOs in the sheriff courts that year numbered 158. Fair conclusions can be drawn from that.

There is nothing wrong with the principle of ASBOs—far from it—but I recollect that it was recently reported that an ASBO was issued only after 33 incidents were reported at a house in Blairgowrie. Serious questions need to be asked when somebody is not locked up long before that amount of trouble occurs. Although ASBOs have a role, where people misbehave themselves consistently, the full rigour of the law should be brought to bear on them instead of the halfway house that is the ASBO.

I am frequently astonished by some of the contributions that are made in debates. I listened to Margaret Jamieson, who said that people who are doing community service should be made visible by wearing dayglo outfits. As Phil Gallie said correctly, when Michael Forsyth made the same suggestion about 12 years ago he was howled down in derision by the people on the Labour benches.

Paul Martin's suggestion of enlisting the help of the Army has some merit. Although we should

consider it, I do not know whether it is practical or politically acceptable. However, I know this: had I suggested that idea a year or so ago, I would have been called all the fascist swine of the day. It is amazing how times change.

Bill Butler: Will the member take an intervention?

Bill Aitken: No, I do not have time; I am in my last minute.

Paul Martin raised another interesting point about the disposals that are available for younger people. We have to examine the operation of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the way in which the children's hearings system can deal with people under the age of 16. I know that the minister probably feels a sense of déjà vu, but there are sound arguments for increasing the menu of disposals, as Paul Martin said, to deal with the under 16s. We have to be more realistic and imaginative at the same time.

Fixed-penalty notices might have a role, but our fear is that they represent a devaluation of crime. For example, someone can receive a fixed penalty for parking their car on a double yellow line. Indeed, some of the cases that previously might have been prosecuted have, for some time, been dealt with through warning notices, conditional offers or a cheeky letter from the procurator fiscal. We must ensure that there is not just another soft option.

15:35

Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): Once again, we have had a debate in which there have been points of agreement, the most fundamental of which has to be that a problem exists and it must be solved. I will hang the debate on that hook and examine how members' speeches have taken us forward.

I suspect that members across the chamber will agree with the reference in Mr MacAskill's amendment to

"the concern and anxiety in our communities caused by both low-level antisocial behaviour and serious and violent crime".

If we disagree—as we do on a number of issues—our disagreement is about tactics, not objectives. We should bear that in mind as this short debate draws to its conclusion.

I very much enjoyed my time on the Communities Committee, when the Deputy Minister for Justice was my ever-helpful and ever-supportive convener. Although we disagreed fundamentally about many things, it was always—if eventually—with a degree of good grace.

Johann Lamont: On your part.

Stewart Stevenson: On my part, as the minister has just reminded me. Even if I have not always agreed with her, I am pleased to see that her diligent endeavours on this matter have been rewarded with ministerial office. She is of a calibre that at least justifies such an appointment.

Christine Grahame: You have embarrassed her.

Stewart Stevenson: Have I really? That would indeed be a novel experience.

In response to Margaret Mitchell's remark about pay-as-you-go justice, many of us feel that, if we could arrange to abstract £50 from the back pocket of a visiting drunk on George Street on a Saturday night to prevent him from becoming even more drunk and violent, it would serve a decent community purpose. Even if it meant that he had to go to the police station on Monday morning to get the change from his fine, it might be okay. That proposal is not yet on the agenda, but—hey ho—it might work. Pay-as-you-go justice might be a good slogan for a policy that serves the public interest.

The now-absent Duncan McNeil described Mike Pringle as

“soft on thugs, soft on drugs”.

I do not go that far, but I am glad that Mr Pringle is coming into line with our 2003 manifesto commitment to put an extra 1,000 police officers on the streets. However, as we will need to distance ourselves from the Liberals in some meaningful way, our new manifesto will have to call for an extra 1,001 police officers.

Margaret Jamieson is absolutely correct to say that alcohol is our biggest problem. Drugs are a huge criminal justice problem, but they do not pose the same kind of problem that alcohol poses on so many streets in Scotland's rural and urban areas.

As far as community wardens are concerned, they were adopted early on in my constituency and, as the minister has heard me say before, they have been a good thing. However, I would take the Executive's words on this issue a bit more seriously if they were supported by more long-term funding.

When my colleague Christine Grahame referred to “sullen” adolescence, Mr Aitken gestured at me as if I should be included in that description. I plead guilty to the charge. I was not a very nice adolescent—and I suspect that I am not the only one in the chamber whose first brush with alcohol came before they turned 18. Indeed, I see a few members nodding. However, the character of juvenile drinking has changed out of all recognition since the tentative experiments of my youth.

As for Phil Gallie, we will miss his passion, even as we rejoice at not hearing some of his

arguments.

In relation to Paul Martin's suggestion, it would be unfair to inflict on the Army people who clearly cannot live up to the high professional standards that we now expect of that body. If the Executive had supported a replacement for the Airborne Initiative, which filled precisely the niche we are talking about, we would be more prepared to respect what it had to say.

Legislation is no substitute for resources. It may support action or it may inhibit it. We need more resources and perhaps a little bit of legislation. It has been a useful debate, so let us move on.

15:40

The Minister for Justice (Cathy Jamieson): The fact that we have had what could be described as a lively debate shows just how important community safety is to communities throughout Scotland.

I will respond to some of the points that members have made, but first I say that the Executive motion does not, as has been suggested, represent an attempt on our part to paint a rosy picture or to suggest that everything has been resolved. We lodged the motion because we know that there is a huge amount of work still to do. Of course we must recognise how far we have come, because that is one way in which we can empower communities to stand up to the antisocial behaviour that has plagued them for far too long.

As has been outlined, the Executive has empowered communities by giving a lead. I have experienced that for myself on visits throughout Scotland, and it is not just in Ayrshire, which Margaret Jamieson spoke about, that people have welcomed what I have done. They have told me that they know that we cannot solve the problems overnight, but that dispersal orders, antisocial behaviour orders and noise nuisance orders are all beginning to work and are having an impact on their communities. On Monday, I met some people in the east end of Glasgow, in Paul Martin's constituency, whom I had met before to find out what difference dispersal orders had made. Front-line police officers agreed that dispersal orders had made a difference.

I say to Margaret Mitchell, with all due respect, that she was absolutely wrong to use the word “squander” in relation to the spending of resources on the introduction of community wardens. That is a shocking accusation to make about the work of 500 people throughout Scotland who are the eyes and ears of the communities in which they are based and who—as the police will confirm—are working hand in hand with the police.

Community wardens are not police officers, of course, and we made no attempt to suggest that they are, because they do a different job. I went to a conference of most of Scotland's community wardens and they told me that they could do more on behalf of communities. They said, "Give us more powers and we will use them." That proposal is well worth considering.

I know that people have differing views on Paul Martin's suggestions. This week, I met a young man from the east end of Glasgow who told me that he had been involved in antisocial behaviour. He put his hands up and told me that he had got in with the gangs and had been involved in a range of activities. The people from Glasgow City Council's antisocial behaviour team worked with him and got him involved in the Army cadets for a short time. That helped to shape his views and get him back on the right track.

Of course it is right that we should deal with the causes of crime.

Patrick Harvie *rose—*

Cathy Jamieson: I say to Patrick Harvie that it is not fair to suggest that the Executive has not examined the causes of crime, as the work of the violence reduction unit and the activities of the antisocial behaviour teams throughout Scotland demonstrate. As well as dealing with enforcement measures, they are considering how to get to the root of the problems and to carry out preventive work.

Patrick Harvie: I hope that the minister acknowledges that my case was that insufficient—as opposed to zero—attention has been paid to the causes.

In relation to the minister's previous point, is it not possible that the young man whom she described would have had a less successful outcome if engagement with the antisocial behaviour team had been compulsory rather than something that he chose?

Cathy Jamieson: I thank Patrick Harvie for his clarification.

Sometimes there are circumstances in which we have to compel young people to undertake programmes or to do other things to change their behaviour. Of course it is right and proper that we try to get young people to turn their lives around voluntarily. However, we do those young people no favours if we simply allow them to cross the line time and again and cause damage in communities without putting something in place—whether we are talking about antisocial behaviour orders or conditions in supervision orders—to make them realise that there are consequences to their actions. Of course we need to tackle the causes of antisocial behaviour, but for the good of the individuals who are involved in such behaviour

and the wider community we must also tackle the aspects of people's behaviour that cause problems.

I think that Scotland's commissioner for children and young people circulated to MSPs a paper that suggests an approach that supports pro-social behaviour as opposed to one that deals with antisocial behaviour. Throughout Scotland, important work is going on—often supported by community wardens and police officers—to provide diversionary activities for young people. Over the weekend, I met young people who are involved in the twilight basketball initiative, which is funded by money that has been seized from the proceeds of crime and returned to the areas that have been hardest hit by drug dealing and violent crime. During an exciting final between a team of young people from Govan and a team of young people from Easterhouse, I had a chance to chat to parents from Springburn, who have seen the initiative provide a positive activity for young people in the community. They said, "It's not money and resources we want from you. Just give us local parents a bit of support to continue the initiative and give young people some hope." Such initiatives are part of our approach to antisocial behaviour. There is no single, isolated strand to our approach, as some people have tried to suggest; we have taken a comprehensive approach to dealing with problems.

Finally, I sound a cautionary note, because I heard comments during the debate that were not particularly helpful. Members seemed to be starting a bidding war around the number of extra police officers who are needed—whether it is 1,000 or 1,001. The issues that our communities face are too serious to permit us to get into a bidding war about numbers. There are issues about police visibility and about reassuring people and getting the police to do things in neighbourhoods. However, the issue is not simply the numbers; it is about how we free up police officers—

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): Speak to the police.

Cathy Jamieson: A member said, "Speak to the police," from a sedentary position. I speak to the police as often as other members do—if not more often. The police say that we could relieve them of certain burdens and get other people to take on the work. That will not be a soft option or policing on the cheap.

I hope that members accept that, in the areas where community wardens are operating, people think that they are doing a good job, and that in areas where there are no community wardens, people want them. I want the funding to continue, so that there are more wardens throughout Scotland.

Environment

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-5607, in the name of Richard Lochhead, on the environment.

15:48

Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP): Last week, the High Court in London delivered the devastating judgment that the United Kingdom Government's decision to pursue a programme of new nuclear power stations is unlawful. I know that all members will want to congratulate Greenpeace on pursuing that action in the UK High Court and doing us all—not just in Scotland, but in the UK—a tremendous favour.

The High Court judge deemed the decision illegal because there was no proper consultation process, as was promised in the UK Government's 2003 energy white paper. The judge humiliated the Government when he said that the consultation was “seriously flawed”, “manifestly inadequate” and “unfair”, and that the Government had provided no information on the real costs and risks associated with the building of nuclear power stations in the UK. The case is, of course, reminiscent of the case of the dodgy dossier that Tony Blair produced before the Iraq war, when he decided on the outcome before he had justified the policy.

The judgment vindicates what the Scottish National Party and many others in Scotland have said: the consultation that the Government undertook—if we can call it a consultation—was a complete and utter sham. It was simply an excuse for Tony Blair to back his cronies in the nuclear power industry in the UK.

The judgment is another humiliating blow to the Government's nuclear policy. The Government's adviser the Sustainable Development Commission said last year that nuclear has no role in meeting the UK's or Scotland's energy needs and no role whatever in tackling climate change.

The Government's amendment is disappointing, as it avoids the big issue. The Scottish people expect the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish ministers to take a stance on the issue of future nuclear power stations in Scotland. It is utterly cowardly of the minister not to mention nuclear power or express a view as to whether it is a good or bad thing for Scotland. The people of Scotland expect the Scottish Parliament to take a stance on the issue. They do not want new nuclear power stations to be built in Scotland and they feel that there is no need for them.

Our small country of 5 million people is a very lucky nation. We are blessed with an array of cleaner, safer and cheaper alternatives to meet our future energy needs and to fulfil our commitment to tackling climate change at the same time. We have hit the energy jackpot yet again, through having many of Europe's wind, wave and tidal resources, among others. We welcome yesterday's announcement from ministers—albeit it was eight years late and only 70 days before polling day—that they will back wave energy generation in Scotland. That is a step forward, but we have taken our time over it and we could have been much further forward in implementing renewables technology if ministers had got their act together. If they had put just some of the energy and enthusiasm into promoting renewables in Scotland as the UK Government has put into promoting nuclear power, we would be a lot further forward.

The Government's record in Scotland does not stand up and it represents a lukewarm response to the need to promote renewables in Scotland. We had yesterday's announcement of support for the wave energy industry only because of the wake-up call when the Portuguese got in before us. Technology that was developed in Scotland was deployed commercially in Portuguese waters before we could put it in ours.

There is a £50 million fund for renewable energy projects, but it has been held for years in London by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets. Although the Labour-Lib Dem coalition Government in Scotland says that promoting renewables is a huge priority for Scotland, that pot of money has not been touched in the past few years. All our ministers have to do is draw down that £50 million and start investing it in promoting renewable energy technology in Scotland.

Energy efficiency has a crucial role in the debate but, as we speak, we are still waiting for the Government's promised energy efficiency strategy for Scotland, which is at least one and a half years late. We have been promised the strategy time and again in the past 18 months but now, 70 days before the election, we are still waiting for it.

During the transition period in which Scotland moves towards becoming a renewables nation in a few decades, we must harness the technologies that are available in Scotland today. We must harness the expertise that we have on our doorstep and play to Scotland's strengths. The offshore industry in Scotland, which is much maligned by members of some parties, has a crucial role in the transition from where we are today to a renewables economy. Talisman Energy Inc's massive offshore wind project in the Beatrice field, which will be the world's first deepwater offshore wind farm, is tremendously exciting for

Scotland and we must support it as much as we can. BP and its partners propose to build the world's first hydrogen power plant with carbon capture in Peterhead in north-east Scotland, which would be another world first. We must ensure that we do not miss the boat and that the UK Government is on board.

The Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Allan Wilson): Mr Lochhead's latter point is interesting. I have noted his party leader's comments in the press about the subject. Does Mr Lochhead know how much BP demands in public subsidy for the Peterhead project to go ahead? How does he propose that we should foot that bill? Would the taxpayer or the consumer meet the bill?

Richard Lochhead: The key problem is that the UK Government has postponed a decision on the matter. We must decide now and get behind what is a massive opportunity for Scotland's energy future. That is the key, but the UK Government, and Gordon Brown in particular, have decided to postpone the decision and BP has put the project on hold. That is bad news for Scotland. We must get the go-ahead if we are to reduce Scotland's emissions and tackle global warming. Doosan Babcock Energy Ltd in Renfrew wants to develop world-leading clean coal technology in Scotland but, yet again, the Government in London is delaying decisions on support for the technology.

The key point is that global warming is a threat here and now. It is a real and present danger facing Scotland. The energy sector is Scotland's biggest contributor to the harmful emissions that cause global warming. We must clean up our energy industry in Scotland, but nuclear energy is not the answer. We must scotch the myths. Nuclear energy is not reliable. As we speak, Hunterston B is closed down and it is not producing energy but, of course, the lights have not gone out in Scotland, which shows that we do not need nuclear energy at present.

Nuclear energy is not carbon free: drilling for uranium causes lots of carbon emissions. Nuclear energy is certainly not a clean industry: for the past few decades, nuclear waste has been produced by the nuclear sector in Scotland. There is no safe solution to nuclear waste in Scotland. The minister should face that reality and dump any commitment to producing even more nuclear waste in Scotland. We should be supplying our communities from renewable energy sources, not sending nuclear waste convoys through their high streets.

We do not have time to wait for nuclear energy. If we supported its construction, the first nuclear power station would not be up and running until 2017-18 or even later.

I conclude my speech in this short debate on nuclear energy and its relation to our energy needs and our environment by saying that we have to take the right decisions now. Future generations will depend on this Parliament having taken the right decisions now. We can have a win-win situation in Scotland. We can make the most of clean energy technologies and of our renewables potential. That could create thousands of new jobs and could meet our energy needs for centuries to come. It would also make a disproportionate contribution towards tackling global warming and towards the global effort to tackle climate change. I commend the SNP's motion to the chamber.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the recent ruling by the High Court in London that declared the UK Government's decision to back new nuclear power stations illegal due to a failure to consult adequately; recognises that the judgement is a further blow to the UK Government's pro-nuclear policy, and rejects the case for new nuclear power stations in Scotland in favour of developing our nation's enormous renewables and clean energy potential which is the quickest, most effective, safest and less expensive energy option for tackling climate change.

15:56

The Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Allan Wilson): We have just heard the usual litany of misrepresentation of the Executive's approach to renewable energy and our position on nuclear power. After all the debates that we have had in this chamber, I would have thought that even Richard Lochhead would have a grasp of our position, even if he does not know how much his party's promises to Peterhead would actually cost.

At the moment, nuclear power is a significant part of our energy mix. Scotland will need a replacement for the generating capacity that is provided by our current stations—which, if she is to be taken at her word, Roseanna Cunningham would close tomorrow. We need a sensible debate on how we can achieve that replacement. The Executive's position is clear: we will not support the further development of new nuclear power stations while waste management issues remain unresolved. What could be clearer than that?

That is the position in Scotland. However, for the avoidance of doubt, let us be clear about the position in England. The SNP motion perhaps implies that the recent ruling by Mr Justice Sullivan condemns nuclear power. That is not the case. The ruling related to the adequacy of consultation by the UK Government on nuclear power. Our amendment reflects the true position.

Richard Lochhead: The First Minister has repeatedly said that the report of the Committee

on Radioactive Waste Management would indicate to him whether a solution had been found to dealing with nuclear waste. What is the position of the minister and the First Minister? Did the report provide them with a solution?

Allan Wilson: I have already outlined the Executive's position. Our policy on new nuclear power stations was made clear in response to the Department of Trade and Industry's energy review, and it will be set out again in the UK Government's proposed white paper, which I am reliably informed will be produced shortly. The white paper will, I am sure, also recognise the huge potential of renewable energy in Scotland not only to meet our own needs but to contribute to the UK's climate change objectives. We cannot compartmentalise the fight against climate change by using national boundaries—that is an example of the futility of the nationalists' position.

Scotland has tremendous renewables potential—equal to 10 times our peak demand. We also have the skills and technology that are necessary for a successful renewables sector. Our own targets are way ahead of those of the rest of the UK and those proposed by the European Commission.

As has been referred to—and, indeed, welcomed—we announced this week that, in 2005, 18 per cent of Scotland's demand was met by renewable energy. We set that target for 2010. We are determined to meet our target of 40 per cent by 2020.

Hydro power and onshore wind are the principal sources of renewable energy today, and they have further potential. For larger cases, the Executive is taking action that could help to reduce the number of stages in the consent process. That is a key issue for staff attention. Only last week, I referred to the issue in response to a question from John Swinney.

However, onshore wind and hydro are by no means the only options. In Scotland, we have the scope to move into other areas. We are actively promoting energy from marine, biomass and hydrogen sources. We have invested in the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney, which is a world-class facility for testing wave and tidal devices, as well as in the offshore wind project in the Moray firth. The key driving factor behind that growth has been the renewables obligation, which is a world-leading market mechanism for promoting renewables technology.

I would say much more if more time were available. We continue to work towards ambitious targets for sourcing our energy from a balanced energy mix. Some have said that that should exclude nuclear power. I do not believe that to be the case. I say to those people that, unless they

support Roseanna Cunningham's view that all nuclear power stations should close tomorrow—which they do not—they must recognise that energy supply is not a simple issue and that it does the Scottish people no favours to pretend that it is. Together with the UK Government, the Executive will continue to work to ensure that Scotland has a secure, affordable and low-carbon energy supply.

I move amendment S2M-5607.3, to leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert:

"notes the ruling by the High Court in London regarding the UK Government consultation on energy; notes that the DTI has accepted the judgement and will consult further; believes that the way ahead for energy in Scotland is to deliver on the Scottish Executive's energy policies; further welcomes the announcement by the Executive that it has already met its 2010 target of 18% of Scotland's electricity from renewable energy; welcomes the Executive's support for nine marine power projects, including one set to be the world's largest, and its commitment to the world-leading European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) in Orkney; notes that the achievement of the Executive's renewable energy targets has been through a mix of renewable technologies, including the major Blacklaw windfarm constructed on a former open-cast coal site generating 140MW; notes that projects for the future include the substantial Glen Doe hydro power project, world-leading offshore wind development and significant biomass energy schemes, and believes that Scotland can achieve its future renewables targets if it is supported with determination and consistency by the Executive."

16:01

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):

It is nice to get back to discussing the good old subjects: energy, and nuclear power's place in it, is one that we have discussed many times. However, I do not intend to dwell too much on nuclear power. I restate the Conservative party's position that we are not prepared to see the lights go out in Scotland. If that means taking tough decisions about replacing existing generating capacity in Scotland, we are prepared to do so.

Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Alex Johnstone: No thank you.

Where does that leave us in relation to the SNP motion? The SNP has lodged what can only be described as an opportunist motion—an attempt to raise a subject that is not within devolved control and to exploit it to the best of its ability. I suppose that it is entitled to do so if it sees fit. How do we address the issue in the Scottish Parliament? The right thing for us to do is to pose one or two questions to the SNP. What does it say about the general requirements that we have for anybody in this Parliament to be a responsible Government in the future and to deliver for the real needs of the Scottish people?

The one thing that we can be absolutely sure of is that a regular, reliable and affordable supply of electricity is absolutely essential to the well-being of Scotland's people in the long term. If we are to have high-quality public services, which we all think are important, we must be able to grow the economy and generate the resource that that requires. If we go to work on a Monday morning and there is no power when the switches are flicked, the economy will not generate the wealth that we require.

What is worse is that those who already suffer from fuel poverty in Scotland will suffer most if the power is switched off.

Richard Lochhead: Will the member give way?

Alex Johnstone: No. It is all very well for those of us who have the wealth and resources to depend on renewable energy to assume that we will manage to deal with the odd day when the power is not on. The real problem is that those who live on the 20th floor of a tower block in one of our major cities and have no alternative but to use electricity might find themselves in a very difficult position one March or February morning.

Ms Rosemary Byrne (South of Scotland) (Sol): Will the member take an intervention?

Alex Johnstone: No, thank you.

The SNP has brought this subject to us again. We want to hear more about what it would do to ensure that we do not require nuclear energy—if that is what it believes. At the moment, the SNP is more determined to talk about this, and is not prepared to address its primary priorities. We must address the issue of how we deal with the difference between what we can generate through the dependence on intermittent sources of power and what we cannot. That means that we need to look at our energy requirements in the context of a great deal of diversity, to which the Labour Party amendment refers, but also to account for how we will address the gap.

Clean coal technology is an option that we should pursue. The Conservative party is happy to make a long-term commitment to the idea that clean coal technology has a future. We also believe that carbon capture techniques are important and should be promoted. However, it is interesting that the Peterhead proposal is being raised yet again in this debate. I worry that the proposal to produce hydrogen at a plant in Peterhead involves technology that is a generation away. Even if we can produce hydrogen on a commercial scale, it is too valuable to burn to generate electricity once again. It must be part of a developed hydrogen economy that, at the moment, we are not in a position to support. We must consider the longer-term aims and objectives in that regard.

It is important that we consider Scotland's energy needs. We must take the issue seriously and take a balanced and broad approach. It is disgraceful that the SNP has sought to score political points by simply attacking the nuclear industry in Scotland once again.

I move amendment S2M-5607.1, to leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert:

"notes the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that human beings are, with a 90% probability, responsible for accelerating climate change and believes that this report simply reinforces the need for urgent action; therefore welcomes the Conservatives' commitment to a climate change Bill to introduce annual targets and their call for carbon capture and storage to be put on an equal footing with other low-carbon energy sources; believes that we need a broad-based strategy of energy production for future energy provision in Scotland, and further welcomes the Scottish Conservatives' proposal for a Scottish eco-bonus scheme to incentivise households, communities and small businesses to install modern energy-creating and energy-saving technologies that will have the triple benefit of cutting their energy bills, reducing CO₂ emissions and giving a boost to new small-scale renewable technologies."

16:06

Shiona Baird (North East Scotland) (Green): Many environmental threats face Scotland, but few pose such a dire threat as climate change. We all know that it is happening, what causes it and what needs to be done. Emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases must be cut by around 90 per cent over the next few decades if we are to have any chance of avoiding the worst consequences of a rapidly changing climate.

We agree with the bulk of the SNP motion. We agree that nuclear power is not the way forward. It is expensive, unsafe and leads to significant carbon emissions of its own. We, too, welcome the recent High Court ruling that upheld Greenpeace's legal challenge of the United Kingdom Government's sham energy review consultation.

Allan Wilson: We have heard tributes to Greenpeace's pioneering campaigning on environmental protection. Does Shiona Baird agree with Patrick Moore, the former leader of Greenpeace, who, in today's *Daily Express*, argues that nuclear power is the only way forward in terms of combating climate change?

Shiona Baird: We must recognise that there are quite a few supposed environmentalists who have changed their views. However, all their arguments can be undermined by the facts. There are myths and there are facts and it is the facts that we need to concentrate on.

The new Labour way of doing business seems to be to decide what it is going to do, carry out a figleaf consultation exercise to offer a veneer of respectability and then arrive, as if by magic, at

the number that it first thought of. However, we now know that such an approach is not only profoundly unethical, it is also unlawful.

We also agree with the SNP that Scotland has an enormous potential for renewables. I urge Alex Johnstone to listen to my next statement. The Executive's figures show that Scotland could generate more than 200,000GW hours of electricity each year if we took full advantage of the renewables that are available to us. Given that we consume only around 35,000GW each year, it is clear that there need be no gap in the generation of electricity.

However, the SNP's assertion that developing our renewable resource is the quickest, most effective, safest and least expensive energy option ignores energy efficiency, which is disappointing. Just as with waste management, in relation to which there is a reduce, reuse and recycle hierarchy, there is an energy reduction hierarchy. First, we must eliminate as much waste as possible. Secondly, we must ensure that the conversion of energy is carried out as efficiently as possible. In parallel with that, we must generate a clean supply of renewable energy.

Scotland could reduce its overall energy demand—I am talking about total energy, not just electricity—by between one quarter and one third if we put our minds to it. However, energy efficiency continues to be the poor cousin of more glamorous energy issues, despite the fact that it offers so much at so little cost. Research from the UK Government's performance and innovation unit showed that most energy efficiency measures are available at a net negative cost. Energy efficiency does not cost money; it saves money. That is why we felt that we had to amend the SNP motion.

Renewable, decentralised energy and energy efficiency must go hand in hand. As we focus on renewables we must, equally, consider the enormous gains that energy efficiency can make. Only then will we achieve the kind of energy future that Scotland needs and deserves.

I move amendment S2M-5607.2, to leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert:

"recognises that developing a sustainable energy policy is one of the most serious environmental challenges currently facing Scotland, given the need to reduce our climate changing emissions; believes that Scotland's energy future is best served by a combination of energy conservation, energy efficiency and clean decentralised production of energy; notes that nuclear power remains an expensive, dangerous and fundamentally unsustainable power source that is by no means carbon-free and that the long-term storage of radioactive waste continues to pose an insurmountable challenge to the nuclear industry; welcomes therefore the success of Greenpeace's judicial review of the UK Government's flawed consultation on nuclear power and hopes that a properly conducted consultation exercise will arrive at a more sustainable outcome; calls on the Scottish Executive to prepare and

submit a timely response to the new UK energy review consultation which highlights the environmental, social and economic benefits offered by energy conservation and efficiency and renewable energy in Scotland, and calls on all political parties that oppose nuclear power to publicly rule out coalition with any party that refuses to rule out new nuclear build in Scotland."

16:10

Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD): Apart from its welcoming the High Court judgment, of which I will say more later, the SNP motion is one that I could endorse. The difficulty that I have with the SNP is its somewhat erratic record on some environmental matters. It talks the talk on green energy but, with a few honourable exceptions, consistently opposes wind farms in its own backyards. The SNP supported the Edinburgh trams, then opposed them. It supported the Edinburgh airport rail link, then opposed it. It supported the Glasgow airport rail link, then opposed it. It supported the Borders railway, then criticised it. However, its motion ends with a sensible statement on energy and climate.

It is interesting that all that the recent High Court ruling delivers is more consultation. I am totally frustrated by the time that has been wasted on consultation on nuclear energy to try to get the answer that Tony Blair wants. More consultation will take more time, and it continues to divert Government from pressing ahead with renewable energy, cleaner technologies and energy efficiency. The Sustainable Development Commission's report on nuclear power, published in March 2006, states that

"there is no justification for bringing forward plans for a new nuclear power programme at this time."

Building state-subsidised nuclear power plants will produce vast quantities of waste that we do not know how to deal with, put a lot of our energy eggs in one terrorist-vulnerable basket and result in more expensive decommissioning 20 or 30 years hence. Nuclear decommissioning will cost at least £0.25 billion a year for at least the next three generations.

Bruce Crawford: On that point, on which I agree with the member, will she take an intervention?

Nora Radcliffe: I am sorry, but I have got a lot to get through in four minutes.

Most important, building state-subsidised nuclear power plants will sap investment from the renewable energy industry.

Scotland has the resources, the marine energy expertise and the manufacturing capability to develop a world-beating marine energy industry. Microrenewables also offer huge potential to reduce household bills and the demand for

centrally generated electricity. The Scottish Executive set itself the target of producing 40 per cent of electricity from renewable resources by 2020, and has met the 18 per cent interim target three years early. In the past three years, we have invested around £100 million in renewables and energy efficiency support—ahead of Ireland or any other part of Britain. Through the Scottish community and householder renewables initiative, we have provided support for more than 600 small and microrenewables projects. Nicol Stephen has announced £13 million of funding for marine energy projects in Scottish waters, mostly in Orkney, where the world's largest commercial wave power farm is being developed. We have developed a £20 million fund for public sector energy efficiency, delivering £70 million of savings and making significant cuts in emissions.

Renewable, decentralised energy and microgeneration are important. Demand is just as important as supply. In energy efficiency, Liberal Democrats believe that the public sector must lead by example by going carbon neutral. We propose to extend the energy efficiency fund to deliver even greater energy savings and to cut carbon emissions still further. Climate change does not give the nuclear industry a way back. Nuclear power is too expensive and unsafe, and no solution has been found for dealing permanently with radioactive waste. A decentralised energy system, working hand in hand with renewable energy sources and more efficient energy use, would tackle head on the problems of climate change, pollution, energy security and cost.

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): This is a short debate and I ask for speeches of a maximum of four minutes. Even then, I am not sure that I can accommodate all members who wish to speak. I call Maureen Watt, to be followed by Maureen Macmillan.

16:14

Ms Maureen Watt (North East Scotland) (SNP): It is the two Maureens. Thank you, Presiding Officer.

As this Blair Government thankfully nears its end, it will be remembered in a negative and discredited way for a few things, not least taking Britain into an illegal war. It will also be surrounded by the suspicion of cash for peerages. The decision by Mr Justice Sullivan just last week must also rank among those scars on our democracy.

As others have said, Greenpeace is to be congratulated in pursuing its legal action and in highlighting the Government's failure to disclose key information on the new generation of nuclear power stations, mostly to do with the disposal of nuclear waste and the financial costs. Alex

Johnstone should be reminded that nuclear power meets only 3.6 per cent of our total energy demand. Under any nuclear new-build programme, the first reactor would not come online until 2018 at the earliest, with the main delivery of the programme not happening until around 2025 to 2030. That is not in this generation.

If there was no further delay on the Peterhead carbon capture project, that could be up and running by 2009, at a projected cost of \$1 billion. If the minister wants to know, the money for that could come from stopping sending our troops to Iraq, and perhaps also from the nuclear weapons programme.

A 4 per cent saving could also be achieved by insisting on energy conservation measures on the part of housebuilders and businesses, which should make it a priority for their workplaces. It is a relief that the Executive has at last managed to decide to support the wave and tidal industries and to take Scotland another step on the way to becoming a renewable energy powerhouse, confirming the huge potential for carbon-free energy generation that exists around Scotland, rather than allowing projects to go to Portugal.

Perhaps Scottish ministers could now turn their attention to chivvying Gordon Brown into supporting carbon capture technology and to getting behind the Peterhead project. The project will convert natural gas to hydrogen and CO₂. The hydrogen will be used as clean fuel for a 350MW power station, and the CO₂ will be pumped into the North sea oil reservoirs for the purposes of increased oil recovery and, ultimately, storage. It is disingenuous for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that he has to compare Peterhead with other projects, which are nowhere near as far down the road. Carbon capture and storage clearly have the potential to add to the growth strategy of Scotland and to reduce our CO₂ footprint.

Aberdeen, the north and the north-east are clearly ready and willing to be the global energy hub, with the development of the Aberdeen science and energy park, an energy academy and an energy technologies institute all in the pipeline or ready to go. That is exciting news for Scotland, and we do not need nuclear power.

16:18

Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The Scottish National Party seems to be committed to renewables only until the going gets tough and its members think that they might lose a vote or two. For example, the SNP has completely sold the pass on wind farm development. It initially called for an upgrade of the Beaulieu to Denny

power line, but now, since the matter has become contentious, it has sold the pass on that, too. Richard Lochhead used the word “cowardly.” That is a word to be applied to the Scottish National Party.

I want to make my commitment to renewable energy perfectly clear. I believe in the well-tested technology of onshore wind power, which SNP members did not mention any more. Richard Lochhead did not mention it in his speech; he mentioned offshore wind power, but not onshore wind power. The 40-plus turbine wind power station at Farr was opened a few months ago, but not one SNP Highland member attended, not even the constituency member. Does that show that the SNP is committed to renewable energy? I do not think so.

I believe in wind power, and I believe in large commercial wind farms that are appropriately sited. I also believe in community wind farms, both large and small, which will provide energy and an income for villages, townships, housing schemes or islands. The island of Gigha is a good example, and it is unfortunate that hysteria has prevented some other communities from following suit. I know that the wind does not always blow, but it blows in Scotland more than in most places, and we can invest in other renewables to fill the gap.

I do not think that we will need a new generation of nuclear power stations in Scotland. Yesterday, the Deputy First Minister made the most significant announcement on investment in marine energy research and the development of a commercial wave power farm west of Orkney. Richard Lochhead described that as “a step”, but I am sure that it is the start of an enormous bonanza for Scotland, not just in producing energy but in manufacturing the devices that will harness the waves and tides and exporting those and our expertise worldwide.

Wind and wave power have particular application in the Highlands and Islands, but if we are to be the powerhouse of renewables, we must be able to deliver power to the grid. I would like to hear all SNP members who are in favour of producing renewable energy in the Highlands and Islands say loudly and clearly that they support the necessary upgrading of the grid that will carry that power from Beaulieu to Denny.

Richard Lochhead: Will the member take an intervention?

Maureen Macmillan: No.

I agree that we can have subsea cables down the east and west coasts and underground land cables when necessary, but that will require a lot of visible engineering work. Members cannot demand that cables are run underground and then object to the building of a large converter station.

Subsea and underground cables carry direct current, so they cannot link to further wind or marine turbines en route without appearing above ground and being converted to alternating current at a converter station. I contend that that would be much more destructive to the visual landscape than pylons.

We need to upgrade our grid connection now, whether or not we are producing renewables. The present line is no longer fit for purpose and is coming to the end of its life. We will have bigger pylons, but fewer of them. To me, that seems to be a good trade-off.

I challenge Opposition MSPs. They cannot be in favour of renewables but against wind power. They cannot be in favour of renewables but against the upgrading of the grid. Too many of them are condoning by their silence a movement which, like the lairds in the days of the establishment of the hydro board, wishes to preserve the Highlands in aspic. I refer to people who want to walk the hills but do not care to see the population of the Highlands and Islands grow and prosper. They do not wish to see the industry that would spring up, or the jobs for our young people in Kintyre, the Western Isles, Caithness and Easter Ross.

We desperately want the engineering and construction work that real investment in renewables will bring. Those areas of Scotland are already being affected by global warming through floods and storms. Global warming will affect other countries even more through drought and rising seas.

Richard Lochhead: What about nuclear power?

Maureen Macmillan: The member should stop shouting, for goodness' sake.

I urge members to speak up for wind turbines, for marine power and for the necessary upgrading of the grid to carry the power. I would sooner have a handful of pylons at Drumochter than see South Uist disappear under the sea.

16:22

Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): Maureen Macmillan told Richard Lochhead to stop shouting, but our ears are sore from her shout—it was certainly not a speech.

The Tory and Executive amendments do not mention nuclear power. I wonder whether it is because there is an election coming along that nuclear power has been airbrushed out of the amendments. It is well known that the majority of Scots oppose nuclear power. Where is the courage of the Executive's convictions? Does the Executive now implicitly support the building of new nuclear power stations? Is that the new

reality? Are the Liberals now so beholden to Labour that that is their position too?

Allan Wilson: Is the member proposing that Scotland's or the UK's energy needs should be determined by public opinion polls?

Bruce Crawford: In that case, I wonder why Mr Blair put the road charging petition on the 10 Downing Street website and sought people's views. Why would he do that if he does not listen to what people say? The minister should get real.

The Executive's amendment is anodyne in the extreme. It "notes" this, that and the next thing, but it contains no ambition, no forward look and no commitment to the future.

Scotland does not want new nuclear power stations. We do not want to leave our children with a dangerous inheritance of nuclear waste.

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

Bruce Crawford: In a moment.

Scotland's technology powered the world into the industrial revolution. Today, we must strive to lead the world again with the technological solutions for the green energy revolution.

Alex Fergusson: Does the member agree that nuclear waste already exists and that we are unlikely to make it safer by, in effect, mothballing the industry?

Bruce Crawford: I agree entirely that nuclear waste already exists. Alex Johnstone talked about nuclear power and the effect of energy prices on the fuel poor. We should remember for a minute that decommissioning has cost us between £56 billion and £70 billion and that a further £20 billion to £30 billion will be needed for long-term management of waste. That is £1,600 per person in the country. If that is not an impact on the fuel poor, I do not know what is.

Nuclear power is not a solution to global warming. Even with the most optimistic build rate, a programme of building 10 new nuclear power stations would deliver a cut of only 4 per cent in CO₂ emissions by 2024. That would be too little, too late to stop global warming. We should stop the nonsense that nuclear power will somehow be the solution to global warming.

I congratulate the Executive on its announcement yesterday about wave power and tidal power. I wonder what Stephen Salter makes of that after all these years. The technology is basically exactly the same as that which he pioneered all that time ago. It is a pity that developing it has taken so long.

As for what Maureen Macmillan said, there is good practice and bad practice on wind farms.

Three wind farms are in the Stirlingshire area. Anyone who goes up the A9 can see the impact of the Braes of Doune wind farm on the landscape. However, at Craigengelt, an embedded system that is not connected to the grid has been planned for the future. That is a good example of a wind farm. A wee bit further afield, a good example is in Fintry, where a community owns a wind turbine. There is good practice and bad practice and we will support the good practice.

16:27

Rosie Kane (Glasgow) (SSP): Today's debate is timely given that, on Monday this week, Frances Curran, Patrick Harvie and I joined the Greenpeace International ship the Arctic Sunrise to sail to Faslane to view the horror of the other side of the nuclear industry—weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons cannot exist without nuclear power. The products of nuclear power are used to create such monsters. That must be kept at the front of the debate about nuclear power today and in the future.

I cannot even begin to guess the Westminster Government's motivation on nuclear power, but is it a coincidence that it plans to increase the number of nuclear power stations in line with an upgrade of our nuclear weapons systems?

Our Government is lining up in a sabre-rattling exercise with Iran on the same issue. It claims that Iran's move towards nuclear power is a cover-up for the introduction of nuclear weapons. That sounds like the pot calling the kettle black.

Like many members, we welcome Mr Justice Sullivan's decision at the High Court of Justice in London in response to Greenpeace's challenge. He states clearly in his decision that the so-called consultation exercise was seriously flawed. It is a disgrace, but not a surprise, that the Government deliberately held back important documents.

Most people throughout the country oppose the new wave of nuclear power stations. That opposition would be strengthened if the truth—the whole truth—was in the public domain. We must listen to the public and to polls on the matter, which is of huge interest and will be a huge expense to the public.

The question is whether the Scottish Executive will exhibit the same clandestine behaviour as the Westminster Government and whether it will keep the public in the dark. I reckon that it will. We see it in the Executive's amendment, in which, as several members have said, Allan Wilson does not even mention nuclear power. If that is not ignoring the elephant in the room, I do not know what is.

If forward planning and care for the environment and the planet's future had been a priority

decades ago, the billions that have been spent on subsidising the nuclear industry could have been invested in clean energy and in initiatives to reduce energy use. We still have the opportunity to do that and we could begin today if every member in the chamber sided with the vast majority of the Scottish people and voted for an end to nuclear power—but I reckon that the foot of Westminster is placed firmly on Executive members' necks, and that they will not support the people of Scotland, the environment, the future of the country or the planet.

In the wake of Mr Justice Sullivan's decision in favour of Greenpeace, the Government must conduct a review, but it should take the opportunity to move away from the nuclear option. It should learn from the mistakes of the past, which are symbolised by the tonnes of nuclear waste that are littered around the country, which will poison the planet for the foreseeable future. The Conservatives mentioned that waste.

Many members subscribe to the views of Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and many have built careers on signing their petitions and wearing their badges. It is incumbent on those members to put their money where their mouth is, to vote to end the nuclear power project and to thank Greenpeace for taking the issue to court. If members do otherwise, they will let down the people of Scotland and the planet. The Parliament should fire a warning shot: it should say that we will not tolerate nuclear power of any scale in Scotland, in any circumstances.

16:30

John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab): It is a pleasure to listen to Rosie Kane, Richard Lochhead and other members kowtowing to rulings by higher authorities in London. The English court passed a judgment on a narrow point relating to detailed procedures for consultation. The problem in question can, should and must be corrected, but the judgment has absolutely nothing to do with the big issues of global warming, carbon emissions and energy supply. The nationalists are on to an entertaining debating point that concerns the ingenuity of London lawyers, but tatties cannot be cooked on consultation documents and carbon emissions cannot be cut by ruling out proven sources of low-carbon base-load electricity. That is the matter that we should be addressing.

As an old lag who is about to leave the Parliament—at last, members might say—I urge colleagues who will stand for election again to focus on the big issues that require serious consideration. It is simply not good enough to express opposition to difficult and controversial

proposals such as the building of wind turbines, pylons and nuclear power plants when we know that our people need secure electricity supplies for industry, their households and their day-to-day lives. People expect politicians to take the necessary decisions to ensure that there are safe and secure supplies of electricity. They would not forgive us if we drifted into a situation in which power supplies could fail.

Reducing CO₂ emissions and providing secure electricity supplies for the future are the key issues. Secure electricity supplies are essential to keep the lights on. We must have reliable, modern generators and minimise our dependence on unreliable and expensive imported oil and gas. CO₂ emissions cause global warming. Therefore, we must scale down the burning of oil, gas and coal in power stations, which means that we must do more than pay lip service to our desire to achieve the objective of supplying 40 per cent of power from renewables in Scotland. Renewable energy cannot be increased if people continue to block renewable projects. In that context, I strongly endorse everything Maureen Macmillan said about upgrading the grid that will carry power from Beaulieu to Denny.

The plan is for 40 per cent of our power to come from renewables, but what about the remaining 60 per cent that will have to come from conventional sources? People in my constituency know quite a lot about electricity. We have a big wind farm in the Lammermuirs and 1,100MW of coal-fired generation at Cockerzie, where vast quantities of Russian coal are burned and a hell of a lot of CO₂ is emitted. That plant is due to be decommissioned in the very near future. We also have 1,200MW of nuclear power at Torness. The immediate question is what to do when Cockerzie power station has to close—500 jobs and more than 1,000MW of electricity cannot be replaced by magic. Increasing generation from renewables and better energy efficiency are extremely important, but such things will not be enough to meet peak demand once our older stations at Cockerzie and Hunterston B are closed.

It is time to get real. We must start planning for a new base-load power station to provide the electricity that Scotland will need in the very near future. Supply, cost and CO₂ considerations mean that it is unlikely that there will be a new fossil fuel station. The inescapable logic, now that there is scientific agreement about the safe permanent storage of nuclear waste, is that there should be a new nuclear station. The only serious question is whether a new nuclear plant and the associated jobs will be located in Scotland or whether we will export those jobs and make Scotland depend on nuclear energy imported from England.

The time has come for politicians to catch up with the common sense that has been shown by

people in East Lothian, Caithness, Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire, who know the nuclear industry well and would welcome new nuclear investment. The days of knee-jerk opposition to nuclear power have passed. I strongly support the minister's amendment.

The Presiding Officer: I apologise to Rosemary Byrne, who has not been called to speak.

16:35

Chris Ballance (South of Scotland) (Green): I agree with John Home Robertson that the people of Caithness know only too well what the nuclear industry means, following the clean-up around the coast there and the abysmal behaviour of UKAEA at Dounreay.

The debate started with a welcome for the ruling Greenpeace obtained in the High Court of Justice on the Government's consultation on new nuclear power. I highlight what Tony Blair said when he was asked whether it would put his plans for new nuclear power stations on hold:

"No. This won't affect the policy at all. It'll affect the process of consultation, but not the policy."

Does that not say it all about the Labour Party's view on what makes a consultation? According to the Labour Party, a consultation is something the Government does once it has decided what policy it is going to put into effect. It is a complete sham. It is not just the Labour Party in London that is saying that: it has been echoed up here. The Labour Party, with its Lib Dem colleagues, conducted a consultation on planning rights. The vast majority of people, who called for a third-party right of appeal in planning, were simply turned into a footnote and disregarded. Consultation means nothing according to this Government. That is deeply disappointing—and it is the important thing that we got out of the recent judgment.

Shiona Baird mentioned the one thing that is badly missing from other parties' amendments—energy efficiency. The Government's own performance and innovation unit has estimated that 30 per cent of the energy we use could be saved through energy efficiency. That means that we could have the same living standards and production standards but use 30 per cent less fuel to get there. Is that not something that we really ought to put first?

In Lockerbie, in the region that I represent, E.ON is building a biomass plant. That is excellent news, but the plant will stand alone: there is no consideration of combined heat and power with it. Lockerbie academy could be heated free of charge for the next 30 years, but almost 60 per cent of the heat energy from the fuel will go straight up the waste stack. Where is the planning in that? Where is the intelligent energy policy in

that? Where is the energy efficiency? It is simply not there.

We have heard—from Alex Johnstone, for example—about the so-called energy gap, but electricity from nuclear power plants meets only 8 per cent of Scotland's total energy needs. The amount of electricity that is produced in that way is trivial—it is very small. The fact that, for a large amount of time, both Hunterston B and Torness power stations have been offline without the lights going out shows that to be the case. We have also heard nuclear power referred to as a low-carbon option, but that completely disregards the processes of uranium mining and enrichment, the building and decommissioning of nuclear plants, and dealing with nuclear waste. In fact, we do not yet know how to deal with nuclear waste, but we know that dealing with nuclear waste will produce carbon emissions.

On the other side of the argument we have the renewables option. Scotland is the Saudi Arabia of wind and sea. We have the biggest resource of renewables, per head of population, in Europe.

Rosie Kane referred to the Greenpeace ship Arctic Sunrise. It is worth mentioning that it runs entirely on recycled chip fat—something that we tend to pour down the drain or throw away and lose completely.

One of the issues that the Green party's amendment addresses is whether the Lib Dems will oppose nuclear power and then join a pro-nuclear Labour Party, just as they supported TPRA in their manifesto but voted it down in the chamber.

If we embrace the massive savings that energy efficiency offers, we can save money, reduce carbon emissions and rid Scotland of the menace of nuclear power. It is not a difficult choice; it is just a question of political will.

16:39

Mr Jim Wallace (Orkney) (LD): First, I congratulate the Scottish National Party on bringing this motion before Parliament today and giving us such an early opportunity to welcome the announcement by Nicol Stephen and the Executive of the £13 million investment in marine renewables, much of the activity of which will be focused on my Orkney constituency.

Of course, the Executive's contribution to renewables does not stop there. I am sorry that Bruce Crawford does not think that the Executive's amendment is ambitious. It refers to the major Blacklaw wind farm; it notes future projects, including the substantial Glen Doe hydro power project; and it mentions offshore wind developments and biomass energy schemes. It

shows the diversity of renewables to which this Executive is committed.

I will say a bit more about marine renewables. With the Pelamis devices from Ocean Power Delivery, we have the opportunity to have the biggest wave power plant in the world. Scotrenewables, a small company in my constituency, is run by Barry Johnston, whom I saw at the weekend. It has exciting proposals for the use of tidal power, and now we have an opportunity for them to be taken forward. Of course, jobs can come from that project, as well as from further investment in the European Marine Energy Centre.

The nationalists can never see a silver lining without looking for a cloud. Richard Lochhead said that this ought to have been done eight years ago. If he looks at where the grants go, many of the activities and developments that are going to take place are linked up to the European Marine Energy Centre. That was not built eight years ago. The nationalists have a cavalier attitude to what they would do. They would just spend the money regardless of whether they were spending it properly. Time and again they show why they are not a credible party that is fit for serious government.

Yesterday's announcement also pointed to the fact that we are five years ahead and have hit our target of 18 per cent of our energy being generated from renewable sources by 2010. I remember, when I was on the front bench, the targets that we set being laughed at. We were told we could not achieve them. We have achieved that target five years ahead of time. I believe that the next target, of 40 per cent by 2020, will be comfortably achieved—and I am pleased to say that my party, the Liberal Democrats, has set a target of 100 per cent of electricity being generated from renewable sources by 2050. I believe that, with the political will, that can be delivered as well.

Much of the focus of today's debate has been on nuclear power. Allan Wilson set out very clearly the Executive's position of no further investment in new nuclear power stations while the problem of nuclear waste has not been resolved. As he has done consistently in the past, John Home Robertson backed the case for nuclear power and, as ever, the Tories nailed their colours to the nuclear mast.

Several members, including Nora Radcliffe, referred to the Sustainable Development Commission and the fact that its report in March last year came out against nuclear power. It made several arguments about safety issues and decommissioning, and expressed concern about technology being locked into a centralised system of nuclear generation that would damage the

investment we want to see being made in renewables.

I conclude by congratulating Maureen Macmillan on an inspired and passionate speech that highlighted, again, a lot of the inconsistencies that are coming from the nationalist benches, and which raised the very important point about transmission. It is all very well being in favour of—or strongly supporting—renewable developments in the Highlands and Islands, but we have to get the electricity from where it is generated to where it is needed. I would welcome any assurances that the minister can give about the steps that are being taken to ensure that the renewable electricity that we can generate can be delivered to the bulk of the population.

16:43

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con): It was not until late yesterday afternoon, or last night, that I discovered that I was to speak in this debate. Although I was not exactly thrilled at the amount of notice given to me by my esteemed friend and colleague, Bill Aitken, I was pleased to be asked to take part in a debate on the environment. I believe that we should take every opportunity to debate the environment—at that stage, I was very pleased that the Scottish National Party had lodged a motion on the issue. Members will understand that, at that stage, I had not seen the motion, which seems to be more about energy than about the environment. While I fully admit that the two are linked, they are not entirely the same.

The SNP has been somewhat duplicitous and opportunistic in the way it has brought this motion to the chamber. I was looking forward to debating whether we are going the right way about developing renewable energy. I was looking forward to debating whether Chancellor Gordon Brown's recently implemented £10 surcharge on flights is really a beneficial environmental measure or just another stealth tax—I think it is the latter. I was looking forward to debating the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report and some of its conclusions, such as the terrifying prospect of summer sea ice in the Arctic ocean disappearing by the end of this century, which is only 93 years away.

I was looking forward to a positive motion and debate, in which I would begin by declaring my entry in the register of members' interests that shows that I receive an income from a wind farm development, part of which is situated on land that I am fortunate enough to own. However, I do not think that I need to do so, because, in the context of a debate on the environment, the terms of the SNP motion that is before us today are something of a disappointment.

There are positives, but in my opinion they lie exclusively in the first two amendments that are printed in the *Business Bulletin*. I disagree with Bruce Crawford. I expected the Executive amendment to be a bit over the top on self-congratulatory rhetoric—I was not disappointed—but at least it is positive in tone. I am sorry that the Green amendment fell into the SNP nuclear trap, but I suppose that separatists should always stick together. I commend Alex Johnstone for the positive nature of his amendment. I hope, but doubt, that it will get the support it deserves. I ask Chris Ballance to note that the Conservative amendment mentions energy-saving technologies and, therefore, energy efficiency. I support it because it reinforces the Scottish and national Conservatives' absolute commitment to addressing the problems of climate change as a major priority.

Alex Johnstone made our position on nuclear power clear. I reiterate my view that it would be irresponsible to close the door on nuclear for ever. It must remain an option for the balanced production of energy that we all agree is needed, even if we have differences on how that balance should be achieved. I say to Jim Wallace that if that is nailing my colours to the mast, I am happy to bang in another nail.

Chris Ballance: Will the member give way?

Alex Fergusson: I am sorry, but I do not have time to take an intervention. This is a desperately short debate.

I am delighted that Conservative members are being positive on this issue. I am delighted that David Cameron is calling for a climate change bill and that George Osborne has outlined a future Conservative policy that includes a shift towards taxation on behaviour and practices that damage the environment. He has stated:

"Not only can environmental protection go hand in hand with economic progress, but it must. To persuade the whole world that we should act against this threat, we must show them that they need not put their quality of life at risk."

I commend that type of positive political leadership, as I commend the amendment in Alex Johnstone's name. It is in marked contrast to the whingeing negativity of the SNP, which is encapsulated in its motion.

16:47

Allan Wilson: I will deal, first, with a point that Jim Wallace and Maureen Macmillan made very effectively. It relates to the old problem of the SNP trying to face two ways at the same time. SNP members consistently talk green in the chamber but turn yellow outside it when a populist bandwagon passes by. We are all used to the SNP saying different things to different people in

different parts of the country—that is its stock in trade—but one cannot disconnect the generation of electricity from its transmission and supply to the market. That means that one must have a position on grid upgrade. I will address Jim Wallace's point directly. Only yesterday I was in discussion with the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets in London about developing solutions to the problem, which is fundamental to the success of the renewables revolution in this country.

Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): Did the minister fly to London to do that?

Allan Wilson: As a matter of fact, I did. I see no problem with that.

I asked the SNP shadow environment spokesperson about the cost of its policy. He could not answer my question, but Maureen Watt did so on his behalf, with a quotation of circa \$1 billion for the cost of the Peterhead project. I asked simply whether that cost would be met by the consumer or by the taxpayer. Mr Lochhead may say that that is a ludicrous question, but it is fundamental and it is at the heart of the SNP policy of dismantling the single UK energy market.

If the SNP dismantles the single UK energy market, it will fall to the Scottish taxpayer or consumer to cover the cost of the cross-border subsidy for transmission loss or connections with the UK consumer or taxpayer base. The SNP has no comprehension of that and not a clue about what it would cost the Scottish taxpayer or consumer to foot that bill.

Chris Ballance suggested that the UK consultation on the energy review was a sham. Although there are lessons to be learned from the outcome of the judicial review, it is not true to suggest that the entire energy review was anything other than a genuine, evidence-based exercise to find solutions to the long-term challenges of climate change and security of supply. It is a sham to suggest that there is a single, easy answer to those questions. It is simplistic to pretend that there is.

It is also untrue that if existing nuclear capacity were shut down—that is what Roseanna Cunningham would do tomorrow—there would be no impact on carbon emissions. In fact, if our existing nuclear capacity were replaced with new nuclear power stations, carbon emissions from the electricity sector would be around 15 per cent lower than they would be if it were replaced with gas-fired power stations—and, obviously, even lower than they would be if it were replaced by coal-fired power stations. I ask Richard Lochhead whether he believes in all seriousness that extending the renewables obligation certificate mechanism to carbon capture would lead to a marketplace disincentive to investing in our renewable-energy industries.

Energy policy must be about meeting two major challenges: tackling climate change by reducing CO₂ emissions and delivering secure, clean energy at affordable prices as our dependence on imported energy increases. There is no single answer to the complex questions that we face—the debate is not whether to have nuclear power or no nuclear power. The Executive's policies are demonstrably delivering some of the necessary action already, by reducing fuel poverty, developing renewable energy and improving energy efficiency.

16:52

Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):

The SNP motion, which calls for Scotland to go forward with an enormous renewables and clean energy programme rather than go down the nuclear route, is simply rooted in the fact that Scotland, like every other country, must set ambitious targets to reduce its CO₂ emissions. If we are to make a 2.5 to 3 per cent reduction per annum our target, as the SNP is committed to doing, we will have to ensure that we have in place the cleanest forms of power and that we undertake the least-polluting forms of activity.

Much of the debate is about the production of electricity, which represents 20 per cent of total energy use. That means that we are talking about a fairly narrow area in which to make changes. Energy efficiency can be carried out on a much wider scale. Nevertheless, we want to focus on the way in which we use the production of electricity as an example to the rest of the world.

If the cost of investing in a diversity of sources of electricity is in question, how can we say that the £13 million that has been invested in the Pelamis schemes in Orkney is anything other than a small step when the creation of a new nuclear power station is priced at about £2.5 billion? We have not been told how much it cost to create the nuclear industry. After all, in the past, when the state invested in nuclear power, the taxpayer paid for it; now, it is being put out to the market. In this day and age, Scotland should be investing the resources in the long term and putting more money into renewable enterprises than the current Government does.

Allan Wilson: Will the member give way?

Rob Gibson: I might let the minister in later. I want to develop my point about costs.

The Executive has simply not factored into its equation the fact that we will not know the total costs of the nuclear industry until the clean-up is complete. Under the model that the UK Government has put together, with the Scottish Executive's agreement, the decommissioning of Dounreay will be paid for by a programme that is

quite simply flawed. For example, it relies partly on money from reprocessing at Sellafield. It is ridiculous to suggest that we can use the proceeds from producing waste to clean up other waste and, indeed, such a proposal jeopardises the proper decommissioning work at Dounreay. If the 500 jobs at Dounreay are lost—I stress that I am not scaremongering, because I do not think that that will happen—it will be a major blow not only to that economy but to a workforce that, after carrying out a smooth decommissioning, could use its skills to harness new energy sources.

That clean-up, which is at the very heart of the nuclear equation, could cost a heck of a lot more money. However, we do not know how much more. In fact, the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency does not even know the answer to that question. In a letter that we have received, the agency says:

“Although the individual plans are extremely detailed, there is still a significant degree of inherent uncertainty in the future cost estimates that underpin the nuclear provisions.”

That suggests that the costs of decommissioning could be far beyond our current estimate of £70 million to £90 million. That enormous amount of money, which could be used to develop renewable energy, will be wasted.

Many negative remarks have been made in the debate. Members responded to our motion as if our targets were not ambitious and as if our proposals did not represent a sensible, safe and responsible approach for Scotland. Alex Johnstone even complained about the fact that we were having a nuclear debate. The Tories had a nuclear debate last year, so what is the problem with our having one?

In a typical example of negative Liberal campaigning, Nora Radcliffe said that the terms of our motion were quite right, but then told the chamber that she will not vote for it. As for the Labour Party, it cannot talk about facing both ways. The front bench says yes to nuclear energy, whereas Maureen Macmillan says no. Labour members are totally split on the way forward. In response to Maureen Macmillan's rant, there has been no attempt to take the Scottish people with us down the nuclear road—

Members: Oh!

Rob Gibson: Well, there have been a lot of attempts to take them down the nuclear road, but no attempt to create a Scottish energy strategy that they can buy into. How many communities in the Highlands and Islands have switched off renewables because of the lack of such a strategy?

Allan Wilson: How much would it cost the Scottish consumer to dismantle the single market in UK electricity supply and transmission?

Rob Gibson: We will be able to answer that question only when we find out what the nuclear industry costs to set up and how many billions of pounds need to be spent on decommissioning. The Executive has not told us any of that. The point is that that money could be spent on renewables.

Any renewables strategy must focus on how we get such energy from where it is produced into the market. The SNP motion sets out our commitment in that respect. We will introduce a Scottish energy strategy, which will be based on renewables, and we reject completely the nuclear option.

Business Motion

16:59

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-5612, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 28 February 2007

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Executive Debate: Future of Scotland's Organic Farming

followed by Business Motion

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 1 March 2007

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Executive Debate: Dealing with Illegal Money Lenders

11.40 am General Question Time

12 noon First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm Themed Question Time—
Justice and Law Officers;
Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.55 pm Stage 3 Proceedings: Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Bill

followed by Procedures Committee Debate: 10th Report 2006, Scottish Commission for Public Audit

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 7 March 2007

10.00 am Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Executive Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Scottish National Party Business

followed by Business Motion

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business
 Thursday 8 March 2007
 9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Protection of
 Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Bill
 11.40 am General Question Time
 12 noon First Minister's Question Time
 2.15 pm Themed Question Time—
 Finance and Public Services and
 Communities;
 Education, Tourism, Culture and
 Sport
 2.55 pm Conclusion of Stage 3 Proceedings:
 Protection of Vulnerable Groups
 (Scotland) Bill
followed by Legislative Consent Motion: Serious
 Crime Bill – UK Legislation
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business—[*Ms Margaret*
Curran.]

Motion agreed to.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):

There are seven questions to be put as a result of today's business. In relation to this afternoon's debate on the environment, if the amendment in the name of Allan Wilson is agreed to, the amendments in the names of Alex Johnstone and Shiona Baird will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S2M-5608.1, in the name of Kenny MacAskill, which seeks to amend motion S2M-5608, in the name of Johann Lamont, on community safety, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 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 (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, 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)
 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)
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (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)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)

Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 23, Against 85, Abstentions 9.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The second question is, that amendment S2M-5608.2, in the name of Annabel Goldie, which seeks to amend motion S2M-5608, in the name of Johann Lamont, on community safety, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)
 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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, 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)
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)
 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)
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, 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)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)

Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 15, Against 79, Abstentions 23.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The third question is, that motion S2M-5608, in the name of Johann Lamont, on community safety, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, 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)
 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)
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, 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)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 67, Against 43, Abstentions 7.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament acknowledges the good progress being made towards making our communities safer; notes that crime is falling and violent crime is at its lowest level since devolution; welcomes the record numbers of police officers now helping to prevent and detect crime; notes that antisocial behaviour legislation has made a real difference, with effective use being made by the police and local authorities of new measures contained in the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004; welcomes work by community safety partnerships to focus resources on tackling crime and disorder in response to local community needs, and supports the Scottish Executive's determination to keep working with communities and to make further progress with its partners towards ensuring that decent and law-abiding people can feel safe in their homes and on their streets wherever they live.

The Presiding Officer: The fourth question is, that amendment S2M-5607.3, in the name of Allan Wilson, which seeks to amend motion S2M-5607, in the name of Richard Lochhead, on the environment, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, 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)
 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)
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)

McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, 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)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 67, Against 35, Abstentions 15.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The amendments in the names of Alex Johnstone and Shiona Baird fall.

The next question is, that motion S2M-5607, in the name of Richard Lochhead, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, 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)
 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)
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)

McMahon, 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)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Swinburne, John (Central Scotland) (SSCUP)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)

Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 67, Against 35, Abstentions 15.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament notes the ruling by the High Court in London regarding the UK Government consultation on energy; notes that the DTI has accepted the judgement and will consult further; believes that the way ahead for energy in Scotland is to deliver on the Scottish Executive's energy policies; further welcomes the announcement by the Executive that it has already met its 2010 target of 18% of Scotland's electricity from renewable energy; welcomes the Executive's support for nine marine power projects, including one set to be the world's largest, and its commitment to the world-leading European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) in Orkney; notes that the achievement of the Executive's renewable energy targets has been through a mix of renewable technologies, including the major Blacklaw windfarm constructed on a former open-cast coal site generating 140MW; notes that projects for the future include the substantial Glen Doe hydro power project, world-leading offshore wind development and significant biomass energy schemes, and believes that Scotland can achieve its future renewables targets if it is supported with determination and consistency by the Executive.

Transport (North-east Scotland)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S2M-5523, in the name of Nora Radcliffe, on making our transport fit for purpose. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament, recognising that transport is integral to the economic, environmental and social well-being of communities, commends the joint initiative of the Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum and the City of Aberdeen Environmental Forum in organising a public meeting on "Making our Transport System Fit for Purpose" on 1 February 2007 in Aberdeen, to inform and facilitate the debate on the future of transport in the north east; notes that the meeting is being held during the current Nestrans consultation on its proposed regional transport strategy, and, in light of the Stern and Eddington reports, believes it is important that the people of the north east think carefully about making the transport system that serves them fit for purpose in a world in which the threat of climate change has become a factor.

17:07

Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD): I thank the members who signed the motion and members who have remained in the chamber for the debate, and I repeat my commendation of the Aberdeenshire environmental forum and the city of Aberdeen environmental forum for their facilitation of a thorough discussion of the proposed north-east regional transport strategy. There is much cynicism about consultation, but the more people take the trouble to get involved, the more effective and real consultation becomes.

Transport opens up opportunities for work, leisure activities and socialising. Lack of transport or access to transport—whether physical or to do with cost—denies people some or all of those opportunities. Transport is important in our response to climate change, because it contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Exhaust emissions also have an effect on human health. Therefore, it is evident that in considering transport strategy a wide range of factors, some of which are conflicting, must be balanced against each other.

I represent a constituency in an area that makes a disproportionately large contribution to the economy but which is logistically quite remote from markets, so I am acutely aware of the economic imperative for the fast, effective movement of goods and people in and out of the area. The recent gauge enhancement of the railway from Elgin to Mossend, to accommodate modern freight wagons, will take goods off the roads and is very welcome.

However, two recent developments are of concern to my constituents. First, Great North Eastern Railway's record in maintaining a service along the entire length of the east coast main line has been less than perfect. GNER had a tendency to dump Aberdeen passengers in Edinburgh when the service was held up on its way north. When the east coast main line franchise is relet, it must be made clear that the east coast main line runs from London to Aberdeen, and if necessary that should be underlined by swingeing penalties if service obligations are not met.

Secondly, my constituents are concerned about the dogma-driven way in which the Competition Commission is dealing with the joint venture between Megabus and Scottish Citylink Coaches to supply what I and my constituents think is a good, reasonably priced, reliable and frequent service between Scottish cities and the south.

That reasonably priced and well-used service would be better guaranteed through undertakings, rather than through divestiture and an attempt to promote a guarantee of reasonably priced services through what I perceive to be non-existent competition. There is no way in which there could be competition on the routes, which is why undertakings would be a far better way to deliver the services. To be perfectly honest, the Competition Commission should butt out.

I have two local issues on which I ask the minister to prompt action, both of which involve railway bridges. I thank the minister for visiting Gordon to see the issues for himself. The first is Inveramsay bridge, which interrupts the main trunk road between Scotland's third and fifth cities. It is ludicrous to have a traffic-light-controlled single carriageway on a main trunk road. The issue is a long-running one that we wish to be resolved. The main trunk road in question is the A96. I reiterate my long-term ambition to have that road dualled along its length, with bypasses of towns such as Keith. I request an assurance that nothing will be done as part of works along the length of the road that will in any way obstruct the achievement of that in the long run.

That brings me to an issue that was raised at the public meeting in Aberdeen to which my motion refers. There was a plea that the weighting that is given to the carbon cost of transport projects in the Scottish transport appraisal guidance mechanism, which the Scottish Executive uses to weigh transport schemes, should be considered. I simply put that issue into the equation.

The second railway bridge that concerns me and which creates a bottleneck is the one at Southerford Road in Inverurie. The minister has seen for himself how that constriction creates backed-up congestion in the centre of the town. Aberdeenshire Council has developed an

integrated transport plan for Inverurie that would incorporate a bus and rail exchange, but which requires the bridge to be dealt with. I would appreciate any assistance that the minister can give in bringing Network Rail to the table to discuss the development.

As I represent a largely rural constituency, I am acutely aware of the limitations of poor or expensive transport connections and the dependence of many rural dwellers, whatever their income, on the private car. Road-user charging, if properly applied, can temper the wind to the shorn lamb. If we lift the one-size-fits-all taxation on the private motorist and shift the tax burden on to motorists in accordance with how much they contribute to congestion, that would benefit the rural car user and would be an excellent way forward.

17:13

Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP): I endorse Nora Radcliffe's points about the Competition Commission's actions in relation to the bus services that link Scotland's cities and the south and her heartfelt plea about ensuring that whichever company runs the east coast main line franchise following the retendering exercise that is under way does not slide out of its responsibilities. I also endorse what she said about the long-term ambition to dual the A96, including the completion of the bypasses that have long been sought along the route, at Keith, Fochabers and Elgin.

However, I was a little disappointed that some of the more contentious issues relating to transport in the north-east were not covered. The minister might like to comment on some of the problems in my constituency at the Haudagain roundabout. Perhaps he can clarify his statement last week that improvements to the Haudagain roundabout might well be on their way after the next stage of the Scottish transport appraisal guidance exercise. Will improvements to the Haudagain roundabout depend on the regeneration of Middlefield? Are the two inextricably linked? If so, will Executive money be available for the regeneration of Middlefield, thus allowing improvements to the Haudagain roundabout? Can the minister guarantee today that the Haudagain roundabout will be addressed by the Executive before detrunking takes place as a result of orders relating to the Aberdeen western peripheral route?

What progress is being made on a number of other important issues relating to the modern transport proposals that were jointly agreed by the councils? We hoped that the proposed improvements in infrastructure would go ahead.

Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): Will the member take an intervention?

Brian Adam: I would like to develop my point.

Four years ago, the First Minister came to Aberdeen and announced the Aberdeen western peripheral route; nothing has appeared. Members on all sides of the chamber have talked about crossrail for Aberdeen; nothing has appeared. We are long on consultations and long on consultants' reports but very short on delivery. If we are to have the modal shift that many of us would like, we have to start to see things happening on the ground.

There is a very successful park and ride in Ellon, in Nora Radcliffe's constituency, but a less successful one in Bridge of Don and a much poorer one in Kingswells. However, there is no sign of the long-proposed park and ride on the A96, which will be key to delivering improvements in public transport to the north-west of the city. As far as I am aware, there are no proposals for anything to the south or west of the city. We cannot expect people to accept modal shift if we are not providing alternatives.

I would particularly appreciate an answer from the minister about the Haudagain roundabout.

17:18

Shiona Baird (North East Scotland) (Green): Nora Radcliffe's motion is very interesting. It is fair to say that transport is the Achilles' heel of climate change. Politicians talk a good game on progress in addressing climate change in other sectors, but there seems to be no acceptance of the inconvenient truth that building more roads and new runways increases traffic and pollution.

Transport—and particularly aviation—is the fastest growing source of damaging pollution. The greatest challenge will be in helping people to make the change from private to public transport. The absolute priority has to be massive investment in public transport.

The NESTRANS strategy has some useful aspirations but in no way can it be classed as

"a transport system which enables a more economically competitive, sustainable, and socially inclusive society."

With the AWPR and air route expansion as its priorities, NESTRANS is failing on a basic understanding of the three strands of sustainability. The first is the economy. Congestion costs UK businesses £20 billion a year, but congestion in Aberdeen will be cut by a mere 2.5 per cent. Any relief on outer roads will be short lived, as traffic is predicted to rise by more than 20 per cent. The statement in its strategy that land-use policies need to "lock in" the benefits of

the AWPR is nothing short of open permission to developers to move in, which will greatly increase congestion.

Brian Adam: Will the member take an intervention?

Shiona Baird: I am sorry, but I have quite a bit to get through. On the environment—the second strand—NESTRANS does at least acknowledge climate change, but only in the context of air quality in Aberdeen, which has an impact on health. That is true, but it also has a lot more of an impact. What planet is NESTRANS living on?

The third element is the social strand. The statement that the AWPR is trying to be inclusive is nonsensical, given that more than 30 per cent of the population do not have access to a car and the road will split communities, creating barriers where none existed before.

Nora Radcliffe referred rightly to Nicholas Stern's review, which was explicit in saying that doing nothing is not an option. However, I doubt whether Nicholas Stern ever considered that we might be stupid enough to plan to build more roads and runways in the light of so much evidence of the impact that climate change will have on the economy and on every aspect of our lives.

Sir Rod Eddington was also clear on road building. He acknowledged that large-scale road building is not the answer to our transport problems. He stated clearly that the transport sector, including aviation, should meet its full environmental costs. He said:

"all transport users should meet all their external, economic, social or environmental costs."

Jeremy Purvis: Will the member take an intervention?

Shiona Baird: No. I need to keep going, or I will not get my speech finished in time.

What message are we MSPs prepared to send out? The motion asks that

"the people of the north east think carefully about making the transport system that serves them fit for purpose in a world in which the threat of climate change has become a factor."

I agree, but I urge MSPs who, of all people, should be setting the right example, understanding the future and showing the vision to take action, to show leadership, scrap the plans for the AWPR and invest that money in long-term sustainable travel options. Leadership implies going forward in the light of all the evidence that we now have. It is not about going backwards to solutions that are outdated and have proved to be ineffective.

Nora Radcliffe and her north-east colleagues must recognise the contradictions in her motion.

NESTRANS is not providing the north-east with the right strategy for the 21st century, with its road and air expansion priorities. The inconvenient truth is that we have to accept the implications of the second part of her motion—that is where the evidence lies. I do not want my grandchildren to wonder why we ignored the evidence and continued to trash the planet.

17:22

Mr David Davidson (North East Scotland)

(Con): I congratulate Nora Radcliffe on securing the debate. I say to the Green party representative that I do my bit for the environment. I use the train, when it is on time—to pick up Brian Adam's point.

Given that Nora Radcliffe said that the debate is about a transport system that is fit for purpose, I think that there are a number of issues on which boxes need to be ticked. The first is access to an adequate transport system. What about the disabled? What about the situation in which two young mums with pushchairs cannot travel together on a bus because only one of them can take a pushchair on? What about two people in wheelchairs who occasionally travel together but cannot both get on a bus? Those issues are about the demands that are placed on the transport system. Nora Radcliffe mentioned service agreements. People are worried about such things. The public transport system should be accessible, so that people do not have to take their car.

We welcome concessionary fares, but there are large parts of Scotland in which the buses do not run. We need to do more. The Minister for Transport has a responsibility to ensure that there are community transport systems that are flexible—they would not necessarily serve the same route every day of the week but would build flexibility into the system.

We have had debates on this before, but we need to talk about the safety of school transport, which is a major issue. Another issue is what we do with luggage on certain vehicles. Little things such as through-ticketing are major aspects of usability.

Nora Radcliffe made a couple of points about the Competition Commission. There are areas where there cannot be competition and we need to look at models for getting over that, particularly where there is a subsidy from the public purse.

I agree whole-heartedly with Nora Radcliffe about the dualling of the A96 and the nonsense of having traffic grind to a halt because we have a single-lane bridge with a traffic light on a main arterial route. However, we might disagree tomorrow morning in the debate about road user charging. It was interesting to hear her comments

about that, which I am sure will be rehearsed by the minister tomorrow.

On infrastructure, I cannot believe the comments that Shiona Baird has made tonight. If she wants to build the economy, she has to find ways by which we can improve the transportation systems as well as meeting the environmental targets.

Shiona Baird: Will the member give way?

Mr Davidson: Not at the moment.

We are not in an either/or situation. It is a practical fact that if the north-east had fewer foreign trips by air, it would do less business. That is how the economy of the north-east works. By all means, remove the need for people to have to fly via London and let us have direct flights. That is the cheapest and most environmentally friendly way to fly from the area. On top of that, we should put some money into better rail connections with faster through trains. That would take people off the roads. However, we still have to get people to stations. With regard to the opening of Laurencekirk station, I am actively working with local bus companies to provide feeder routes so that people do not bring their cars to the station.

We must also consider the issue of road safety. In that regard, we must examine the slip roads on the A90, all the way from Dundee to Peterhead and beyond.

We cannot run Scotland on a bike. By banning transport and infrastructure development, we would hold Scotland back. It is a known fact that a static diesel engine—stopping and starting constantly—will use at least 10 times as much fuel as one that is travelling correctly along a highway at 45mph or 50mph.

We hear some real drivel in this chamber but, now and again, I would like the Green party to come up with some solutions to the problems that it points out. Rather than simply being negative, it should say what practical options we can take.

17:27

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab): I congratulate Nora Radcliffe on securing the debate. Her motion recognises the great importance of the transport debate in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen. I know that the minister is keenly aware of some of the key issues.

I disagree with Shiona Baird. I think that, in NESTRANS, the north-east is fortunate to have such an effective partnership, which is able to highlight the key issues for the development of transport links in the region and ensure that progress is made on those issues. Tonight is a good moment to acknowledge the work of Peter

Cockhead, who has promoted those issues as the co-ordinator of NESTRANS.

The motion is right to acknowledge the need for an integrated transport network in Aberdeenshire. We have a great opportunity to work towards that goal as a great deal is being invested in our local transport infrastructure, which will be important for future transport delivery. We have the investment in our roads network, particularly in our western peripheral route, which is a vital project. Addressing congestion in the city is an issue of concern not only to residents of Aberdeen but to the residents of the shire who travel into the city.

We want further developments to complement the western peripheral route.

Shiona Baird: Would Richard Baker accept that the evidence shows that the western peripheral route will reduce the congestion in the centre of Aberdeen by only 2.5 per cent?

Richard Baker: The minister is considering a number of proposals that will address congestion in addition to the western peripheral route. Obviously, we have the plans for the Haudagain roundabout, which I hope moves to its construction phase as soon as possible.

Of course, there is investment not only in the roads network but in the rail network as well. We look forward to having a new station at Laurencekirk and I am particularly keen for us to move from analysing the scheme for Aberdeen crossrail to making that vital project a reality. I am not as pessimistic about that as Mr Adam seems to be. I think that such plans have to be scrutinised properly, but I believe that the case will be overwhelming. Accordingly, I have made submissions as part of the local and national consultation processes that are being run on the transport strategy to make the case for crossrail, which I believe to be a comparatively cheap way of making a huge impact on congestion.

The motion refers to the Stern report. Of course, it is incumbent on us to invest in promoting sustainable forms of transport, which means that we must continue to invest in excellent schemes such as the community bus schemes and local bus links, bolstered by our agenda for free travel for older people and cheaper travel for younger people on public transport and on new rail schemes, such as crossrail. NESTRANS has made progress on such issues by encouraging, for example, local businesses to urge their employees to take part in lift-sharing schemes. Work such as that must continue and be built on.

The Executive is investing record amounts in transport, of which the Aberdeen peripheral route is very much a part. In the next phase of investment, the issues that the motion highlights should be prioritised. I would argue that schemes

such as Aberdeen crossrail deserve their place, alongside proposals for major rail investment in some parts of the country, such as the airport rail links in Edinburgh and Glasgow. I welcome once more this opportunity to raise those issues and look forward to the minister's response.

17:30

The Minister for Transport (Tavish Scott): I am delighted to respond to the debate, which has been secured by Nora Radcliffe, on transport in the north-east. Participants in transport debates tend to be divided into those of us who believe that there is much that we can do that is positive and those who believe that we are all doomed. That has been rather graphically illustrated tonight, although far be it from me to say who was in the doomed category, and which of us genuinely care about the future of our country and our economy and how we will move forward in the world.

I agree with all who argued that transport is integral to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the north-east, as well as to those of the rest of the country. I join Nora Radcliffe in commending the joint initiative of the Aberdeenshire environmental forum and the Aberdeen city environmental forum in their work on the transport strategy for the north-east. Transport is vital to us all, which is why the Executive published the national transport strategy in December 2006, to map out the long-term future for transport in Scotland.

Although I do not agree with Shiona Baird's conclusions, there is one point on which I might agree with her. We do—and will—take seriously the compelling evidence on climate change, which is why this will be the first Government to introduce a carbon balance sheet on transport emissions. It is why we have made emissions reduction one of the three strategic outcomes for transport policy over the next 20 years. That recognition of the role that transport plays in emissions shows a significant move forward.

I cannot accept Shiona Baird's criticisms of NESTRANS. Most members here—certainly members who represent constituencies in the north-east—would pay tribute to its work and its positive engagement with communities. Nora Radcliffe made a good point about the importance of ensuring that consultation means something; NESTRANS has done that. I agree with those who have argued positively in favour of its work in considering issues such as congestion and air quality in Aberdeen and the surrounding areas.

On roads, I answered Richard Baker's point about the Haudagain roundabout very fully during question time last week. Hardly a week goes by without that roundabout being mentioned. I am

sure that Mr Adam may wish to refer to the detailed reply that I gave Richard Baker last week.

Brian Adam: Will the minister take an intervention on that point?

Tavish Scott: I have dealt with the matter. I want to deal with many points tonight.

Brian Adam: The minister did not deal with the point.

Tavish Scott: The member may not like it, but I dealt with it, and I dealt with Mr Baker's question last week.

On David Davidson's very fair point about road safety, one of the drivers—that is probably the wrong word—or focuses of what we have done with Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Moray Councils on the pass plus scheme has been the representations that many members from the north-east have made in relation to the worrying number of accidents involving young people. That is why we have taken forward that initiative, which I strongly hope will pay dividends.

On the specific issues that have arisen from the debate, we will continue with NESTRANS to support quality bus services in the north-east, including the important interchanges in Inverurie and Peterhead, and the new park-and-ride facilities to the south of Aberdeen at Banchory. I accept members' points about the importance of moving forward with demand-responsive transport—or, in other words, public services that meet localised needs—and finding ways to develop that. We have got to make a real step change on that in the future and I am strongly committed to that.

On local rail, I strongly support the feasibility study on Aberdeen crossrail. I am pleased about the reopening of Laurencekirk station. It is important to recognise that some of the train services in Inverurie with which Nora Radcliffe is familiar arguably begin that process of crossrail. I absolutely accept the argument from some members for more of that process, but I believe that we are beginning to see development, which is a tribute to those who are involved, including local agencies and the franchise operator, First ScotRail.

I remain a supporter of the efforts to improve the quality of intercity rail services to Aberdeen. On the Department for Transport's retendering exercise for the east coast main line franchise, I am very much aware of Nora Radcliffe's representations on continuation of the uninterrupted service from London to Aberdeen. I spoke on Monday to Tom Harris, the United Kingdom minister who has responsibility for rail, and I can give Nora Radcliffe an assurance about the specification for the tendering: I know that the

continuation of uninterrupted services to and from Aberdeen is included as far as four companies are concerned. That applies to Inverness, too, so I hope that members from the Highlands will acknowledge that. It is important that the Aberdeen service, which is important to the north-east, continues to ensure connections between main business centres on each side of the border. Those connections should be enhanced, and the shift from road to rail should be encouraged through improved journey times and connections.

We must be realistic. As most members—although not all—have rightly argued, we cannot simply do away with road transport. If we are to avoid stifling of economic growth, it is important that we take traffic out of city centres, where necessary, and that we deal with pinch points in the network. That is why we support the Aberdeen western peripheral road, as well as upgrades to the trunk roads in the region.

When I was up in Nora Radcliffe's constituency the other day, I took the opportunity to open the £5.5 million straightening of the Hatton bends, in Stewart Stevenson's constituency. I was pleased to meet Mr Stevenson on that occasion on the A90 between Aberdeen and Peterhead. I hope that that will give the lie to the suggestion that nothing ever happens outside the central belt. That was an important investment for the area.

I accept Nora Radcliffe's point about the Souterford bridge in Inverurie. She was able to show me the situation there the other day. I have asked Network Rail to engage with Councillor Alison McInnes, the chair of NESTRANS, and Aberdeenshire Council on the matter. I want to ensure that a meeting on that happens urgently. I also take Nora Radcliffe's point about the Inveramsay bridge. We will, through the strategic transport projects review, look closely at the possibility of removing the traffic lights there. I know that Nora Radcliffe and others have made correct observations about the concerns that have been expressed over local roads being impacted upon by traffic that should be on the trunk road. We need to deal with that.

I take the points that were made by Nora Radcliffe and others about Megabus and Citylink. In our representations, we have very much followed the principle that the focus should be on the passenger, not simply on the perfect market solution. We hope that those representations will be heard.

It is important that we have a balanced and integrated transport strategy. I commend NESTRANS and the other agencies on their work, and we will do all that we reasonably can to make their intentions a reality.

Meeting closed at 17:38.

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