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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 21 December 2011

Session 4

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Scottish Parliament

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[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 14:30*]

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is the Rev David Denniston, who is parish minister of St Cuthbert's parish church in Edinburgh.

The Reverend David Denniston (St Cuthbert's Parish Church, Edinburgh): Presiding Officer and members of the Scottish Parliament, I thank you most warmly for this opportunity to offer today's time for reflection.

In John's gospel, we read:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Over the Christmas season, the familiar story will again be heard—the story of Mary and Joseph, angels and shepherds. The story also makes mention of some rather important people. The wise men who travelled from afar to visit the infant and pay homage no doubt held positions of some significance in their society. Certainly, King Herod was a man of some power—power that he exercised with considerable brutality. With even greater authority than Herod was Quirinius, the governor of Syria and, of course, there was none more powerful or influential than Caesar Augustus himself.

All those people are to be found in the biblical account, yet powerful, renowned, feared and significant although they may have been, it is not they who are the focus of the Christmas story. They have, at best, walk-on parts. Instead, the story centres on the birth of a baby that takes place in rather inauspicious circumstances in a somewhat insignificant Judaeon town. Of all those who are named in the story, it is the baby whose name is best known, whose influence is most significant and whose birth is still celebrated. Wise men, kings, governors and emperors walk across the pages of human history. They come and they go, they do good or do ill, they have their day and then time moves on, as do they and as will we.

It is of that little baby that it was said:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

What seemed of least significance was, in fact, the most significant thing of all. All those people who

seemed so important at the time are yesterday's news and history's footnotes.

God grant that we all have the discernment and the wisdom to perceive that which has true and lasting significance, and that we not be seduced by that which has merely the outward trappings of importance.

May God bless this Parliament now and in the coming year of 2012, and may his light, which darkness will not extinguish, lead us all into the future.

Business Motion

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-01626, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to the business programme for today. I call Bruce Crawford to move motion S4M-01626.

14:34

The Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business and Government Strategy (Bruce Crawford): The business that has been added to the business programme is a ministerial statement on the outcome of the end-of-year fishing negotiations.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees the following revision to the programme of business for Wednesday 21 December 2011—

after

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Delivery and Legacy of the Commonwealth Games

insert

followed by Ministerial Statement: Outcome of End of Year Fishing Negotiations.

Motion agreed to.

Commonwealth Games (Delivery and Legacy)

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-01620, in the name of Shona Robison, on the delivery and legacy of the Commonwealth games.

14:35

The Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport (Shona Robison): In the debate in June shortly after my appointment as the Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport, I set out my intention to come back to Parliament later in the year with an update on progress on our journey to 2014. I am committed to keeping all members updated on progress.

I urge members to look at the new portal to see what is happening across all Scotland. I sent members the most recent biannual update on progress, which sets out what has been achieved since May. I will also ensure that members are sent the six-monthly progress report from Glasgow 2014 Ltd. I am happy to agree today to have regular meetings with Opposition spokespeople, which will meet what I understand is the sentiment behind the amendment in Patricia Ferguson's name.

I am pleased to have called the debate and to reassure members that significant progress continues to be made. I mentioned the new legacy portal, which acts as a one-stop shop for all games-related activities. In its short life, it has already had more than 16,000 hits, and it is becoming a key focal point for information on the legacy.

Enormous progress has been made this year. I am pleased to say that we remain well on schedule and that the budget continues to be soundly based. Work is under way on almost all the remaining venues, and the outstanding facilities that are springing up in Glasgow will leave a legacy to be enjoyed for generations to come.

By this time next year, the national indoor sports arena and velodrome complex will be finished and will have welcomed its first users. Construction began on the athletes village in June. In games mode, it will be home to 6,500 athletes and officials, but when the games are finished, the properties will be converted into 700 new homes as the core of the revitalised community of Dalmarnock.

Of course, it is not only Glasgow that the games will touch. In my part of the country, the shooting events at Barry Buddon will be a great occasion and will bring economic opportunities to the area.

The diving competition at the refurbished Royal Commonwealth pool promises to bring the excitement of the games to Edinburgh as well as to generate welcome revenue for the city.

Even in difficult times, it is clear that there is still enormous buy-in for the games. I am delighted that more than £32 million of commercial income has already been secured. The sponsorship deals are with the established names of Harper Macleod LLP, Ernst & Young and Search Consultancy. There is still a long way to go to achieve the commercial income targets, but the organising committee is ahead of previous games at this stage and I hope that that promising position will improve further in the new year.

We were delighted when the BBC was announced in June as the domestic broadcaster for the games. Ensuring that the games are well covered in the United Kingdom will be key to inspiring our athletes of the future. That contract will enable us all to share the moments of triumph, of which, I hope, there will be many.

I will go into a bit more detail on the impact of the games on Glasgow. The Government is working to ensure that the benefits are felt Scotland-wide, but it is right to recognise that Glasgow is truly being transformed. At the epicentre of games activity, the M74 extension opened in June this year—eight months ahead of schedule and under budget. It is improving transport connections in and around the city. The east end regeneration route, which is a vital games link, will open next year. Work has started on refurbishing Dalmarnock station, to ensure greater access for the local community.

All the games-related transport projects are on course. When they are complete, they will leave a lasting legacy of reduced journey times, lower congestion levels and opportunities for improved public transport that will benefit not just Glasgow but the whole of the west of Scotland.

The Clyde Gateway programme continues apace to help to regenerate the area and to create much-needed jobs in the community. Clyde Gateway's programme is a 30-year programme that is aimed at transforming the area. The games will give the programme impetus and help to transform an area that has suffered from deprivation for too long. Since 2007, £103 million has been invested through Clyde Gateway, which shows the Government's long-term commitment to the area. We are on track and, although there is no room for complacency, I am confident and encouraged by the progress that has been made.

That confidence is shared by the Commonwealth Games Federation, which audits our preparations. Its October 2011 inspection confirmed that it is satisfied that our planning for

the games is on track. In addition, the federation saw a

“clear focus on generating value and legacy for the people of Glasgow and Scotland”.

That external confirmation that we are on target, on budget and on schedule is very good indeed. The federation also remarked on the strong partnership working that it had seen when it visited us in October. It bodes well for our preparations that links between games partners are still strong after four years of working together.

I want to say a word about evaluation, which was raised by several members during the debate in June. I am very clear about our ambitions for 2014, but I am equally clear that progress needs to be robustly monitored and evaluated. Work is well under way to design what is called a meta-evaluation for the 2014 games and their legacy. The aim of that work will be to assess whether and how the Commonwealth games legacy has been delivered. It will assess our progress on the outcomes that we are looking to achieve across all areas of legacy over a number of years before, during and after the games. Partners in national and local government, the third sector and academia are all involved in that process. In January, an evaluation working group will convene for the first time to progress the meta-evaluation. We expect baseline measures to be in place by the end of February.

Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab): Has the minister spoken to Manchester about how it evaluated its Commonwealth games? Are there any lessons that we can learn from the Manchester experience?

Shona Robison: I had an early meeting in Manchester. I went down there and had a good look at the legacy that the games left, along with some of the issues that Manchester thought would be of benefit for us. Officials have done a more detailed follow-up to that meeting, so Kezia Dugdale can be assured that if there are any lessons to learn, we will learn them. Manchester has been quite successful at promoting itself as an international sporting venue and Glasgow has already begun to do that by securing a number of sporting events for after 2014.

Let me turn to our legacy ambitions. Enormous benefits are already coming to Scotland as a result of our hosting of the games. We have been clear that our ambition is a legacy for all the people of Scotland, and in communities up and down the country, the games are beginning to inspire people and change lives. I have always been very clear that helping Scots to become more physically active is our overriding legacy ambition, which is why we are building on the success that we have already achieved in making and keeping Scots

active. The results from the last Scottish health survey showed that 72 per cent of people had participated in sport in the preceding four weeks, and that 83 per cent of Scottish adults had visited the outdoors for leisure or recreation. That is evidence that Scotland is indeed more active than we sometimes give ourselves credit for, but we need to build on that and use the excitement of the games to re-energise our efforts.

I am delighted that one of the most successful elements of that is the active schools programme, which has given 5 million opportunities to young people to take part in more than 70 different physical and sport activities that were provided last year, and were underpinned by a staggering 10,000 volunteers. We should celebrate that.

We continue to invest in ensuring that we provide easy access to local facilities for communities across Scotland, and I am delighted to announce that there are now 72 hubs in the pipeline, with 41 community sports hubs up and running throughout Scotland. I am delighted with that progress because the hubs are providing a home for the community to come together. They cater to the local needs of each community and support participation in physical activity across the country. They demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that all Scotland's people and communities can benefit from becoming more active.

We want to build on that—which is why I announce today that we will deliver at least 100 hubs by 2014. However, we will do more, with a commitment to deliver a further 50 hubs before the end of this parliamentary session. We expect at least half those 150 hubs to be based in schools, which will help significantly to open up the school estate. Following the Commonwealth games, Scotland will be a stronger sporting nation and this commitment reinforces our view that community sports hubs will play a critical role in delivering on our aspirations.

I want to say a few things about high performance sport, because winning medals in the 2014 games will be important. For that reason, we are continuing to invest heavily in the future generation. Sportscotland will maintain the increases in investment in the past three years of £7.5 million, giving a total of £15 million of additional investment to support our athletes and develop the governing bodies over the six-year period.

In these difficult times, the games are increasingly giving a welcome boost to the wider economy, with businesses large and small winning valuable contracts from both Glasgow 2014 and London 2012. Scottish businesses have won 133 of the 171 contracts that have been awarded through the Glasgow business portal, on which

more than 16,000 Scottish companies are registered, and have won 158 London 2012 contracts. Through our work with Scottish Enterprise, we continue to support Scottish businesses to ensure that they are as competitive as possible, and we have invested a further quarter of a million pounds in BusinessClub Scotland to ensure that our businesses continue to benefit from hosting major events.

Thousands of jobs have already been maintained to construct key infrastructure projects around the games. For our young people in particular they are providing a much-needed step on to the employment ladder and are giving real social and economic hope in a challenging environment. Not only are infrastructure programmes such as Clyde Gateway and the M74 helping our economy, they are giving real jobs to real people, and I am determined that as a lasting legacy of the games we will create a more skilled workforce and give our people the tools that they need to compete in the changing workplace. Of course, the 15,000 volunteering opportunities will also help to give people valuable experience to enter the workforce.

London 2012 will dominate much of the media attention next year and our plans for making the most of the event are being developed. We are delighted to be welcoming the Olympic torch relay to every Scottish local authority area, which will provide a great opportunity to showcase our unique landscape and heritage to a worldwide audience. Olympic sport will also come to Scotland, with eight football matches taking place at the national stadium at Hampden. Of course, we have a particular interest in the Olympics as a valuable learning experience for our own journey to 2014. It will be a launch pad for us and we are determined to make the best of it.

I am delighted to stand here today, 945 days before the Commonwealth games opening ceremony, and to share with members the progress that has been made. We will deliver an outstanding games on time and on budget. Our plans for leaving a lasting legacy are well developed and are beginning to make changes in our people's day-to-day lives.

We bid for the games because we saw their potential to inspire. We may find ourselves in very different financial circumstances now, but that vision is already becoming a reality. I am pleased to commend the motion to Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the good progress being made by the Games partners to deliver the 2014 Commonwealth Games on time and on budget; welcomes the view of the Commonwealth Games Federation's first Evaluation Commission that Games planning is on course and that the Games partnership is a strong one; recognises the tangible

benefits already realised through collaborative working between the Scottish Government and its many partners, and recognises that the current and planned activity will maximise legacy for the whole of Scotland from both the London 2012 Olympic Games and the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

14:48

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): I was interested to hear the minister mention in closing that there are only 945 days to go before the opening of the 2014 Commonwealth games. I had planned to open my speech with that very number but she has pre-empted me. Then again, she seems to have pre-empted me on a number of matters—which is no bad thing.

It is but a relatively short time before the Commonwealth games will open in Glasgow and, of course, a considerably shorter period until the summer, when the Olympics will open in London. Scottish Labour welcomes today's debate and we hope that it marks the beginning—indeed, the continuation—of a positive dialogue across the chamber as we seek to play our part as parliamentarians in ensuring that the Commonwealth games are successful, a credit to Scotland and of lasting benefit to its people.

The discussion must not only cover the significant and encouraging progress that is being made in preparation for what will be the largest multisport event ever held in Scotland, but focus on the challenges that still lie ahead, and which must be met if we are to ensure the games' success.

By success, I mean not only that of our sportsmen and sportswomen in competition, although we all want a large haul of medals in 2014. The progress of our athletes through the Commonwealth games in Manchester, Melbourne and Delhi suggests that by the time we get to 2014 our medal haul will be extremely significant. However, the games' benefits must not be enjoyed only by the elite athletes who have the honour and pleasure of participating on behalf of Scotland, but by Scottish society at large. There needs to be advantage to our country, not only in the legacy of improved sporting infrastructure, important though that is, but in the legacy that is secured for our economy, particularly the tourism industry, and the legacy in our communities, particularly in health and in sporting and physical activity. We also need an advantage in confidence building, which is the less tangible part of the legacy that we hope for.

Significant progress has certainly been made since 2004, when it was decided that we would back a Scottish bid. I vividly recall the day—16 August 2005—when the Scottish Executive, under the then First Minister, Jack McConnell, with the

support of the United Kingdom Government, all the parties at Holyrood and the other devolved Administrations, announced that Glasgow would bid to host the 2014 games, building on the reputation that the city already had as a major conference and sporting venue. That decision was a good one, but it was made only after a great deal of research and scrutiny and only when we were sure that Scotland could make a success of delivering a first-class Commonwealth games on time and on budget and, crucially, that the games would benefit our country. Too many countries have taken the opportunity to host Olympic games, Commonwealth games or other major sporting events without being able to guarantee that.

The announcement that the Glasgow bid had been successful was greeted with great enthusiasm by people around the country and we owe it to them to ensure that their expectations are met. Since the announcement of the winning bid in 2007, a great deal of work has gone into making the games a success. As the minister rightly outlined, that has involved the Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland, the organising committee, Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government working together to get things done. As the motion points out, the recent evaluation commission report is testament to that.

As we know, many of the venues for the games already existed, which is a real advantage in cost and timing terms, but a new velodrome and indoor sports arena had to be built, while other facilities needed to be renovated or extended. It is a pleasure to see progress being made in Glasgow on the venues and athletes village. Earlier this year, I was delighted to visit the new velodrome and arena with colleagues. Although the facilities were still some way from completion at that point, it was clear that they will be truly world class and will continue to attract major sporting events to Glasgow in the years ahead. Glasgow City Council has said that it will begin to use the venues on their completion in 2012 so that by the time of the games in 2014, all the teething problems will be ironed out. They will be community facilities.

As the minister said, not all the games events will take place in Glasgow. I look forward to hearing more about the work that other local authorities are doing to maximise opportunity for their residents from the Commonwealth games. So far, I have struggled to find much written commentary on that element of the complete picture, although perhaps I have not been looking in the right channels.

It is good news that the evaluation commission has endorsed the work that the partners have done to ensure delivery of the games, but we cannot be complacent. In the previous

parliamentary session, the Public Audit Committee raised important questions about conflicting information being provided by a senior Scottish Government official and the chief operating officer for the games concerning the use of contingency funds and the impact of inflation. I ask the minister to indicate whether clarification has been provided on that.

As a long-time supporter of the 2012 Olympics and London's bid, I was delighted that the 2012 games were included in the motion and I was pleased to hear the minister's comments about the success of Scottish businesses. Businesses in Scotland secured contracts in the very early stages of the Olympic bid; one produced the banners that were on display around the country when the bid evaluation team visited the UK, and a company in Leith was awarded the contract to produce the bid document. Scottish firms have been involved since the beginning, and it is good news that so many have been able to secure contracts.

A particular issue with ticketing and ticket distribution has arisen in recent months in relation to the Olympic games, which might provide a challenge for the Commonwealth games. Will the minister tell us in closing whether lessons have been learned from the way in which tickets for the London Olympics have been distributed? I realise that it is perhaps a little early for precise details about ticketing arrangements, but it would be good to hear reassurance that the ticketing arrangements in London have been evaluated and that any lessons from that will be learned.

I am confident that, in working with its partners, Glasgow City Council will continue the excellent work that it has begun in order to deliver the venues and infrastructure that are needed for the games. In many ways, I believe that the real challenge lies in delivering the legacy—the minister also identified that concern. Nowhere is that more evident than in respect of health.

In Scotland annually, some 2,500 people die prematurely because they are inactive. If we are to make real progress in that area, we must devote much of our effort to our young people. We have to break the cycle that afflicts too many of our adult population, who probably played football, hockey or netball vigorously at school but did not continue when they left.

I share the minister's enthusiasm for the active schools programme, and I think that it is a key component of the drive to increase the number of our young people who are active while they are at school. By making links with clubs outwith the school, it will encourage them to consider exercise to be an important component of their lives.

The Commonwealth games lottery fund will also help to encourage an imaginative approach. I have noticed in my own constituency that there has been an increase in zumba classes at Springburn academy and basketball coaching at Miltonbank primary. Having been invited as an MSP to see many such things in schools, I was slightly anxious that the trapeze project might end up with my name on it. I hope not.

We in Scottish Labour want to work with the Scottish Government because we share its ambition for the games. We will be critical when it is appropriate, but we will also be supportive. What we ask for from the Scottish Government is openness about the achievements and the problems. I am grateful that, following our conversation this morning, the minister has agreed that regular update meetings will be held with front-bench spokespersons from the parties that are represented in the chamber. I look forward to them.

I move amendment S4M-01620.1, to leave out from "will maximise" to end and insert:

"has the potential to maximise the legacy for the whole of Scotland from both the London 2012 Olympic Games and the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and calls on the Scottish Government to report more regularly to the Parliament on the implementation of the Games legacy plan for Scotland."

14:58

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I welcome this debate, as 2011 draws to a close. It is now fewer than 950 days until the Commonwealth games come to Glasgow—members will note that I am slightly less precise about the number of days than the previous speakers were.

The games have been a long time in the making, since Glasgow was announced as the host city in 2007. We must remember that we still have another two and a half years until they become a reality, and that before then there is a lot more hard work ahead.

I believe that the games will be good news not only for Glasgow and the surrounding Strathclyde area but for Scotland as a whole. Like the London Olympics next year, they will be an occasion for everyone the length and breadth of the United Kingdom to celebrate and be involved. Glasgow 2014 will be an opportunity to promote everything that is great about the British spirit and, of course, to boost our national economy.

In that regard, I think that all of us in the chamber would agree that among the most significant and, to my mind, far-sighted aspects of the games are their Scotland-wide inclusive approach and the legacy that we hope they will leave.

Although we Conservatives are happy to support the Government's motion, we will also support the Labour amendment, which rightly takes a slightly cautious approach to the success of the games' legacy. Evidence from previous events suggests that it will be difficult for the Commonwealth games to deliver all the objectives in terms of providing a legacy. Although multisports events undoubtedly deliver tangible benefits to their host cities, results in the past have been limited. Although it is right to set high standards and aspirations—it is very good to hear from the minister that so far the Government's plans are on track—it is still important that we retain a sense of realism about the difficulties that might be ahead.

The Labour amendment calls on the Government to update the Parliament and, therefore, the Scottish people on progress on the games' legacy. That is a sensible point to make, so I was glad to hear from Patricia Ferguson that the minister has agreed to do that.

Given that the Commonwealth games will be the largest multisports event that Scotland has ever hosted, it is only right that activities will not be confined to the west coast. In my home city of Aberdeen, there is a rolling programme of events involving schools and local organisations. As far as I know, we have five community sports hub sites, and a youth legacy ambassador has been recruited for Aberdeen. Only last month, we saw the opening of the new £700,000 international artificial-grass football pitch at Banks O'Dee sports club. The new state-of-the-art sports village is running at full capacity and is involving people from all sections of the population in Aberdeen, including students—I gather that there is quite a long waiting list to get in. Of course, we are also eagerly awaiting the completion of our new Olympic-size swimming pool at Linksfield.

Further afield in Aberdeenshire, the impact of the games is demonstrated by the awarding of some 63 community grants by the Big Lottery Fund. Those grants are aimed at bringing people and communities together, breaking down barriers and supporting existing groups to take part in new competitions.

It is also interesting to note that at least 10 athletes from my region, which is North East Scotland, competed at the previous Commonwealth games in Delhi, including silver medallist trap shooter Shona Marshall and—much more local to me—gold medallist swimmer Hannah Miley, from Inverurie.

Ultimately, one of the key legacies that is intended as an off-shoot from the games is an aspiration to improve the health of our nation through greater physical activity. In that sense, I commend the Government and Glasgow City

Council for launching their programme three years ago.

The focus on getting more disabled people and people over 65 years of age engaged in physical activities is significant, given that those two sections of our society are sometimes ignored when it comes to sports activities in general.

As we know, the four themes of the overall games legacy of Scotland are “active”, “connected”, “sustainable” and “flourishing”. Under the sustainable theme, I note that environmental projects that have benefited include the development of community woodlands and the Clyde walkway pilot project. The minister might be interested to know that a group called the Children's Orchard attended the Public Petitions Committee last week. Its aim is to encourage local authorities, schools and community groups to plant fruit trees in schools and community settings so that children, their families and the wider community can learn how to grow, harvest and enjoy their local seasonal fruit at the same time as they develop their physical fitness and general knowledge. Will the minister look favourably on the Children's Orchard petition—when it comes to her—which is asking for support from the Scottish Government as part of the Commonwealth legacy? I am sure that she would agree that that worthwhile project also meets the aims of the Government's national food and drink policy, recipe for success.

We in the Conservatives welcome the Government's commitment to pursuing a lasting legacy from the Commonwealth games for Scotland and the UK. We look forward to hearing more progress reports in the run-up to the games in 2014.

15:04

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): When I was elected as the MSP for Glasgow Shettleston earlier this year, I thought that one of the many privileges of that position was to be the MSP for many of the Commonwealth games sites, including Celtic Park, which will host the opening ceremony, the games village, the velodrome, the national indoor sports arena, Glasgow green, which will host the hockey, and Tollcross, which will host the swimming.

Winning the bid for the games was a partnership success. It was especially a partnership between the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council, and we should pay tribute to Alex Salmond, Steven Purcell and others who worked together for that. The games' success and legacy also depend on a partnership approach. We need the Government, the council, Glasgow Life, the

private sector, the third sector and volunteers all to work together.

The legacy is about more than the physical venues, as has been mentioned. On the other hand, the physical venues are essential to it. Several of them will be in use before the games or have already been in use. All must be in use after the games. Local people and people throughout Scotland have the opportunity for employment in building the facilities and operating them afterwards. They will also have the opportunity to watch the world-class events that will happen during the two weeks of the games and the opportunity to use the facilities before and after that.

I will comment on some of the venues that are in Glasgow Shettleston. First, Celtic Park is already in place, as many members know, and does not have to be built. The big advantage of using it for the opening ceremony is that the athletes living in the athletes village will be within yards of the ceremony. In some other such big events, the athletes have not gone to the opening ceremony because of travel problems and the disruption to their preparations. That is the first big plus.

The second venue that I will mention is the athletes village itself. The buildings are just now beginning to take shape on the ground. Outside the chamber a few weeks ago, members saw models of how the site will look and parts of the buildings, much of which are being created off site and brought on site.

As the minister said, after the games, we will end up with 1,400 homes in the area, some 300 of which will be social rented housing that will be operated by three different housing associations. That is good news. On top of that, there will be private housing and a council care home for 120 residents.

Thirdly, we have the velodrome, which is perhaps one of the most dramatic and exciting buildings. I saw around it recently and it is certainly coming on well. Its future use presents a big challenge. The cross-party group on sport had Eamonn O'Rourke up from Manchester recently to tell us some of the lessons that can be learned from there, as running the velodrome there was a challenge for the city.

One of the good points about the velodrome is its location: it is beside other facilities and is not isolated, as has been the case in some other cities. Also, the velodromes in Glasgow, London and Manchester are working together so that, when one of them bids for an event in future, they will not compete with one another. That is extremely positive.

The velodrome will open in October or November next year. We are due to have the

world youth track event in 2013. The national indoor sports arena, where we will have sports such as athletics and basketball, is the other half of the same building. It is important that there will also be community facilities, plus the headquarters of Scottish sporting bodies, such as Cycling Scotland.

The hockey arena at Glasgow green is another big plus, as it will be the only hockey facility in Scotland with covered seating. Scottish Hockey is extremely keen to be involved in running it in the future.

The sixth venue that I will mention is the swimming pools at Tollcross. We already have a top-class pool there, but there can be tensions between the competitive swimmers and those who just want a leisurely swim. Having two pools means that we will be able to win competitions because we will have a warm-up pool and a main pool; it also means that those two groups can operate together and not compete with each other.

As I list those venues, I find it breathtaking to think about all the different sports facilities, and there are others spread across the country. On top of that, non-sporting infrastructure is being built.

I will comment finally on the legacy, which will be a big topic in the debate. From my perspective, the main essentials are that the facilities must be available to local people at affordable rates. I spoke to Glasgow Life this week—Bridget McConnell does tremendous work there—and was told that it will treat those venues like other venues, so people who are members of the Glasgow club will get access to them without having to pay on the day.

Linked to that is that people from all over Scotland will be able to attend the games. I hope that it will be possible to have tickets that allow entry to games facilities, travel within Glasgow and entry to some cultural events.

The third aspect is volunteering. We need some 15,000 volunteers. I had not realised that volunteers travel round the world to these events. We certainly welcome those volunteers. I thank members across the parties who have supported the games in this session of Parliament and the previous one.

15:10

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to speak in a debate about the 20th Commonwealth games in Glasgow and its potential legacy.

I will focus on the legacy that this international sports event can have for children and young people in Glasgow and throughout Scotland. My colleague Kezia Dugdale will speak about the

importance of the games having a legacy in terms of youth employability, which is a crucial issue, given the investment that is taking place and the chance that it offers to provide work opportunities and to help young people to gain the skills that they need to get a job.

I welcome Glasgow City Council's Commonwealth jobs fund and its Commonwealth graduate fund, both of which will make a significant contribution to employment in Glasgow.

I will concentrate on the wider benefits that the games can provide for young people and children in Scotland. First, it is encouraging that, thanks to Glasgow City Council, the Scottish Government and their many partners, the games are financially on budget and, in planning terms, on time.

One of the most important legacies that can be achieved following the games is the improved fitness and health of our children and young people. I think that we are aware on all sides of the chamber that, if children and young people are active, it will improve their health in their early years and continue to benefit them in later life.

Members of the Scottish sports alliance raised an important point about the need to improve the basic physical literacy of our children. We must look at all the ways in which we can increase the number of children who are able to run, jump, throw, catch and swim. The importance of that is emphasised by statistics on childhood obesity. According to the Scottish health survey, in 2010 almost 30 per cent of children were overweight or obese and 32.5 per cent of children had a body mass index outwith the healthy range. I am sure that we can all agree that such statistics make worrying reading and require action. The Commonwealth games and the showcasing of sport, along with the provision of two hours of quality physical education for all schoolchildren, can and should be aimed at creating a culture of regular participation in sport and physical activity, which in turn would constitute a huge step forward in our battle with obesity.

It is important to emphasise that sport and play not only make children and young people healthier but give them the confidence to apply themselves to other tasks that they encounter in everyday life. What is also important is that such aspirations can give them the confidence to learn and can improve their concentration and educational attainment. Sport therefore has the potential to give our children healthy bodies and healthy minds.

I welcome the recruitment this year of 96 Commonwealth games youth legacy ambassadors. They have an important role to play in getting young people involved in Glasgow 2014 and in encouraging people to be more active. Who better to ensure that the games have a lasting and

positive legacy for young people than young people themselves? I pay tribute to Young Scot for its work with local authorities throughout Scotland and look forward to further progress in that area.

It is important that we recognise and learn from the success of the Lanarkshire international children's games, which took place in August. The world's biggest youth sporting event brought a total of 1,300 competitors and coaches, along with administrators and delegates, to Scotland. Seventy-seven cities from 33 countries worldwide were represented.

Lanarkshire 2011 was the 45th time that the international children's games have been held but the first time in their history that the games had a legacy plan, which included a focus on education and learning and on promoting the importance of health. Event organisers also made a commitment to ensuring that equipment that was purchased and facilities that were improved would become available to support local sports clubs and to creating a Lanarkshire-wide youth sports competition involving schools and sports clubs. Lanarkshire should feel the benefits of hosting the international children's games for years to come. That is exactly what we all want to see throughout Scotland following Glasgow 2014.

When Wimbledon is on, for two weeks there is a surge in the number of young people playing tennis. When the Ryder cup is on, participation in golf increases. On the day of a football match, I remember as a child going to the local park to re-enact the match—very badly. I am sure that children still do that today. With the Commonwealth games, we have a fantastic opportunity to showcase new sports to our young people. In total, the games will play host to 17 different sports to inspire future generations.

We are fortunate that Glasgow 2014 will be held shortly after the London Olympics in 2012, which will provide a platform on which the Commonwealth games can build. London 2012 should provide a significant boost to youth participation in sport in Scotland, and I am delighted that several football matches will be played at Hampden Park. I welcome sportscotland's distribution of 400 free tickets for Olympic events to young people in Scotland.

As part of Glasgow 2014, an estimated 1 million tickets will be sold to 250 medal events. I am sure that I am not alone in hoping that as many young people as possible get the opportunity to see up close some of the 6,500 athletes whom the games will host, and I hope that the organising committee will consider that when it sets prices. I am aware of the need for around £80 million in revenue to be raised from the selling of tickets, but I would welcome the minister considering how many free or discounted tickets will be made available to

schools and clubs, which would have the added benefit of guaranteeing full stadiums.

I know that, following the games, the organising committee wants to keep admission prices to facilities as low as possible, and I hope that the Scottish Government will consider in what ways it can assist with that aim so that the games can provide not only an elite sports legacy but, as John Mason said, a legacy at community and grass-roots level for the benefit of people in Glasgow and the west of Scotland.

It has been a good debate, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss the progress and legacy of the Commonwealth games in Glasgow. As my colleague Patricia Ferguson said, I hope that we will be able to discuss the progress of the games and their potential legacy again in the coming months and years.

15:16

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I congratulate Patricia Ferguson on her new post and wish her well. I am probably one of the people she referred to when she mentioned people who play hockey or netball at school and then give it up. I used to do that many years ago, but I do not think that I could do so now—although perhaps we could set up a Parliament team.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting the new Commonwealth house in Glasgow's merchant city, which is in my constituency of Kelvin. I was extremely impressed by the dedication and professionalism of the staff there and by the building itself, which, as well as embodying the ethos of the games, with its beautiful portrayals of all the 17 sports, is a great example of how the games will help ordinary people and businesses.

It is a great testament to the organisers that they made extensive use of Royal Strathclyde Blindcraft Industries, a social enterprise that employs disabled people to make high-quality furniture. They are also to be commended for employing veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to work on the renovation of Commonwealth house. The veterans were recruited through Glasgow City Council's helping heroes campaign, which assists former soldiers in finding work. In addition, more than 40 young apprentices were employed as part of the renovation of Commonwealth house. As the minister said, on top of the physical legacy of the games, there will be an economic regeneration and job creation legacy.

Glasgow has a long history of events that have been intended to deliver a lasting legacy to the people of Glasgow and the city itself. Many members—with the exception, perhaps, of our younger members—may remember the Glasgow's

miles better campaign back in 1983, which was the year in which the internationally acclaimed Burrell collection opened. The Glasgow's miles better campaign was one of the best and most successful promotions ever launched, and it won a New York international film and television award no fewer than four times between 1983 and 1987.

The campaign was launched in response to a lingering negative stereotype of Glasgow as a dangerous place that tourists did not want to visit, which ordinary Glaswegians were not particularly proud of. I remember the campaign well and the amazing effect that it had on perceptions of the city. Almost overnight, there was a tangible new buzz in Glasgow, as local people began to feel proud of their city and, internationally, people began to look at Glasgow as a vibrant modern city that embraced the future rather than looking to the past.

The campaign acted as a launch pad for a lot of rejuvenation in Glasgow and a new confident outlook. The garden festival that followed built on the campaign's success and enhanced Glasgow's reputation internationally. That was not the festival's only legacy. The site, which is known as Pacific Quay, now houses the Glasgow science centre, the IMAX theatre and the BBC's headquarters. Two years after the festival, one of the city's most transformational events took place—Glasgow was named European city of culture 1990. Those celebrations showcased the very best of what Glasgow had to offer the world. Glasgow had been transformed and the recognition that it received throughout the world was phenomenal.

The 2014 Commonwealth games are the next step on the road. Once again, Glasgow will showcase itself to the world and deliver a lasting legacy for areas of the city that have not always benefited much from previous projects. The minister said that Glasgow 2014 will bring benefits not just for sport but for the economy. I am pleased that she announced an extension of sports hubs, in particular in the school estate. Such an approach is long overdue. People have constantly said, "We have school playing fields on our doorstep that should belong to the community, but we cannot access them." The minister's announcement is positive.

There will also be benefits from the building and renovation of sports grounds and buildings—I talked about Commonwealth house. I commend the partners who are involved for their collaborative approach to projects, but I ask them to reflect on the improvements that can be made to the surrounding areas. The minister is looking at me, so I will give a couple of examples. Thousands of visitors will travel through Kelvingrove underground station, in the west end,

because many events will take place at Kelvingrove park and in the Kelvin hall. The station is in dire need of a significant facelift. Its entrance is in a bad state of repair, but that will be the first view that visitors get of the west end.

Partick, which is also in the west end of Glasgow, was the site of the first international football match, which took place between Scotland and England. The event could be celebrated during the Commonwealth games, perhaps by erecting a plaque—or whatever commemoration the community would like.

George Square is another example. Thousands of people will pass through the square and, to my mind—and to many Glaswegian minds—a makeover for the square is well overdue. A while back, the *Glasgow Evening Times* ran a competition to redesign the square, and readers submitted their ideas. Perhaps the paper will run the competition again.

I applaud the joined-up approach that agencies are taking to delivering a legacy for Glasgow and Scotland, which is paramount. Perhaps the minister will take on board and report back on some of my suggestions. We have a fantastic opportunity in Glasgow and in Scotland as a whole. We can go for gold, but in Glasgow we always reach further than people say that we will. With the Commonwealth games, Glasgow can reach for the stars.

15:22

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): The other day I went to the Scottish national portrait gallery in Queen Street with my children. I alighted on a rather splendid painting of what I think were the first world cycling championships, which took place in 1897 at Celtic Park, which Mr Mason mentioned. A striking aspect of the gallery, which has been wonderfully refurbished, is the portraits of famous Scottish football stars, such as Kenny Dalglish and Sir Alex Ferguson. Would it not be nice if, after the Olympics, the Commonwealth games, the Ryder cup and all that will happen in sport generally during the next 10 years in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom, a number of the people who we hope will win in those events took their places in our Scottish national portrait gallery?

Sport inspires, which is why the next decade is crucial. It inspires the current and next generations. When we read about the importance of events, their value to the economy, which the minister was correct in mentioning, and all the other aspects, we can see that it is not just one event but a series of events that creates legacy, by changing behaviour. The minister and other members were right to talk about the lack of

fitness and sporting activity in this country, and it strikes me that the Commonwealth games, considered in the round with other international events, such as the Olympic games and the world athletics championships, which will come to London later in the decade, are part of what will make the message work over time.

I am sure that that is very much the Government's thinking. If we are to work constructively for the future and ensure that there are behavioural changes, we must ensure that the Commonwealth games add to the overall encouragement to future generations to take up athletics or indeed just a healthier lifestyle than people might currently have.

Golf is my sport, so the Ryder cup will be my biggest highlight of the next decade without a shadow of a doubt. I take Neil Bibby's point that, after people see sport, their participation can rise, but I have to confess that participation in golf at my club falls through the floor when the Ryder cup is on because everyone is watching it. However, I take his point that the next generation will participate as a result. I took up golf after watching Tom Watson win the open at Muirfield in 1980. Many young Shetlanders took up cycling or athletics after seeing Chris Hoy cycle or Allan Wells win the 100 metres in 1980, all those years ago. Sport inspires. The minister touched on that, and I am sure that she could talk for a whole 18 minutes on it. The elite athlete programme and all the work that is being done to encourage and push brilliant young men and women into potential medal-winning roles in the next couple of years will be very well rewarded in terms of what they bring back to Scotland.

The minister mentioned the Commonwealth games portal. I agree that it is an extremely useful source of information for those of us who are trying to understand what is happening. To make one small point, I hope that she will get the map on the front page right because, at the moment, Shetland is to the east of Orkney. The last time I flew home, we were a bit north of Orkney, so I would be very grateful if, tomorrow morning, the website could reflect the true geography of Scotland. I appreciate that that is a minor point to some, but it is a pretty major one if you happen to live in the islands.

I was encouraged by the statistics that the minister outlined on the number of contracts and subcontracts awarded through the games portal. Of the 171 contracts that have been awarded so far, the bulk are in Scotland, although I note that the bulk of those are, I suppose understandably, in the Clyde valley. It would be useful if, once the tender period has ended and the contracts have been awarded, the names of the successful companies could be listed. That should be a

positive aspect of the games, both for those companies and for the economic argument that the minister and other members have rightly made. Will she consider that suggestion?

It would also be helpful and welcome if, on the website and in other public information areas, the Government could pick up how many jobs have been created by the games at this point and roll that forward, because it is important for the public to see the economic benefits to the country of the investment that our Government, Glasgow City Council and the other partners are making on their behalf. This is a tough time for taxpayers' money, after all, so making the positive argument about the number of jobs and long-term training opportunities that have been created, and other such benefits, would be very helpful in dealing with the one or two sceptics we all come across who say, "Why are you spending any money on sport? You don't spend enough on the arts, or on other areas." Those would be strong, positive economic arguments and numbers that would help us all to deal with that.

Will the minister pick up a couple of figures that I found on the website? If I read the forecasting correctly, capital development funds are down in the current six months—I am sure that there is a good reason for that—and some of the spend on planning and preparing for the games has gone up by £16 million in the past six months. I am sure that there are good explanations for all that, but it would be very useful if the minister would touch on those issues.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): Will you draw to a close, please?

Tavish Scott: Indeed, Presiding Officer. I finish by mentioning the Scottish sports alliance briefing, because I believe that its points on volunteers and coaches, in particular, are important.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Tavish Scott: One of the most important aspects is encouraging coaches right across Scotland and I hope that the minister will deal with that as well.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Paul Wheelhouse, who has an exact six minutes.

15:29

Paul Wheelhouse (South Scotland) (SNP): Thank you—duly noted.

I am delighted to support the Government's motion today and I am particularly heartened that the games are on time and on budget, as others have said. Although I do not represent Glasgow, I am delighted that the games are coming to

Scotland and I sincerely believe that the games will play a key role in regenerating Glasgow, which will ultimately benefit Scotland as a whole. Tavish Scott made that important point.

With regeneration in mind, I think that it is a pity that the Glasgow games are not benefiting from the full consequential of the Olympic games. I hope that, as a Parliament, we keep up the pressure on that front and ensure that additional funds are made available.

I am delighted that the BBC is covering the games, which will help to market Glasgow and Scotland as a whole to a wide audience of 2 billion people around the globe and benefit Scotland's tourism sector through an estimated 4 per cent increase in tourism traffic in the three years following the games. In effect, that coverage is millions of pounds of free advertising for Glasgow and Scotland, which is to be welcomed. That should help to assuage some of the concerns to which Tavish Scott referred. I am also delighted that, to date, Scottish companies have won 82 per cent of the Glasgow 2014 contracts. I will do my own bit as an MSP representing South Scotland to ensure that businesses there bid for and, I hope, win contracts.

The games have 17 sports, but their sporting legacy has the potential to extend way beyond that number. I noted in one of the briefings that I saw that there are 13,000 sports clubs in Scotland. In the Borders alone, there is a network of over 200 sports clubs. It is crucial to recognise the role that sport has played. Indeed, in the debate in June, we heard that £1.8 billion of economic activity is generated by sport and that it supports up to 51,000 jobs in Scotland. Clearly, any growth in participation in sport and any growth in sport as a whole will make an economic contribution and not just have a sporting legacy.

I am deputy convener of the cross-party group on sports, which has discussed whether it is more important to achieve medals or to encourage participation in sport. However, the two are, of course, closely interlinked. A new generation of medal winners will inspire people to take up sport, so the two aspects are not in competition with each other. I am pleased to see that the Scottish sports alliance briefing highlights the importance of the new indicator in Scotland performs. I hope that that will help us to keep track of our performance and improve our record on participation, particularly among adults.

I was delighted to hear about the progress of community sport hubs. I ask the minister to indicate whether she sees that being reflected across the whole of Scotland and not just in particular areas. I am aware that the Borders has no community sports hubs, but I hope that some are in the pipeline. However, I am pleased to see

that there is at least one in Dumfries and Galloway, at Maxwelltown high school.

It is clear that the issue of legacy has been thought through from the start, which is important. Unlike previous games, the legacy has been a key part of the Government's activities in sport. I commend Glasgow City Council for its role in that regard.

Preventative spend is a subject that has been close to the Finance Committee's heart for the past few months. I was particularly pleased to see the figures on increased participation: every 1 per cent increase in participation in sport yields £3.5 million of savings in reducing coronary heart disease, strokes and colon cancer alone. It is good common sense to increase investment in sport, because it benefits not only individuals but society and Parliament by making health savings. I am also pleased to see that the level of spend on sport in Scotland has increased since 2007-08 and that there will be a continual increase until 2014-15, when the games will be held. I hope that that will be a lasting legacy.

On the prevention agenda, I wonder whether there are issues with how sport is perceived by other disciplines, whether health, justice or regeneration. Perhaps sport is not regarded as having the impact that I perceive it to have. For example, people have been critical of Strathclyde Police for investing in sport, but it is obvious that sport has an important diversionary role for people who are involved in crime. The legacy from getting people involved in sport can also have benefits in reducing crime.

I am conscious of time passing, but I want to highlight that I am aware through contact with the Commonwealth games team of strands of funding from the Big Lottery Fund and other sources, with micro-grants of up to £2,000 to encourage participation. Just to encourage the minister, I say that since last week, when I met Mr Stewart, who is in the public gallery today, I have heard from a rugby club in the Borders that is interested in taking up some funding. We perhaps need to market that more to the sporting community to make it aware that the funds are available, because there is a lot of demand for support to help to develop volunteer coaches and other means of encouraging participation.

In closing, I congratulate employers such as the Weir Group, which I understand has had an important role in funding local legacy work. I hope that other employers get involved, too. With regard to the 15,000 volunteers, I very much hope that an army of volunteers from the Borders will head up to watch the sevens tournament at Scotstoun and that they will pack out the team as well as act as volunteers.

15:35

Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab): I begin my remarks by highlighting the achievement that the securing of the Commonwealth games for Glasgow and Scotland represents. As a Glasgow councillor for 17 years, I particularly want to commend Glasgow City Council for its efforts in successfully bidding to host this international event, which will showcase our great city and our great country.

I will let others speak about the sporting aspects of the games and the objective of increasing participation in sport, as I am sure that others are better qualified than me to talk about that. I want instead to touch on four other aspects of the games: the lessons to be learned from history about infrastructure, the ways in which we can promote Scotland to the Commonwealth, how we can use the games to enhance community cohesion, and how we can maximise the opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises.

I welcome the update paper, "A Games Legacy for Scotland", and the work that is being done to ensure a lasting legacy for Glasgow and Scotland.

We need only look back to the Commonwealth games in Edinburgh in 1986 to see how a potential legacy can be squandered. Meadowbank stadium is decaying and is destined for demolition. The train station across the road, which was opened specially for the games, lies empty and unused, and the tracks that once linked the stadium directly with Waverley station have been lifted. If there was a legacy of the Edinburgh games, it was civic debt, as they lost the city £3 million on expenditure of £14 million.

On the promotion of Scotland to the Commonwealth, I believe that the games present a great opportunity to strengthen the Scottish brand abroad, enhance the image of our country and renew friendships with other nations. I therefore welcome the partnership between VisitScotland and VisitBritain to promote Scotland during the coming Olympic year. Perhaps the minister will explain how that increased visibility can be sustained beyond the London Olympics.

On community cohesion, the Parliament will be aware that Glasgow—and Scotland more broadly—is home to many thousands of people with a connection to the Commonwealth countries. However, I have not yet heard mention of how communities can be encouraged to engage in the games and, in particular, provide support to athletes and supporters from countries with which our citizens have a link. That would help to celebrate the fact that we are one Glasgow, woven together by many diverse threads.

I feel strongly that the commercial benefits that may be gained from the games should not be solely the preserve of large, multinational corporations. The legacy update document states that Scottish businesses have won 133 of the 171 contracts that have been awarded through the Glasgow business portal. Perhaps the minister could tell us how many of those 133 contracts were won by small and medium-sized enterprises.

I fear that small businesses find the tendering process for games contracts complex and somewhat daunting. We need to redouble our efforts in that regard and ensure that as many of our smaller firms as possible can tender for contracts, and that they can compete on a level playing field with larger companies. By ensuring that smaller firms get their fair share of the contracts, we will go a long way towards ensuring that the financial benefits of the games find their way into local communities in Glasgow and other parts of Scotland, which will give a boost to our economy.

It might be possible to engage with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to explore the possibility of bringing together councils throughout Scotland to support our potential heroes—when they are selected—by providing free use of sporting and events facilities, and even free transport if that can assist them.

The Commonwealth games present a great opportunity to promote Glasgow and Scotland to the Commonwealth, but we seek benefits for the city's wellbeing beyond the last race in 2014. I welcome this debate as part of the process of securing that legacy. As a Glasgow MSP, I will do my best to make the games a success, and I look forward to the future updates that my colleague Patricia Ferguson's amendment requests, as 2014 draws closer.

15:41

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): I have thoroughly enjoyed this high-quality debate so far, and I echo the comments from John Mason and Patricia Ferguson about how inspirational some of the new infrastructure has been. As a Glasgow MSP, I, too, have visited some of the facilities that are coming on line, in particular the velodrome and the related indoor arena. They are part of a spectacular transformation of the east end of Glasgow with which I am proud to be associated. It is a million miles from the old perceptions of Glasgow: the "No Mean City" tag that existed previously, and the Victorian sandstone gloom across the city. Modern-day Glasgow is far from that. The partnership work between the Scottish Government—and the previous Scottish Executive under Jack McConnell—and Steven Purcell at Glasgow City Council has been quite powerful and

successful. It shows exactly what we can do when all parties work together.

The Commonwealth games will take Glasgow the brand to the next level and cement the city's position as a global player. I will touch on the previous attempts to improve Glasgow's image, which Sandra White mentioned. Those initiatives were to be welcomed—and I still welcome them—but many of them were city-centre based, with shiny new buildings and conference facilities on Clydeside. They seemed a million miles away to many deprived communities just 1 or 2 miles down the road, which did not think that the Glasgow regeneration was for them. That is not a criticism of previous regeneration attempts, but we must acknowledge that they were city-centre based and isolated some of our most deprived communities.

The difference with the Commonwealth games is that the investment is not so much in the city centre, but directly in some of our most impoverished communities. That is very different from what has happened before. It is an infrastructure legacy that is very real and direct to many vulnerable groups, and not remote from them as previous regeneration attempts may have been.

We have the games village, the velodrome, the M74, the Clyde Gateway, the Tollcross international swimming centre—the list goes on and on. It is a meaty list of successful projects that are coming on line. Indeed, there is a financial boon too: 82 per cent of all contracts that were offered were successfully tendered for by Scottish companies. I take on board Hanzala Malik's reasonable points about small and medium-sized companies. The meat behind the infrastructure is £523 million of investment. There is £344 million from the Scottish Government and £80 million from Glasgow City Council—which is an 80:20 split—and the rest is made up from television revenue and other sources of income. All in all, there is £1 billion of related capital investment in and around Glasgow, which will sustain an additional 1,200 jobs. That is good news in these exceptionally difficult times, and we should commend the successful partnership work between the Parliament and our partners in Glasgow.

Around 6,500 athletes will be coming to the city from 71 countries, and there will be many more thousands of visitors. I hope that, instead of making a one-off visit to Glasgow and the rest of Scotland, they will be repeat visitors because of the positive experience that they have had, and that they will take that good news and their good experience of Glasgow back overseas.

Hanzala Malik talked about communities other than the indigenous white communities benefiting from the games. I am working closely with the

African and Caribbean Network in Glasgow, at the African and Caribbean centre in the merchant city, which is already looking to build links with the Namibian and Zambian training camps that will be based in Glasgow for the 2012 Olympics. It wants to forge close links with the people from that part of the world who will be coming to Glasgow, including members of athletes' families, to give them a positive cultural experience right across Glasgow and Scotland. That is happening now, and I would be happy to chat to Hanzala Malik about how he could work in partnership with me to promote that work further. That is a really good success story.

Lots of good things are happening. I commend Glasgow City Council's Commonwealth graduate fund and its Commonwealth jobs fund, just as I commend the additional 1,000 apprentices that were announced for the Glasgow Commonwealth games back in 2009, with another £2 million of investment from the Scottish Government. That is all just the public pound. When Glasgow and the Scottish Government do something good, it is the same public pound that funds it. It is called partnership funding. It is not about who has leveraged in the most cash; it is about working together as a team. I want to think about how we can take that further forward and build on the legacy.

We have heard about the 15,000 volunteers. I have made this point to David Grevemberg and he has taken it completely on board. Let us make sure that those volunteers are not the same people who volunteer at every volunteering opportunity for the sake of their curriculum vitae. How can we reach into the deprived communities and ethnic communities and get those who are not the usual volunteers to volunteer? That would be something.

In the little time that I have left, I will mention the cashback for communities scheme. Who knows how much money will be available under that scheme in the future? By definition, that will be based on how much money is confiscated from criminals. I ask that the fund be monitored, reassessed and re-evaluated, with some of the money put into our most deprived communities to support youth workers and youth coaches to ensure that people in deprived communities do not just watch the Commonwealth games on television but are inspired by local coaches, youth leaders and facilities. We must have joined-up thinking so that the legacy is not just the buildings, the repeat visitors to Glasgow and the jobs that are created. We must reach into the heart of our deprived communities and ensure that there is a real Scottish legacy.

I commend the debate as one of the finest that I have been involved in at the Scottish Parliament during the current session.

15:47

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): I thank Sandra White for invoking memories of the Glasgow garden festival. Neil Bibby and I were chatting and he told me that, at the time, he was too wee to go on the Coca-Cola rollercoaster. I was just too scared.

I thank the minister for the work that she is doing on the Commonwealth games. I welcome her announcement in the press this morning that Carnoustie, in the region that I represent, is also to benefit from the games, with the shooting events being hosted at Barry Buddon. I also welcome her announcement that an athletes village will be built in Dundee to accommodate the competitors. It is welcome news that Dundee will benefit directly from the Commonwealth games, and I thank her for that.

The minister will be aware—because her council colleagues have signed up to it and pledged to back it—that I have been running a campaign, which now has the support of more than 2,000 Dundonians, to bring the Government's promised £50 million national football academy to Dundee. A new athletes village facility in Dundee will be a major boost to the city council's bid for the national football academy. I therefore welcome the minister's announcement this morning and thank her for it.

I turn to a darker side of the debate, which it is my responsibility to address in my new role in Labour's justice team. It is something that I know that the Government will want to do early work to prevent—I refer to the risk that people will be trafficked to Scotland for the sex trade for the Commonwealth games. In an answer to a parliamentary question on 14 March, Kenny MacAskill reported to Parliament that, so far, no trafficking issues had been identified surrounding the Commonwealth games. However, Baroness Helena Kennedy states in her report on trafficking in Scotland, which was published just last month, that Scotland's police service acknowledges that it lacks intelligence on human trafficking.

Baroness Kennedy argues that intelligence on human trafficking in Scotland is insufficient to uncover the true nature and extent of the problem. That means that the Scottish police admit that they are often unable to identify in houses that they raid women and children who have been trafficked for sex or domestic servitude. I therefore believe that, when the Cabinet Secretary for Justice gave his answer to Parliament in March, he was probably unaware of the risks that are out there.

In her report—which I recommend that all members read—Baroness Kennedy recommends that all first responders and relevant front-line professionals, who include paramedics and police officers, should undergo anti-trafficking training before the Commonwealth games. Such training has been provided—the minister gave an answer about that in the chamber earlier this year—to contractors that are involved in constructing the national sports arena. Will the minister work with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy to commit to providing that training to all police officers, paramedics and perhaps other relevant staff whom she identifies who are working in greater Glasgow, given that construction has started and the issues are—unfortunately—all too alive?

Baroness Kennedy recommends resourcing a dedicated multi-agency law enforcement group to work together in greater co-operation with victims' groups to ensure prompt investigation and prosecution of human trafficking in Scotland. Another step is to ensure that police services and victims' groups are fully resourced to overcome the lack of intelligence that has led to only one conviction for human trafficking ever having taken place in Scotland, compared with more than 150 such convictions in England.

Another of Baroness Kennedy's recommendations is to raise awareness of human trafficking in Scotland among the public as well as in public services. No such initiative currently exists. As I explained, professionals who might come into contact with human trafficking are unlikely to recognise it. Against the backdrop of the 2014 games, an awareness-raising campaign could help the police and the public to identify victims of human trafficking more quickly and more successfully.

I recognise the work of the former MSP Trish Godman and of Glasgow City Council on the issue. I ask the minister to address when she sums up my request for anti-trafficking training for front-line staff, in the light of Baroness Kennedy's findings. I pledge Labour members' support for doing everything that we can to assist the Government in preventing human trafficking for the Commonwealth games.

15:53

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I am sure that fellow members are aware that no women are in the top 10 nominations for this year's sports personality of the year award, and perhaps members are aware that the award's 27-strong nominations panel of newspaper sports editors and *Zoo* and *Nuts* magazine staff was entirely male. It is not as if there was no female

success this year—Kath Grainger, who is the single most successful female rower in British history, won her sixth world championship gold in the double sculls together with Anna Watkins. I am reassured by the public criticism of that award's glaring oversight and I believe that the Commonwealth games can address the woeful lack of recognition of women's significant achievements in sport.

As John Mason and others have noted, the built legacy of the games is extremely important. The new facilities such as the community sports hubs in local authority areas are extremely welcome. Grass-roots access to the more elite facilities is also essential to make those facilities work after the games have gone.

However, a culture change of gender equality in sport could be the most valuable legacy of all. We must take the opportunity to inspire more women—young and old—into sport. Women and girls play much less sport than men and boys—12 per cent of women play sport regularly, compared with 20 per cent of men. There are many reasons for that. Women's sports coverage makes up just 2 to 5 per cent of all sports media coverage.

Women appear all too infrequently in the sports pages. It is important to address that by increasing positive images of women participating in sport, and raising awareness of what is going on in women's sport at all levels, week in and week out. However, few sports journalists in Britain are women. A report for the Commission on the Future of Women's Sport shows that only 0.5 per cent of all sponsorship in the UK goes to women's sport. We must therefore use the games as an opportunity to give equal coverage to male and female sports. We need active programmes to target women, as well as to change the media portrayal of female success. More female sports in the media and gender equality in sports participation, with the health and wellbeing benefits that come along with that, will be a legacy worth delivering. I ask the minister to ensure that the Commonwealth games legacy enhances the role of women in sports in Scotland.

It is essential to work directly with Government bodies to ensure that we have a meaningful legacy of participation. Financial and practical support for coaching programmes across the sporting disciplines to ensure that opportunities are made available to those who are inspired by our games are also crucial. The minister will be aware that, in the Lothians, there have been campaigns to ensure the retention of Edinburgh's neglected track stadium and velodrome—the much-loved grass-roots home of track cycling—and although less elite, no less important, Leith waterworld. We must also ensure that any new buildings are maintained to a decent standard.

As Jenny Marra highlighted, modern games are not just about sport, unfortunately. Members will no doubt be aware of the controversy surrounding the London Olympic committee's decision to appoint Dow Chemical as sponsor of the Olympic stadium wrap. As many members know, Dow Chemical is the legal owner of Union Carbide, the company that is responsible for one of the world's worst industrial disasters—the Bhopal gas disaster in 1984. It is hard to think of a less appropriate sponsor for a life-affirming, health-promoting, global sports event. That is why the community that is still living in Bhopal and the Indian Olympic Association—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I think that we need to deal with matters that are relevant to the motion on the legacy and planning of the games.

Alison Johnstone: Many people in Scotland are in solidarity with the Indian Olympic Association and it is important that the global Olympic association looks at those issues. We have an opportunity to do things differently in Scotland. I am sure that the minister will agree that ethical considerations should be part of the sponsor selection process. I would be grateful if, in closing, the minister would confirm that she agrees that Dow is a wholly unsuitable company to sponsor sporting events of this type.

A modern, global games provides challenges and opportunities. I warmly welcome the practical progress that has been made to date and the positive visions that are being shared by members across the chamber of a fitter and more sporting Scotland throughout ages and genders.

15:58

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): As we have heard, the Commonwealth games will be Scotland's games and not just Glasgow's games. As the MSP for Angus South, I am delighted that one of the 2014 disciplines is being staged in the constituency that I am privileged to represent. Of course, this will not be the first time that Barry Buddon has been involved with a Commonwealth games. Back in 1986, when the games was last hosted by Scotland, the Ministry of Defence property on the outskirts of Carnoustie staged the full-bore target rifle event, with the remainder of the competition taking place at Musselburgh.

In 2014 though—and no pun intended—we in Angus get the full shooting match. I am sure that we will seize the opportunity to demonstrate once again our ability to host a major sporting event, as we have done so successfully with golf on the nearby links, as well as to showcase everything that Angus has to offer as a tourism destination.

The games shooting coming to Barry Buddon will provide a significant and welcome economic

boost to Angus and Dundee. Like Jenny Marra, I welcome Dundee being the site for a satellite village to accommodate competitors, support staff and officials. Commonsense and practicality require those who are taking part to be billeted somewhat closer to the venue than the athletes village in Glasgow, and realistically, with 40-plus countries expected to be represented and more than 600 people requiring beds, Angus is not an option.

That being the case, I am pleased that Dundee was the choice. It is the logical option and locating there further highlights the growing, mutually beneficial bond between Angus and its neighbouring city. Just as my constituency will enjoy the wide-ranging and considerable benefits of Dundee attracting the Victoria and Albert museum, the jobs boost from Michelin and the massive economic fillip from the promise to develop Dundee port as a renewables hub, it is good to see the city sharing the benefits of our games involvement.

Even without competitors and officials being based in Angus, we will, if the shooting in previous games is anything to go by, be in for a significant economic boost courtesy of the influx of spectators. I understand from past evidence that we should be gearing up for in excess of 3,300 visitors daily over the five or six days of the event, and I have written to the chief executive of Angus Council to encourage the authority to seize the economic opportunity that that presents.

I hope that local companies will enjoy some success in bidding for the £4 million-worth of construction and other related contracts at Barry Buddon, thereby safeguarding and enhancing employment in our area. I can also tell the minister that, from discussions I have had with its management, Angus College is keen to explore possible temporary job opportunities for its students.

Having the games in Angus affords an opportunity to promote our area as the fantastic tourism location that it is. That is why, as the local MSP, I have been in touch with both Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland to encourage them to join the council in engaging with games organisers and ensuring that visitors are made aware of the appeal of nearby tourist attractions such as Arbroath abbey and Barrie's birthplace and are encouraged to stay on and sample everything that Angus has to offer. John Mason and Bob Doris are right: delivering a successful games and fully exploiting their potential will depend on partnership.

However, this debate is about a lasting legacy from 2014 and I am mindful of concerns within Scotland's shooting community about the spin-off for the sport. Back in 1986, temporary ranges

were used for small-bore rifle and pistol shooting. The only permanent facility remaining from those games is at Barry Buddon. I understand that, 28 years on, that full-bore set-up will again be utilised, although I presume that it will receive a revamp beforehand. The remainder of the infrastructure that will be put in place for 2014 will be temporary in nature, which, of course, is a similar scenario to that which is planned for the 2012 Olympics.

I understand that suggestions have been made to hire or purchase buildings and equipment that are in service for the London games for redeployment here two years later. In economic terms, that would make sense. However, the Scottish Target Shooting Federation is concerned that we might miss an opportunity if we do not establish a permanent home for this infrastructure. No new target shooting facilities have been built in Scotland since 1986, and the STS would like us to hang on to the infrastructure and persuade the MOD to have it located in some small part of the massive Barry Buddon complex, with Scotland's shooters having an access arrangement for competitions, training and whatever else. Again, as the local MSP, I would welcome such a move as it would provide a lasting legacy in Angus. However, given that the Scottish Government might have difficulty in persuading the MOD to play ball, can the minister advise the chamber what consideration is being given to ensuring a lasting shooting legacy in the country, wherever such a facility might be? After all, Scotland has a proud shooting tradition, especially at the Commonwealth games.

Unfortunately, shooting did not feature when the event was staged in Edinburgh back in 1970. Although the sport debuted in 1966, it took until 1974 for it to become a fixture on the programme. Having drawn a blank in 1966, which—let's face it—was not a good sporting year for Scotland, we won a silver and bronze in Christchurch before the legendary Alister Allan won gold in Edmonton in 1978 and began a remarkable run that saw him win two golds and a bronze in Brisbane, two silvers and a bronze in Edinburgh in 1986 and then, remarkably, a further silver and bronze in Victoria in 1994, making him the second most successful ever Scottish Commonwealth games athlete behind Alan Wells. In Delhi in 2010, we had an all-time record haul of nine shooting medals, including four golds, and we witnessed some remarkable efforts from Jen McIntosh, who won two golds and a bronze, and Jonathan Hammond, whose two golds, a silver and a bronze made him the most successful ever Scot at a single games.

I hope that, on home soil, there will be further success to come, although I understand that there might be fewer pairs competitions included on the Barry Buddon programme. That will make getting

close to the Delhi target rather challenging. I hope, however, that Angus will host domestic success and witness the raising of the saltire at the medal ceremonies.

Hosting the 2014 Commonwealth games is an immensely exciting prospect for Scotland and Angus looks forward to playing its part in making them a triumph.

16:04

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con): It is a pleasure to take part in this positive debate. It is clear that we all agree that the Commonwealth games represent an exciting opportunity. A great deal of very hard work and professional commitment contributed to Glasgow's successful bid; indeed, I remember being in the Old Fruitmarket for the victory announcement. The excitement was palpable—I think that I might even have kissed Nicola Sturgeon.

The whole venture is surrounded by high hopes and good will. Glasgow wants it to be a success; we want it to be a success; and Scotland wants it to be a success. Of course, as members have indicated, we want Scotland to benefit from the Olympic games as well. However, if we are to translate the good intentions and aspirations into reality, there must be robust, objective and, if necessary, critical assessment of progress. The 2009 report "On your marks ... Get set ... Go: A games legacy for Scotland" laid out a positive set of objectives for the Commonwealth games. I will concentrate on two of the areas that were covered: young people and the economy.

I might look an improbable candidate to take part in a debate about sport in general and the Commonwealth games in particular, but I have had my moments—at least, I vaguely recall that I have had my moments. When I was active in sport, two things were important: a structure by which I could engage in sport and role models to encourage me. I am delighted by the desire to ensure that, by 2022, 80 per cent of children meet the recommended level of physical activity that is set out in the national activity strategy. That is great, but how will it actually happen?

When I was at Greenock academy, which was a state secondary school, we had something called games every week and interschool matches every Saturday. There was hockey for the girls and—yes, Mr Wheelhouse—rugby for the boys. In the summer term, we had tennis, athletics and cricket. That led me from the age of 12 into a life in which sport was a regular component. Competing was fun and winning was a bonus, although a somewhat infrequent one. That activity continued at university and beyond and it certainly had

benefits for me way beyond the actual sport. Neil Bibby referred to that aspect.

The role models were not just Wimbledon tennis champions and ace athletes; they were the dedicated and passionate physical education teachers who turned out in all weathers to instruct, train and inspire. Only in adulthood did I really appreciate how much I owed them. They were supported by other teaching colleagues whose commitment to their pupils extended to assisting with umpiring, refereeing and bus duties for away games.

Can we really say that such or even similar opportunities exist for youngsters at secondary school today? They might do in the private sector, and those pupils and schools are very lucky, but what about the state sector, particularly when recreational areas and open spaces are disappearing at an alarming rate? Those reservations about what exactly is available to school pupils are shared by the Scottish sports alliance. The Scottish health, household and recreation surveys have indicated that there has been no significant impact on the average level of physical activity among Scots.

A *British Medical Journal* report in 2010 showed a mixed picture on the legacy of large sporting events. My friend Nanette Milne urged caution in how we view the legacy. If we want to deliver a worthy legacy for our young people, the Scottish Government must commission an audit now of how, where, when and by whom that legacy will be delivered. It is not just about a fitter future for our young people, although that is important, but about identifying Scottish sporting talent for the future, which is too precious an issue to leave to speculation and good intention. I hope that the Scottish Government will respond positively to that suggestion. The Government should also be prepared to report on progress to the Parliament. Patricia Ferguson's sensible amendment makes that point, and we will support it.

Economic benefits have featured as an identifiable legacy. As many members have said, not least John Mason, benefits are already visible for Glasgow, which is hugely important. We can anticipate direct spend in the Glasgow and Scottish economies from spectators and visitors but, again, anticipation and expectation are not enough and there are health warnings hovering around. The *British Medical Journal* report confirmed that an increase in tourist numbers cannot be taken as a given. During the games in Lillehammer, Seoul, Barcelona and Atlanta, tourist numbers increased, but that did not happen during the games in Manchester and Calgary, and Sydney showed mixed results.

If we want to translate economic potential into reality, we need robust activity to measure what is

happening on the ground. I ask the Scottish Government to liaise regularly with Glasgow City Council, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the Confederation of British Industry Scotland to get accurate feedback from businesses on whether progress is actually being made or is just fondly imagined. Again, I expect the Scottish Government to report back to the Parliament on what those organisations find.

The debate has been informed, interesting and constructive, as Bob Doris said. I hope that the Scottish Government will respond in a similar vein. I support the motion and the amendment.

16:10

Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab): Like Sandra White, I come to the debate with a great deal of enthusiasm and a giant head cold, so I hope that members will please excuse the sniffles as we go along.

I welcome the opportunity to close the debate as Labour's new shadow youth employment spokesperson, because we are talking about legacy. We are talking about the legacy of the games to sport, to skills, to the health of our nation, to the regeneration of Glasgow and beyond, and to our economy. Ultimately, legacy is about how we better ourselves and our nation for the next generations that follow us, and for me that is what politics is all about.

We have heard some great speeches covering various aspects of what legacy means. On health, I felt that Neil Bibby made some excellent points about physical literacy and the fact that sport brings confidence to young people and allows them to access new disciplines that they may never have seen or experienced before. That is incredibly valuable in its own right.

John Mason, Sandra White and Bob Doris all talked eloquently about the facilities that they will see in their constituencies in Glasgow and the legacy that they will bring to the communities that they represent. Hanzala Malik talked about the important role that the legacy can bring in community cohesion and the integration of communities across Glasgow.

I thought that Tavish Scott spoke very well about the contribution of the games to the economy. In particular, he made a point about the legacy of the games in tough economic times and the fact that we need to keep faith and encourage people to keep faith in the economic benefits when they might see other ways of spending public money as better. There is a great job to be done, and I welcome Tavish Scott's comment about publishing the lists of Scottish companies that

have benefited from the games to promote that agenda more widely. He made a very salient point.

I will spend the time that I have left talking about skills and sport together. Neil Bibby talked about two Glasgow City Council initiatives—the Commonwealth jobs fund and the Commonwealth graduate fund—that seek to bring them together. The Commonwealth jobs fund aims to create 1,000 jobs that are targeted to 18 to 24-year-olds who have been without employment for six months or more. Personally, I was impressed to see that priority is being given to living wage employers, which is important in progressing the case for the living wage.

The Commonwealth graduate fund is worth £10 million over four years and seeks to create 1,000 graduate jobs. That is important considering youth unemployment, particularly when there is so much displacement within the jobs market and underemployment in the market itself. Similar to the jobs fund, the graduate fund is focused on graduates who have been without employment for six months or more.

There is also a role for the future jobs fund. I am aware that the Scottish Sports Association has taken on 67 young people through that scheme, which to the association is the equivalent of £435,000-worth of investment. That is money used to create new roles in sports administration, coaching, information technology and sports development.

Coaching in itself is particularly interesting. I notice that hockey bodies have picked up the opportunities more than other sports have done, because they recognise that they provide the ability not just to coach people in hockey skills and allow them to take those coaching skills into the classroom, but to increase the capacity of the active schools programmes. More coaches are created, and they can then go into schools and deliver the sport. We need to recognise the value of that and encourage more of the same by ensuring that, when we need new coaches, we give them the business skills that they need to be the self-employers that they so often are. We need to remove any barriers to that development.

I recognise that the community jobs fund does much of the same work, but I am conscious that the future of that particular pot of money is unknown beyond March. I am sure that the Scottish Government would not be daft enough to get rid of the fund, so perhaps it could look at enhancing it by developing a specific sports strand that could form part of a wider legacy of the games.

I want to talk about volunteering, which John Mason touched on. I read with great interest the Manchester legacy paper, which talked about

volunteering opportunities for more than 10,000 people in Manchester and greater Manchester. What was interesting about that was that 24 per cent of those people were volunteering for the first time; 47 per cent said that they had learnt new skills; and 20 per cent reported improved employment chances following that experience, which I thought was very important.

There were a mixture of volunteering opportunities around transport, event organisation, security, technology and indeed supporting the ceremonies themselves. There is a mix of volunteering opportunities with which to engage. I was interested to see that, of the 10,000 volunteers in Manchester, 2,250 came out with a level 1 qualification—they were accredited for the volunteering work that they had done. Does the Scottish Government have plans to ensure that people who volunteer in the Glasgow games get the same accreditation for the experience that they are about to put themselves through?

I recognise that the personal best scheme is mentioned on the Commonwealth games website. Although it is a very welcome scheme, which seeks to work with those who are perhaps furthest removed from the jobs market, it is very small scale, in that only 127 opportunities have been taken up so far. How many opportunities would the minister like to see being taken up by the time that the games come round in 2014? Perhaps the Government will match the ambition—and indeed the delivery—of Manchester in that regard, as it brought more than 2,000 accredited positions.

The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils Scotland report on delivering the skills for the games recommended that perhaps 10 per cent of the opportunities that the games create could be ring fenced—for want of a better term—for those who are disadvantaged in the labour market. Perhaps there is a role there to ensure that it is not just the same faces and the same people who benefit from the games.

The report made important points about the use of community benefit clauses, which I encourage the minister to look at more closely, not just with regard to the games but in a wider sense across Scotland in the procurement processes that we go through. It also made recommendations around the use of student placements and the secondment of employees across the different partnership organisations involved with the games to ensure that we feel the benefit of the games across a number of aspects of civic society and across public bodies.

I read a little bit of the organising committee's report on progress on the games so far, which paid particular tribute to the Government and the various other agencies involved with regard to the strength of partnership that has been delivered. It

is in that spirit that Labour comes to the chamber to say, "Please work with us. Together we can deliver the strong, productive and valuable games that Scotland so needs and deserves."

16:17

Shona Robison: Like others, I think that we have heard some good speeches and some good suggestions in what was a consensual debate. I will try to respond to as many of those suggestions as possible, but if I do not, I assure members that they have been noted.

Patricia Ferguson asked a number of questions. I agree with her that the creation of a lasting legacy is a challenge, but is absolutely critical to our success. I agree absolutely with what she said about the involvement of other local authorities. The games legacy for Scotland portal outlines some of the work that is being done.

Patricia Ferguson mentioned the work of the previous Public Audit Committee. She will be aware that the games budget now includes an inflation forecast, following a request from that committee in early 2010. I assure her that there is a significant contingency budget within the games budget.

The ticketing strategy is still under development, but we will certainly look at the Olympic experience and the strengths and weaknesses of the Olympics ticketing strategy.

I was very pleased to hear that Patricia Ferguson is taking up zumba, which fits in very well with the let's get Scotland dancing programme, which Fiona Hyslop looks after.

Nanette Milne referred to the petition from the Children's Orchard, which I will look at, along with other ministers.

John Mason made some very important points. One that I want to highlight was his comment about the community facilities within the NISA and velodrome complex. Local communities have had a fair amount of upheaval in relation to the development of the sites, so it is right and proper that they see a direct benefit in terms of the community facilities that they gain.

Neil Bibby talked about some of the apprenticeship programmes that Glasgow City Council is running, which are also important. Through Skills Development Scotland, we support those to the tune—I think—of £1.43 million. That partnership work is important. Someone made the point that it does not matter whose public pound it is, because it is all the public pound at the end of the day. What matters is what that money delivers.

Neil Bibby also made the point that the legacy from the international children's games is

important. I experienced that highly successful event for myself.

The organising committee will, of course, consider free and discounted tickets as part of the ticketing strategy but, as I said, that strategy is at an early stage of development.

Sandra White was right to comment on the involvement of Blindcraft and veterans in the refurbishment of Commonwealth house. I attended the Commonwealth house opening ceremony. The standard of work in the fixtures and fittings is fantastic, so they have done a wonderful job.

Sandra White asked me a couple of specific questions about improvements at Kelvingrove underground station. I will get back to her about that, because I will have to take it up with Glasgow City Council and ask it about any plans that it has.

Tavish Scott asked a couple of questions, including one about capturing some of the sporting moments in art form. Fiona Hyslop is, handily, in the chamber, so I am sure that she heard that. Those moments need to be captured so that future generations can get a feel for them.

Tavish Scott also mentioned that he is a golfer. I do not wish to detract from the Commonwealth games debate, but he will be aware that one of the important legacies of the Ryder cup is the club golf programme. It is one of the most fantastic successes, with a 20 per cent conversion rate for clubs.

I assure Tavish Scott that the map to which he referred will be fixed. He also asked questions about jobs. I assure him that, as part of the meta-evaluation that I mentioned in my opening speech, an economic evaluation will consider the detail of some of the questions that he asked. I hope that that will fulfil his desires in that regard.

Paul Wheelhouse talked about community sports hubs. I reassure him that I want the whole of Scotland to benefit. However, councils need to be proactive in leading the bids from their areas and it is fair to say that some have been more proactive than others. I encourage all councils to examine closely the potential for community sports hubs in their areas.

I reassure Mr Malik that the approach that we are taking to 2014 is very different from that taken to the legacy from the Edinburgh games. Many lessons have been learned since then.

On increased visibility beyond 2012, Mr Malik makes the important point that we want continuity of interest. If we keep that interest going all the way through to 2014, it will provide an important platform.

Community cohesion is also important. We will examine opportunities to enhance not only our

links with Commonwealth countries, but community cohesion in Scotland through the Commonwealth themes. I am happy to write to Mr Malik with a bit more detail about that.

Mr Malik made an important point about support for small and medium-sized enterprises. Many of the contracts have been won by SMEs but, without a doubt, some will need to be supported to get the best out of bidding for contracts. We will do that through our enterprise agencies.

Bob Doris talked about the work that is going on. He mentioned not only the city centre investment, which has been important for Glasgow, but the fact that Commonwealth games investment is being made in some of the most deprived communities in the city. It will make a real difference not only to the physical landscape but to social regeneration in those areas. That is crucial.

Jenny Marra talked about trafficking. She can be assured that Kenny MacAskill, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, has said that he will discuss with Helena Kennedy how to make progress on matters that are raised in her report. I am happy to write to Ms Marra with more information on that or to ensure that the cabinet secretary does so.

Alison Johnstone raised several issues about the role of women in sport. We certainly want to ensure that the profile of women in sport is heightened and we will look at ways of doing that. She also raised the issue of ethical considerations in the sponsorship realm. The games organisers are alert to the potential damage that an inappropriate sponsor could cause to the image of the games or to the attractiveness of the brand to other potential sponsors. They are well aware of the issue.

I say briefly to Graeme Dey that I am aware of the shooting governing body's desire for a lasting legacy. We are looking at how we can secure a lasting legacy around a competition training facility and I will write to him with more detail on that.

Jenny Marra: Will the minister give way?

Shona Robison: Do I have time, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): Yes.

Jenny Marra: I ask the minister to address my specific request for anti-trafficking training for paramedics and police.

Shona Robison: I will pick up that issue with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and look at whether there are any plans for such training. We will get back to the member on the detail.

As I have an extra minute, I can respond to further points, which I am keen to do. Annabel

Goldie raised some important matters. I reassure her that sport and physical activity in state sector schools are being given a priority that they have never had in the past. I acknowledge that there are challenges and I assure her that I have made it one of my personal priorities to nail down the issue of PE in the curriculum. More will be said about that in the new year.

Let us not underestimate the impact of the active schools network. Five million sessions have been held across 70 different sports and physical activities—there was nothing like that when I was at school. Children are now exposed to different sports and physical activities in a way that has not happened before. There is more to do, but we are doing the right things. We are opening up the school estate through the community sports hubs, but we need to do more of that and ensure that it happens in every school.

Kezia Dugdale made a very good speech in which she covered some important issues. We want to ensure that the next generation is one of the key beneficiaries of the Commonwealth games legacy. Some good work is taking place around employment initiatives—she mentioned a number of those. The personal best scheme pilot in Glasgow has been evaluated and we are looking at how we can take it forward, not only in Glasgow but throughout Scotland, in a way that has the biggest impact. I am happy to keep her updated on how we are doing that. It is important to highlight having community benefit clauses in contracts.

I have gone through as many of the points that have been raised as possible. I am sure that if I have missed any, members will write to me about them. I thank members for their positive contributions to the debate.

Fishing Negotiations

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

The next item of business is a statement by Richard Lochhead on the outcome of end-of-year fishing negotiations. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

16:29

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): Two weeks ago I informed the chamber of our intentions for the negotiations at the European Union fisheries council, which took place on Thursday and Friday last week, finishing shortly before 4am on Saturday morning. Before the negotiations, I outlined how crucial the talks would be for Scotland, and I think that it is useful to update Parliament on the outcome.

We went into the negotiations with a very dark cloud hanging over us. The legal quagmire of the cod recovery plan threatened to snatch from our fishermen their rightful opportunities to catch their quotas. Let me be clear about what was at stake. We faced penalties for an alleged misinterpretation of a regulation that would have kept large parts of our prawn and white-fish fleets idle in port for the vast majority of the year. The impact would have been catastrophic for our fishing communities. More than 200 vessels could have gone out of business. We were staring over an abyss of economic meltdown for two of our key fleets.

Recently, I explained to the chamber that that was all down to a decision by officials in Brussels to interpret one of the articles in the cod recovery plan—the notorious article 13—in a way that would have driven a coach and horses through our whole approach to sustainable fisheries management. In short, they wanted to scupper the win-win scenario that has been pioneered in Scotland, which has given the fleet the lifeline of more days at sea in return for delivering real gains in conservation.

I told the chamber that I would take every step to ensure that our fleets had the time to catch our available quotas, which would mean overturning the Commission's decision. We made that goal our top priority as we went into the negotiations, to avoid our fleets plunging over the abyss of draconian penalties.

With enormous relief, I can now report that we managed to deliver that key priority. With the support of our United Kingdom, Northern Irish and Welsh counterparts, we played a leading role in winning widespread support for our incentive-based approach to achieving cod recovery. WWF

and RSPB Scotland gave us a clear endorsement. During the negotiations, we managed to build the case for common sense, and the Commission was eventually obliged to accept our sensible and positive approach.

Our fishing communities can now look forward to 2012 with much greater optimism than would otherwise have been the case. Our vessels will still be able to secure additional days at sea in return for continuing to take conservation measures. The outcome that we achieved has allowed our fishermen to draw back from the brink and, finally, to make their plans for accessing their fishing opportunities next year.

To move forward, we must stick to our commitment to develop further cod avoidance measures, particularly in the important prawn fleet, where we all agree that the high discard rates need to be tackled. As always, that will be extremely challenging, but we have a strong and proud track record of working with our industry to put in place cutting-edge conservation measures.

Indeed, we have a head start. A month before the council, we were already actively discussing with the industry a range of selectivity measures, and we had a programme for further reducing discards clearly in our sights. It is important to make the point that many of those measures are being developed by the industry itself.

However, as we move forward, it is necessary for all vessels in all fisheries to support effective fisheries conservation. The package that was agreed last week adds extra urgency to the discussions and, through meetings with the industry in the early new year, we will set to work on putting in place the next stage of our conservation plan for 2012.

The fact that our fleets can now go to sea next year is without doubt the big prize that we had to win, but I—along with, I am sure, the rest of the Parliament—remain hugely frustrated that we were not also able to secure a pause in the automatic yearly cuts in days at sea that the crazy cod recovery plan imposes on our fishers. That was the other threat to days at sea that was being negotiated.

We pushed hard for such a pause alongside France, Germany and Spain and, up until the last moment, we genuinely believed that we had secured a vital breathing space for our fleets. However, as is so often the way, given the ludicrous nature of the rollercoaster negotiations, as we neared the finishing line, the Commission suddenly declared that common sense was no match for the legal straitjacket of the plan. In short, it insisted that it did not have the legal powers to deliver the pause that it appeared to be sympathetic to. That left us incredulous that the

lawyers were once again running the show to the detriment of our fishing industry and our stocks.

We believe that the further cut in days at sea is grossly unfair and that it defies reason, but it is important to recognise that, thankfully, our success on the interpretation of article 13—the other issue affecting days at sea—will allow our fishers to reinstate the days that have been cut as a reward for taking conservation measures. Therefore, we must urgently investigate what new selective gears and other measures can be made to work in our mixed fishery to reduce cod mortality to the extent that complete exemption from the cuts will be allowed for the days-at-sea regime. That is one possible option.

Crucially, we left the negotiations with a clear commitment from the Commission that it would accelerate a complete overhaul of the cod recovery plan. Regardless of how belated that might be, we welcome it. We will focus our efforts next year on holding the Commission to that commitment.

Turning to our other priorities at the council—priorities that would normally dominate the debate at the council and here—I am pleased to be able to report an extremely positive picture.

We have been battling with the Commission for three years to remove west of Scotland haddock from catch-composition rules, which next year would have become a recipe for discards, given the increased quota for the stock. That key priority was finally secured at the council, thereby freeing our fishers to operate a targeted and profitable haddock fishery without massive and wasteful dumping of good-quality fish.

As part of the package, we secured the second-largest ever—I repeat, the second-largest ever—quota increase for a white-fish stock, with a 200 per cent increase for west coast haddock. That is still well within sustainable limits. At last our west coast haddock fishery has been placed on a sustainable and secure footing for the future.

More generally, we succeeded in overturning the Commission's attempt to impose arbitrary cuts in quota for so-called data-poor stocks. That allowed us to pursue the far more sensible approach of considering each stock on the basis of all the available evidence and left us with a vastly improved set of outcomes, which are worth an additional £4 million to Scottish fishermen for those stocks alone.

We managed to hold steady quotas for a number of other stocks that were threatened with arbitrary cuts, such as ling and tusk, while successfully arguing, on the basis of the evidence, for a rollover for our valuable megrim stocks and smaller reductions for a number of others, such as North Sea nephrops, or prawns, for which the

reduction was only 6.5 per cent, and monkfish, for which the reduction was just 5 per cent on the west coast and in the North Sea.

We followed our scientific long-term management plans, where plans were available. That means that in 2012 we can look forward to healthy increases across many of our key stocks, including a 94 per cent boost to North Sea herring, an 18 per cent gain in North Sea whiting, a 14 per cent increase in North Sea haddock and a huge uplift in blue whiting.

On top of that, we succeeded in achieving a commonsense approach to reaching maximum sustainable yield across all our key stocks, with agreement that we should follow the scientific advice to seek to reach that point by 2015, rather than bring the date forward to 2013—an unrealistic date, which had been plucked out of thin air.

These were the toughest of negotiations. I take the opportunity to pay tribute to the Scottish Government officials who worked over two days without sleep to fight Scotland's corner and deliver many gains for our industry. We achieved all but one of our key priorities, in extremely challenging circumstances. Crucially, we resolved in our favour a dispute with the Commission that would have decimated our fleets and made a mockery of our approach to rewarding fishers for conservation actions that will improve the cod stock and reduce discarding, which are aims that the Commission and member states are supposed to share. We achieved that by working closely and effectively with our UK partners and other member states. We also saw healthy quota increases in key stocks such as haddock, whiting and herring. Those are big gains, which will be worth millions of pounds to the Scottish fleet. We at last achieved our long-standing priority to remove haddock from the west coast catch-composition rules.

Our one disappointment was that we were prevented from stopping the on-going annual cuts in days at sea, due to the frustrating legal barriers that I mentioned. However, that will provide a driver for accelerating the overhaul of the current plan and ensuring that its successor is much more sensible and delivers effective conservation of cod stock alongside viable fishing opportunities for the Scottish fleet.

I am determined that in 2012 we will finally strike the balance between fisheries conservation and fleet viability, and I am determined to secure, in time for the new common fisheries policy in 2013, the necessary changes to that damaging policy, to allow Scotland more control over the destiny of our fishing industry and our seas.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The cabinet secretary will take questions on the issues that he raised in his statement. I intend to allow about 20

minutes for questions, after which we will move on to the next item of business.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I thank the cabinet secretary for the early advance copy of his statement, and I am pleased to respond in my new role. I discovered this morning that there was to be a statement on the fishing negotiations; there is nothing like being thrown in at the deep end. The east neuk fishing industry is in my region, so I very much recognise the need to support our fishing sector and acknowledge its importance to the viability of many communities.

It was difficult to get to where we are with the EU fisheries negotiations, and I acknowledge the contribution of the Scottish Government, the UK Government, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, RSPB Scotland and WWF in securing the withdrawal of the proposed regulation in the cod recovery plan. Their achievement underlines the importance of everyone working together in the interests of the Scottish fishing industry.

Following the outcome of the negotiations, how will the cabinet secretary respond to the concerns of the fishing sector, which is worried about elements of the deal? How will the Scottish Government work with both the fishing fleet and the processing sector to address those concerns? The cabinet secretary stresses his frustration at the inflexibility of the cod recovery plan, but what further dialogue will the Scottish Government have with the Commission to get it to recognise the Scottish fishing industry's strenuous efforts to deliver sustainable fishing and promote the use of scientific evidence in advance of the promised complete overhaul of the cod recovery plan?

Richard Lochhead: I thank Claire Baker for her questions and extend a warm welcome to her in her new role. I am sure that she will enjoy engaging with the rural affairs and environment portfolio and, in particular, with our fishing communities. I am also sure that I speak for most members of the Parliament when I say that very few will envy her having been given only a few hours to respond to a ministerial statement on fisheries.

We will be working very closely with our fishing industry throughout 2012. One clear message that I want to get across is that our industry is taking its obligations in relation to fisheries conservation very seriously indeed. Many of the measures that we now have to bring forward early in 2012—with a view to allowing the fleet to buy back days at sea in return for adopting new conservation measures—were already in the pipeline, and many of the discussions had already started over the past few months. Many fishermen have been trialling new measures and new gear, and I hope that those trials are productive. I know that many will be deployed for the first time in 2012. The

close working relationship with the industry, which I certainly support, will continue.

Claire Baker mentioned the impact on the onshore sector. That was a very important theme throughout the negotiations. Our fish processors need continuity of supply, otherwise they will lose their markets. On the one hand we are getting increased quotas, which is a very positive piece of news for our onshore sector. However, on the other hand, we had the debate about whether the fleet should go to sea to catch those quotas, and we have to make sure that that happens.

We will maintain dialogue with the European Commission. There are many issues that we want to pursue after last week's negotiations, but we also want to hold the Commission to its word that there will be an early, thorough overhaul of the cod recovery plan. We are not against the principle of a cod recovery plan, but it must work in Scottish circumstances. That is our aim.

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I thank the minister for sight of his statement.

This is indeed lumpy water yet again for the Scottish fishing fleet. Despite welcome quota increases in west coast haddock and North Sea herring, and the smaller increase in North Sea haddock, what was given to the Scottish fleet by the Commission's right hand was taken away by its left hand. The reaction of the Scottish fleet to me is that it is hugely disappointed and that the outcome is a bitter blow.

Does the cabinet secretary feel that the result is a good one? Does he think that the status quo would have been a good enough result? Why does the Scottish fleet, which has been praised by the Commission for conservation, again have to suffer cuts in effort, which will play havoc with the livelihoods of people in fishing communities up and down the Scottish coastline? Why is poor Scotland, which has strived to perfect conservation measures, being punished while Iceland and the Faroes, which, frankly, have done the opposite, are so far basking in their forbidden fruits—or should I say forbidden fish? Is it any wonder that Euroscepticism and disillusion with politicians thrive when, in the cabinet secretary's own words,

“common sense was no match for the legal straitjacket”

of the Commission's plans?

Richard Lochhead: Jamie McGrigor asked first for my response to the results that we achieved at the negotiations last week. I will make two clear points. First, we achieved all our priorities, bar one. It is not often that any minister in Scotland or the UK can come back from the negotiations and say that. Secondly, it is regrettable that, as I

outlined in my statement, we did not achieve that priority. We resisted with the utmost vigour, but for legal reasons—which is not a good enough excuse from the Commission—we were unable to achieve the pause that we wanted to achieve.

We now have to work with our industry because, as I hope Jamie McGrigor and others accept and as I said in response to Claire Baker, we still have some way to go in fisheries conservation.

I agree that the negotiations were about fishing opportunities for Scotland's fleet. As I said, where the science can back them, we have a variety of quota increases. However, the negotiations were also about fisheries conservation, because we must ensure that the stocks are there for future generations.

The industry in Scotland recognises that we still have some way to go, as I am sure do Jamie McGrigor and the Conservatives. However, we must ensure that the legislation that comes out of Brussels is appropriate for Scottish waters. We have a mixed fishery, which is why the combination of quotas and constant effort reduction is not the right solution for our waters.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: If we have short questions and answers, I might manage to get everyone in; otherwise, I am afraid that I will not be able to.

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): What assessment has been made of the impact that the negotiations will have on the fishing industry as a whole? What help or advice will be available to fishermen who are struggling to adjust to the outcome of this year's talks?

Richard Lochhead: We will produce the economic analysis of the negotiations in due course. Our initial findings are that they will be largely neutral in terms of revenue for the fleet. If anything, there will be an increase in the value of the quotas that can be landed in Scotland. However, we are continuing to work out that information.

With regard to the future, I can only reiterate what I said in response to other members, which is that we will work closely with the industry on many of the measures that we want to put in place so that we can finally reach a position whereby we are fishing sustainably in all fisheries with all vessels, which will be a win-win situation in which we will land better-quality fish from sustainable fisheries and have higher incomes for our fishermen, while at the same time having a long-term conservation plan in place.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): On the issue of scientific evidence, is it possible in these challenging economic times for the Scottish Government to put any finance into support for the

evidence base that the industry needs for the future to address the complex issue of what the catches consist of? For the record, I am pleased to speak again in a fisheries debate. I say to the cabinet secretary that the negotiations must have been extremely challenging—it is not a place that I would like to be in.

Richard Lochhead: I assure Claudia Beamish that it has its good moments as well. I thank her for her questions and I welcome her to her new role in the Labour shadow team with responsibility for the environment and climate change. I expect that she will have more exchanges with my colleague Stewart Stevenson than with me, but I am sure that we will have exchanges from time to time.

We paid attention to the science throughout the negotiations. The irony was that, quite often, the European Commission, which likes to preach how important the science is, did not stick to the science. If I had had a couple of extra hours for my ministerial statement, I could have explained to members what we had to go through just to secure a 200 per cent increase in the west of Scotland haddock catch, when the scientists were recommending a 410 per cent increase. Perhaps that gives members an indication of the inconsistency in Europe's approach to such matters. However, we are confident that we stuck to the science throughout.

I am determined that adequate support will be available for fisheries science in Scotland in the future. Our challenge is always that we have more than 30 species that we fish for in our waters alone, so other countries are not always able to contribute to the scientific effort. It is quite a challenge to fund that, because we must prioritise. However, we will pay close attention to that.

Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): The chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Bertie Armstrong, has said that the European Commission has totally ignored the progress in stock conservation that has been made in Scotland. Does the cabinet secretary, too, believe that that is the case? Would genuine regional management play a more active part in promoting conservation than the legal straitjacket does?

Richard Lochhead: I agree that the experience of this fisheries council and the previous one only serves to highlight how important radical reform of the common fisheries policy is. If we had decentralisation of the kind of decisions that were discussed on Thursday, Friday and Saturday back to member state level, working where appropriate on a regional basis, we would reach the right decisions without the anomalies and inconsistencies that we experience in Brussels in every annual negotiation.

In response to Rob Gibson's first point, I can only reiterate that we should remember that, just a couple of weeks ago, a law—not a proposal but a law—was published by the European Commission that would have decimated the fishing fleet in Scotland had it stayed in place. We resolved that in Scotland's favour at the negotiations, which is a big prize that we must not forget.

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD): In his statement, the minister said that Scotland played a leading role in the negotiations, with the support of the UK Government, which I am pleased to hear about. Of course, with a leading role comes a lead responsibility. We are now seeing what the Scottish Fishermen's Federation is calling a bitter blow.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We need to have a question, Mr Hume.

Jim Hume: Earlier, the SFF said to me that the number of days at sea was a red-line issue. Will the minister tell me how on earth the fishermen will have time to catch their quota? What measures will the Government put in place to tackle the issue?

Richard Lochhead: The key is to take advantage of the fact that the dispute over article 13 is now resolved, which means that we are allowed to give back to the fleet the amount that was cut, as a reward for adopting conservation measures. That has to be our tactic.

Although we disagree with the European Commission that it is possible to have year-on-year cuts—because, clearly, the more the basic allocation for the fleet is cut, the more difficult it becomes to restore the days, because we have a mixed fishery in Scotland and avoiding cod is difficult in many circumstances—there is a lot more that we can do. There are certain fisheries in Scotland in which discard levels are too high. I know that the Liberal Democrats and the other parties support this Parliament taking action in partnership with our industry to reduce those discards. We should focus on that and do what is right for fisheries conservation, as well as the fleet's long-term future.

Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab): I start by saying how much I have enjoyed working opposite the cabinet secretary and Mr Stevenson—and Ms Cunningham and Mr Russell—over the past three and a half years.

Can the minister assure us that EU implementing regulation 1211/2011/EC has been permanently repealed and cannot be brought back without consultation, as it was previously?

Is there any detail attached to the proposed overhaul of the cod recovery plan with regard to issues such as timescale, consultation and,

possibly, additional scientific information that might inform any future plan?

Richard Lochhead: We will deeply miss Elaine Murray in this portfolio, but I am sure that she will still be around, given her rural interests as a constituency MSP.

I confirm that the article 13 dispute has been resolved. A declaration was passed at the council, which we are satisfied gave us what we wanted at the end of that important dispute.

As I indicated in my statement, the commissioner has given a commitment to the council that, early in 2012, she will propose an alternative to the existing cod recovery plan. We will hold her to that timetable and will demand that ways be found to ensure that it is fixed as soon as possible because, of course, we face the prospect of co-decision with the European Parliament, which could take up to 18 months, and we want some early changes in place.

Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): I congratulate the cabinet secretary on securing the 200 per cent increase in west coast haddock. That was a remarkable achievement in the circumstances.

In his statement, the cabinet secretary referred to the new CFP that is anticipated for 2013. How does he see our negotiating position panning out, particularly in light of the curious developments at the European Council summit that took place the week before the fisheries council?

Richard Lochhead: That is a very good question. I am sure that time will tell. Thankfully, many countries in Europe realise that two thirds of the UK fisheries are based in Scotland. I assure the chamber that Scotland has many friends in Europe at the current time. We will use that good will to ensure that Scotland's voice is heard in the renegotiation of the common fisheries policy.

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): Is the cabinet secretary pushing the European Commission to produce a legal document that can allow the automatic cuts in days at sea that he mentioned in his statement to stop, which is what all member states want? What additional restrictions will be placed on our white-fish vessels this year so that they do not fall foul of a regime that will allow them to fish only four days in a fortnight?

Richard Lochhead: I assure Tavish Scott that I and, I am sure, my UK colleagues, will be fighting tooth and nail to ensure that we can pin down the commissioner on a strict timetable for—and, indeed, a legal interpretation of—a new cod recovery plan, with the amendments that we want put in place. We are not opposed to the principle of a cod recovery plan—indeed, Scotland is

leading the way in many regards in helping cod stocks to recover in our waters—but we have to have those changes in place as soon as possible. We will continue on those lines.

Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP): Obviously, the processing sector and markets rely on a continuity of supply in order to make their businesses viable. Can the cabinet secretary assure us that he will have discussions to ensure that the reduced days at sea are staggered in such a way that that continuity is not affected, which would have a detrimental impact on the processing sector and the markets?

Richard Lochhead: Mark McDonald raises a good point. The future of our fishing industry in Scotland is not just about tax and quotas that are negotiated in Brussels or anywhere else, but about how the processing and onshore sector interacts with the fleet at sea. That is one of the biggest failings of our fishing industry in Scotland, because it has not been happening adequately in recent years.

If there is anything that I can do—and I have been trying to encourage this for a long time—to fix a better relationship and greater co-ordination between landings and what the market requires for the processors and onshore sector, I will do it. That will be another win-win situation: the fleet will get higher prices and the processors will get continuity of supply. The sea fisheries partnership that the Scottish Government is setting up will address the very point that Mark McDonald raised, because we have to pay attention to the markets.

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): There are many in the fishing industry who believe that the whole debacle over article 13 was simply a clever tactical ploy by EU officials that allowed them to cut days at sea, leaving our fishermen to pay a heavy price for the settlement. What is the cabinet secretary's view on that theory?

Richard Lochhead: As I said before, it was not a European Commission proposal but an act of law that was published—it was then withdrawn, thankfully, but at one point it was the law of the land that we would suffer penalties that would mean that our fleet could not go to sea. Thankfully, we have resolved that dispute, and that was the right thing to do.

I once again experienced the European Commission's tactics—well over 48 hours without any sleep—and I can tell members that they are not the best. Thankfully, they do not often win, but the way in which they are implemented is abhorrent. That is a symptom of the common fisheries policy being far too centralised and the Commission trying to reach a deal among 27 member states, many of which do not even have

fisheries, over a matter of hours. That is not the way to do business and it is not the way to treat Scotland's fishing communities.

Margaret McDougall (West Scotland) (Lab): In response to an earlier question, the cabinet secretary agreed that the high discard level was an issue. Can he expand on the Scottish Government's plans for further cod avoidance measures to tackle the high discard level?

Richard Lochhead: To give Margaret McDougall comfort, the industry has been working closely with the scientists and the Scottish Government. There are a number of new nets being developed, as well as other measures. Others are still to be developed in the future, but we hope that those measures will be deployed in 2012, which will help to cut the discard rate and improve cod avoidance. That will in turn allow more days to be given to the fleet at sea, which will be a win-win situation all round.

“The National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17”

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of motion S4M-01610, in the name of Stewart Maxwell, on the draft national Gaelic language plan 2012-2017.

16:57

Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP): The Education and Culture Committee took oral evidence on the draft national Gaelic language plan 2012 to 2017 on 6 December and received further written evidence from the Bòrd na Gàidhlig shortly thereafter. After reviewing the evidence, the committee welcomed the publication of the draft plan in our report.

We noted that it is an ambitious plan that will require close partnership working between the bòrd and a number of bodies, and that there should be greater focus on the main priorities to ensure that targets are met. Subsequent to the report's publication, and given the very short time available today to examine the matter, I approached the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Mike Russell, and the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Alasdair Allan, to seek assurances that a full debate on the national Gaelic language plan 2012 to 2017 would take place in the new year. I am glad to inform members that ministers have given a commitment that such a debate will take place.

On behalf of the Education and Culture Committee, I move,

That the Parliament agrees that the Education and Culture Committee's 3rd Report, 2011 (Session 4), *The draft National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17* (SP Paper 52) should form the Parliament's response to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's consultation on the draft plan.

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

Business Motions

16:59

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-01627, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, which sets out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 11 January 2012

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Education and Culture Committee Debate: Inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children

followed by Business Motion

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 12 January 2012

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Scottish Labour Party Business

11.40 am General Question Time

12.00 pm First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm Themed Question Time
Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy

2.55 pm Scottish Government Debate: Improving Learning Outcomes for All Young People in 2012

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 18 January 2012

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motion

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 19 January 2012

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Scottish Government Business

11.40 am General Question Time

12.00 pm First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm Themed Question Time

Culture and External Affairs;
Infrastructure and Capital Investment

2.55 pm Scottish Government Business

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business—[*Bruce Crawford.*]

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-01628, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, which sets out a stage 1 timetable for the Criminal Cases (Punishment and Review) (Scotland) Bill.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Criminal Cases (Punishment and Review) (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1 be completed by 30 March 2012.—[*Bruce Crawford.*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of four Parliamentary Bureau motions.

I ask Bruce Crawford to move en bloc motions S4M-01629 to S4M-01631, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Crofting Commission (Elections) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (Advertising and Trading) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Storage of Carbon Dioxide (Licensing etc.) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.—[*Bruce Crawford.*]

The Presiding Officer: I ask Bruce Crawford to move motion S4M-01632, on approval of guidance.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Scottish Natural Heritage Code of Practice on Deer Management be approved.—[*Bruce Crawford.*]

The Presiding Officer: The questions on the motions will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are five questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S4M-01620.1, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-01620, in the name of Shona Robison, on the delivery and legacy of the Commonwealth games, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The second question is, that motion S4M-01620, in the name of Shona Robison, on the delivery and legacy of the Commonwealth games, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament notes the good progress being made by the Games partners to deliver the 2014 Commonwealth Games on time and on budget; welcomes the view of the Commonwealth Games Federation's first Evaluation Commission that Games planning is on course and that the Games partnership is a strong one; recognises the tangible benefits already realised through collaborative working between the Scottish Government and its many partners, and recognises that the current and planned activity has the potential to maximise the legacy for the whole of Scotland from both the London 2012 Olympic Games and the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and calls on the Scottish Government to report more regularly to the Parliament on the implementation of the Games legacy plan for Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: The third question is, that motion S4M-01610, in the name of Stewart Maxwell, on the Education and Culture Committee's report, "The draft National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17", be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Education and Culture Committee's 3rd Report, 2011 (Session 4), *The draft National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17* (SP Paper 52) should form the Parliament's response to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's consultation on the draft plan.

The Presiding Officer: I propose to put a single question on motions S4M-01629 to S4M-01631, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments. If any member objects to a single question being put, they should please say so now.

The fourth question is, that motions S4M-01629 to S4M-01631, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on approval of SSIs, be agreed to.

Motions agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Crofting Commission (Elections) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the London Olympic

Games and Paralympic Games (Advertising and Trading) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Storage of Carbon Dioxide (Licensing etc.) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.

The Presiding Officer: The fifth question is, that motion S4M-01632, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on approval of guidance, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Scottish Natural Heritage Code of Practice on Deer Management be approved.

Disability History Month

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):

The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S4M-01265, in the name of Siobhan McMahon, on disability history month. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament welcomes the UK's second Disability History Month; notes that "Celebrating our struggle for equality" will be the theme for 2011 and that its purpose is to raise the profile of disabled people's rights and to advocate disability equality by celebrating the historical and contemporary struggles and the achievements of disabled people globally; further notes that, by taking place between the 22 November and 22 December, the event will cover International HIV/AIDS Day, International Day of People with Disabilities and International Human Rights Day; considers that the UK Government's latest spending cuts will have a disproportionate and unfair impact on disabled people across Scotland, and particularly those in Central Scotland, and would welcome recognition and a celebration of the second UK Disability History Month.

17:03

Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Lab):

It is an honour and privilege to host the first Scottish Parliament members' business debate on United Kingdom disability history month. I will start by saying a few words about disability history month, which has only just entered its second year.

In 2009, several organisations and charities that represent disabled people were commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families to conduct research into the possibility of having a disability history week in schools. The research found overwhelming support for the idea, so it was suggested that the week be extended to a month, to be held every year between 22 November and 22 December. Disability history month aims to bring together disparate organisations including educational establishments, voluntary organisations, employers, local authorities and national Government to allow them to collaborate to facilitate events, organise campaigns and arrange speakers and materials. The idea is to provide a forum in which issues that are of relevance to disabled people and groups can be debated, discussed and publicised. The key purpose is to raise awareness of the unequal position of disabled people in society and to examine the roots of that inequality by highlighting disabled people's historical and contemporary struggles for acceptance and inclusion.

This year, the theme of the month is "celebrating our struggle for equality". When I came to write my speech, I was struck by two points. The first was that whenever we discuss issues that relate to

inequality and prejudice, the temptation is always to be negative and to dwell on defeats as opposed to victories, and on the past rather than on the future. I do not wish to be negative, partly because this year's theme includes the word "celebrating" and also because, whether in the service of religion, gender, disability or race, the struggle against adversity is always bittersweet. It is bitter because it reminds us of a collective propensity for fear, discrimination and prejudice, and it is sweet because it reminds us of the unbreakable strength of the human spirit and our refusal to lie down in the face of injustice.

I will celebrate that determination and strength, which brings me to my second point. Some of history's most famous personages have been disabled, but not enough time has been devoted to the willpower and courage that it takes to surmount such difficulties. What do Socrates, Pythagoras and Charles Dickens have in common? All three were epileptic, as were Agatha Christie and Richard Burton. John Milton—arguably Britain's greatest poet—was completely without sight when he wrote his famous masterpiece "Paradise Lost". British percussionist Evelyn Glennie has been deaf since the age of 12, and Beethoven wrote some of his most famous works while suffering from tinnitus—a condition that eventually rendered him completely deaf. Franklin Roosevelt—architect of the new deal, and the man responsible for steering Americans through the second world war—contracted polio in 1926 and was paralysed from the waist down for much of his presidency. Actor Rowan Atkinson suffers from a speech impediment, and the late television presenter Jeremy Beadle was the first person to appear on national television with a visible physical disability. Finally, Alison Lapper has forged a remarkable career as an artist, despite being born without arms.

That is just a small selection of individuals who have shown great courage in the face of adversity. They and others like them serve as examples to us all. However, there are many other individuals whose achievements are equally inspiring, although they are perhaps less well known. Born in 1939, Edward Verne Roberts was the first individual with severe disabilities to attend the University of California at Berkeley. A man of great determination and charisma, Roberts faced up to his fears while still at school and worked hard to generate a positive self-image. He overcame the objections of Berkeley's administrators—one of whom reportedly commented,

"We've tried cripples before and it didn't work"—

to enrol in 1962. He earned a BA in 1964 and an MA in 1966. Roberts's example inspired many others to enter the university through the Cowell residence programme.

Roberts formulated a political analysis that interpreted his disability in a positive light, and he attracted a group of like-minded followers who named themselves the Rolling Quads. The group was instrumental in the creation of the physically disabled students programme. Roberts later returned to Berkeley to head the Center for Independent Living, which caters for the needs of disabled people in the wider community. He was a pioneering and courageous leader, who is now often referred to as the father of the disability rights movement.

Christy Brown was born with cerebral palsy into a working-class family in Dublin in 1932. Despite pressure to place him in a convalescent hospital, Brown's parents raised him at home where, from an early age, he displayed a keen interest in the arts and literature. Lacking formal schooling, he taught himself to write and paint with the only limb of which he had control—his left leg. In 1952, Brown published "My Left Foot", which quickly became a literary sensation and was later made into an Academy award winning film. Although best known for "My Left Foot", Brown published a series of other novels, including "Down all the Days", which was translated into 14 languages. Christy Brown is one of my heroes.

Disability history month not only provides an opportunity to commemorate those achievements and similar achievements, but allows members of the disabled community to express themselves and discuss their experiences of living with a disability. On 22 November, more than 50 people attended the launch of disability history month Scotland in Edinburgh. Contributors included George Lamb—he is present this evening—who recounted his experience of growing up disabled before comparing current and historical attitudes to disability. Jo McFarlane, who is disability history month's resident poet, spoke with eloquence and scathing humour about the need for disabled people to reclaim their identity and about the recent "hardest hit" rallies. The launch was a tremendous success, and I hope that I will be able to attend next year's.

I would do the Parliament a disservice if I did not note that many of the UK's 12 million disabled people are still daily victims of bullying, hate crime and systematic discrimination. Between 70 and 80 per cent of disabled people claim to have experienced bullying at school, while 69 disabled people were murdered between 2007 and 2010 and a further 519 were attacked.

I cannot finish without touching on the Welfare Reform Bill, which will disproportionately penalise disabled people. That is simply not acceptable, so I and my Labour colleagues will continue to fight the proposals at every turn.

I end on a positive note. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to commemorate the on-going struggle of disabled people against adversity. I thank all those who have attended tonight's debate and I look forward to hearing what other members have to say on this important issue.

17:10

Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): I am pleased to be called to speak in this important and timely members' debate on disability history month, which Siobhan McMahon has secured. I acknowledge the work that Siobhan McMahon has done in the campaign to achieve equality of treatment for disabled people across all aspects of their lives.

The establishment of disability history month in 2010 was an important marker in provoking debate about the profile of disabled people's rights. The event serves to act as a celebration of the achievements of disabled people, many of which were listed by Siobhan McMahon. Those achievements are a matter of record, notwithstanding the adversity that disabled people face in their daily lives. Many individuals' achievements do not attract much by way of publicity, but the Herculean effort and determination involved on the part of the individual concerned mean that such achievements are truly colossal in anyone's book.

As Siobhan McMahon said, this members' debate is timely because it falls on the eve of the Parliament's legislative consent motion debate on the United Kingdom Welfare Reform Bill. That bill, which was introduced by the Tory-Liberal Democrat Government in London, has proved to be extremely controversial because of its likely impact on disabled people. The legislation will impose changes to disability benefit and support that will cut the budget for the disability living allowance by 20 per cent. That is the stated motivation for the changes to be introduced by the bill. It is all about cuts and has nothing to do with fairness or with improving the operation of the system for those who are entitled to some help and support because of their disability. Surely, in a civilised society, the payment of a benefit to assist with a disability should be seen as an entitlement and not a handout.

It would be instructive for the UK Tory-Liberal Government in London, during disability history month, to reflect further on the deeply damaging impact that the legislation will have on disabled people who will be affected disproportionately in Scotland and who have been placed in a state of fear and alarm. There is no safety net in the proposals. The UK Government should be ashamed of itself and should amend the bill in light of the widespread concerns that have been raised

across the spectrum. There are no second-class citizens here in Scotland and it is simply unacceptable to me and to my colleagues that the UK Government, through the Welfare Reform Bill, is content to see disabled people being treated so shoddily.

As Siobhan McMahon said, disability history month is not just about negatives. It is very much about focusing on positives. I end on a more positive note by mentioning the recent launch of the human rights toolkit for disabled people and their advocates. That is excellent source material and a practical guide for disabled people and for all those who have responsibility for ensuring that the rights of disabled people are respected. It is not enough just to talk about the rights of disabled people; there must be appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that those rights can be enforced. More work needs to be done here, but I am convinced that the publication of that toolkit is a significant step on the way to creating a truly just society in which we can all enjoy our rights as individuals.

Presiding Officer, I thank you for calling me to speak in the debate and I congratulate Siobhan McMahon on securing it.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Many thanks. I call Nanette Milne, after which the minister will wind up the debate.

17:14

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): This is a very timely debate, the first of its kind in this Parliament, and the fact that disability history month Scotland launched only last month following the launch last year of its UK sister group means that an enormous amount of work has been undertaken in a relatively short time. Therefore, I have no hesitation in congratulating Siobhan McMahon on bringing this important debate to the chamber.

As members have mentioned and as the text of the motion makes clear, the theme of this year's disability history month is

"Celebrating our struggle for equality".

It is only right that as a nation we look to the past for lessons that we can learn for the future, and in the field of equality for disabled people we witness a very clear struggle for the same rights as everyone else.

Without doubt, the most significant contribution to disabled people's rights was made by the Labour MP, Alf—now Lord—Morris. In the late 1960s, there was hardly a mention in Britain's statute books of disability but Alf Morris, who was deeply affected by his father's disabilities, set about drafting a private member's bill that encapsulated ideas such as providing help at

home, assessing a person's needs and—most important—making local authorities responsible for ensuring that the environment around disabled people was accessible. Despite what was, at best, Government indifference, Lord Morris's bill was passed as the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and, four years later, he became the first minister for the disabled anywhere in the world.

However, there was still much more to do, such as getting disabled people out of institutions in which they had been incarcerated as a result of wrong assessments and giving them the freedom to lead independent lives. Disability benefit was eventually introduced and, in 1995, John Major's Conservative Government passed the Disability Discrimination Act, which made it unlawful to discriminate against those with a disability when providing services and, in most cases, when employing people.

Further legislation in the past decade has impacted on and benefited the lives of disabled people; indeed, one example that will be apparent to all of us in the chamber has been the requirement on us either to alter our constituency offices or to make alternative arrangements to ensure that we are accessible to our disabled constituents. Although that is progress, it should not have taken legislation to make that happen.

I applaud the mood of the debate but I am slightly disappointed that, when we are here to celebrate the struggle for equality for disabled people—and rightly so—the second part of the motion makes a partisan point that I know Siobhan McMahon and others feel strongly about but which I feel would be better left out of this debate and left to tomorrow's discussions. However, I finish by quoting Alf Morris, who, last year, said about disabled rights:

"I don't like talking about what I or my bill achieved. That way lies complacency. There's still so much to be done."

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Many thanks. I believe that there is to be an unexpected but nonetheless welcome contribution from Jackie Baillie.

17:18

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): Thank you very much, Presiding Officer. Far be it from me to contribute to this debate at the last minute, but I felt that we could not mark this occasion with such a small number of speakers, even though their speeches were exceptional.

First of all, I congratulate my colleague Siobhan McMahon on securing the debate, which I understand is the first ever in the Parliament on disability history month. Although the event has

been going for two years, this is the first time that it has been recognised in Scotland.

Nanette Milne was absolutely right to remind us of the legal aspects, changes to the law and Alf Morris's considerable role in introducing disability legislation for the first time and creating the post of UK minister for the disabled. However, if this were simply a question of passing legislation, a lot of the issues that continue to trouble us today would have been resolved long ago. It is about mainstreaming approaches to equality and the treatment of equality, not only across the public sector but in the private sector and, indeed, in every part of society. I am very proud that this Parliament was very much founded on the principles of equality and that we have an Equal Opportunities Committee that is engaged in making progress on these issues. That is all to the good, because more progress needs to be made and we on these benches will work with the Government to ensure that that happens.

That said, I cannot fail to reflect on the fact that, tomorrow morning, we will again debate welfare reform proposals that have emanated from the UK Government. I have no problem with reform of the welfare state, which is overly complicated and often cumbersome and difficult to work through. Simplifying it is not a problem, but applying a 20 per cent cut to disability living allowance in advance of anybody being assessed is surely wrong and unfair.

I recall David Cameron saying in Parliament or in his Cabinet—I cannot remember quite where—that we did not need to worry and that the cuts, the changes to welfare and the consequences of the economic downturn would be borne by those with the broadest shoulders. Therefore, the disproportionate impact on disabled people is, frankly, astonishing. They will be hardest hit by the reforms. It is incumbent on members of the Scottish Parliament and our colleagues in the UK Parliament to change the proposals substantially and protect those people, who are perhaps some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. We will discuss that further tomorrow.

The debate has been extremely useful. I would like us to consider—I am sure that the minister will point the way—how we can make a huge difference to the lives and experience of disabled people in Scotland, not just through legislation or mainstreaming approaches, but in practical ways.

17:21

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): As other members have done, I congratulate Siobhan McMahon on securing the debate, which comes soon after another members' business debate that she secured—she clearly

has the knack. She has taken a particular interest in the issue since she joined the Parliament and is now a deputy convener of the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament on disability. I should say that I set up that group back in 2000 and that the first minister to address it was one Jackie Baillie, who at that time was the Minister for Social Justice. I have no doubt that the group continues to do valuable work in engaging with a range of stakeholders from across Scotland who have an interest in disability issues.

I welcome the opportunity to debate the second disability history month, which helps to raise the profile of disabled people's rights and advocacy for disability equality. Given that equality is a key theme in this year's disability history month, it is worth reminding members of the United Nations universal declaration of human rights, which was signed 63 years ago, on 10 December 1948, in the aftermath of the horrors of the second world war. Article 1 states:

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.

Article 2 states:

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind”.

Those are powerful words. Our task, these many years on, is to ensure that they are not just words and that measures are taken that turn into actions across our society—actions that we take as a nation as we go into 2012.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which followed in 2007, builds on article 1 of the declaration to which I referred. On 24 November this year, the UK Government submitted the first UK report to the UN, setting out the Government's position and progress on the issues. The Scottish Government contributed to the report with regard to Scottish activity.

Given that it is disability history month and that equality is a key theme running through the programme, I will highlight one area that demonstrates the historical changes for disabled people in Scotland. Back in 1980, 6,500 people with a learning disability in Scotland were in long-stay hospital care. The figure reduced to 2,450 by 1998 and under “The same as you? A review of services for people with learning disabilities”, no one with a learning disability was in a long-stay hospital by the midpoint of 2006. That is significant progress for people with a learning disability and is to be celebrated. However, the example also illustrates the struggle that many people with a disability such as a learning disability faced in being able to live their lives normally and on an equal basis in the community.

The pathway and journey for people with a disability continue. A large amount of the money

that we put into community care for adult services goes towards supporting people with a disability to live in the community. Although more people with a disability are living independently in our communities with additional support, the journey continues and there is a growing demand for people with a disability not to be supported by services that are provided by others but to have greater control over their lives and to be able to decide how they are supported and how to manage their situation in their own home and community.

That is one of the key policies that we intend to take forward through the self-directed support bill, which we intend to bring to Parliament in this session. We will give people greater control over their own personal situation and the responsibility to take forward arrangements in a way that best suits them. Since the 1980s, when some 6,500 people with a learning disability were in long-stay hospital settings, we have therefore moved to the point now when I have constituents with a learning disability who are keen to use self-directed support to manage their care in a way that best suits their needs.

I turn to some of the concerns that have been raised about the welfare reforms that the UK Government is taking forward. We are concerned about the speed and scale of the cuts that it intends to make to the welfare provision programme. People who are the most vulnerable and have the poorest outcomes are often the least able to cope with such significant change. That includes lone parents, people living in deprived areas, pensioners and disabled people. I suspect that history will show that some of the reforms that the UK Government intends to take forward will result in a significant change for people with a disability in Scotland and across the rest of the UK.

The only point of difference that I have with Siobhan McMahon's motion is that I do not think that the reform will have any more of an impact on the people of Central Scotland than it will on people in the north of Scotland, Liverpool or Manchester. I think that the impact will be the same—and it will be significant.

As a Government, we will continue to engage with the UK Government to express our concerns about how it is taking forward the welfare reforms, the lack of detail regarding certain elements, the anxieties that people with a disability are expressing and the impact that the reforms could have on their equality and their right to live their lives in a meaningful way. We debated the issue in this Parliament on 5 October and, as Jackie Baillie, said we will have a further debate on the legislative consent motion, which will come before the Parliament tomorrow.

There has been a significant journey in ensuring that people with a disability have equality in their lives and in how they are treated. As we draw to the end of 2011, we have an opportunity to consider what we have to do in the years to come to ensure that people with a disability continue to get the equality that they deserve. As a Government, we are committed to continuing that pathway.

Meeting closed at 17:28.

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