



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 15 December 2011

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**Thursday 15 December 2011**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE</b> .....	4703
<i>Motion moved—[Nicola Sturgeon].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Jackie Baillie].</i>	
The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (Nicola Sturgeon) .....	4703
Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab) .....	4709
Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con) .....	4713
Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP) .....	4715
Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab) .....	4717
James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP) .....	4719
Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Lab) .....	4722
George Adam (Paisley) (SNP) .....	4724
Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con) .....	4726
Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP) .....	4728
Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD) .....	4730
Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP) .....	4732
Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab) .....	4734
Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP) .....	4736
Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP) .....	4738
Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab) .....	4739
Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP) .....	4741
Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con) .....	4744
Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab) .....	4746
The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson) .....	4750
<b>SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE QUESTION TIME</b> .....	4755
<b>GENERAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	4755
Ovarian Cancer (Awareness) .....	4755
A9 Upgrading Works .....	4755
Long-term Medical Conditions .....	4756
Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivors (Identification) .....	4757
Reserved Matters (Scottish Government Position) .....	4758
Hidden Waiting Lists (NHS Lothian) .....	4759
Single Police Force (Headquarters) .....	4760
Grampian Police and Judicial Services (Discussions) .....	4761
Winter Resilience .....	4762
<b>FIRST MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME</b> .....	4764
Engagements .....	4764
Secretary of State for Scotland (Meetings) .....	4768
Cabinet (Meeting) .....	4771
Prime Minister (European Union Summit) .....	4773
National Health Service (Spending Balance) .....	4774
"Powering Scotland" .....	4775
<b>SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE QUESTION TIME</b> .....	4777
<b>FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH</b> .....	4777
Employment Opportunities .....	4777
Aberdeen City Council (Meetings) .....	4778
Job Creation (Inverclyde) .....	4779
Growth Forecasts .....	4780
Small Business Bonus Scheme .....	4782
Capital Investment in Glasgow .....	4783
Small Businesses .....	4784
Solar Panels (Domestic Use) .....	4785
Council Tax Benefit .....	4786
Economic Growth (Capital Spending) .....	4787

Wind Farms (Guidance on Siting) .....	4788
Fossil Fuel Levy (Energy Demand) .....	4789
Small and Micro Businesses (Highlands and Islands) .....	4790
Renewables Projects (Employment and Economic Growth).....	4791
Hotel Bed Levy (Edinburgh) .....	4791
Credit Unions (Membership).....	4792
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN</b> .....	4794
<i>Motion moved—[Alex Neil].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Lewis Macdonald].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Alex Johnstone].</i>	
The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment (Alex Neil) .....	4794
Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab) .....	4798
Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con) .....	4802
Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP) .....	4805
Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab) .....	4807
Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP).....	4809
Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP) .....	4811
Margaret McDougall (West Scotland) (Lab) .....	4813
Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP) .....	4815
Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD).....	4817
Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP).....	4819
Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab).....	4822
Paul Wheelhouse (South Scotland) (SNP).....	4824
Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab) .....	4826
Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con).....	4829
Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab).....	4831
Alex Neil.....	4834
<b>PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTION</b> .....	4837
<i>Motion moved—[Bruce Crawford].</i>	
<b>DECISION TIME</b> .....	4838
<b>UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW</b> .....	4846
<i>Motion debated—[Sandra White].</i>	
Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP).....	4846
Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab) .....	4848
Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP) .....	4850
Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con).....	4851
Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP).....	4852
The Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages (Dr Alasdair Allan).....	4854

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## Scottish Parliament

*Thursday 15 December 2011*

[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 09:15*]

### Integration of Health and Social Care

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Good morning. The first item of business is a debate on motion S4M-01585, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the integration of health and social care.

09:15

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (Nicola Sturgeon):** I am pleased to open the debate on the integration of adult health and social care. During the debate I will set out the Government's clear commitment to improving health and social care outcomes and outline the proposals for reform that will assist us in achieving those outcomes.

First, let me be clear about the objectives of this programme of reform. We want to ensure that adult health and social care services are firmly integrated around the needs of individuals, their carers and other family members; that the providers of those services are held to account jointly and effectively for improved delivery; that services are underpinned by flexible, sustainable financial mechanisms that give priority to the needs of the people they serve rather than the needs of the organisations through which they are delivered; and that those arrangements are characterised by strong and consistent clinical and professional leadership.

Our next step as a Government will be to continue the invaluable partnership work that we have already begun with NHS Scotland, local government, the third and independent sectors and professional bodies to develop detailed consultation material for public discussion and scrutiny. I believe that that approach will help us to ensure that integration is informed at each and every step of the way by the knowledge and experience of those in the public sector and beyond who have a key interest in health and social care.

We are not starting from scratch or with a blank sheet of paper. There is already a great deal to be proud of in Scotland in health and social care provision. There have been significant improvements in recent years in standards and outcomes, with improvements in waiting times,

patient safety and delayed discharges from hospital.

Our healthcare quality strategy underpins our commitment to delivering the highest quality healthcare services. Our introduction of a dementia strategy, the continuing commitment of us all to free personal and nursing care, and our reshaping care for older people programme, supported by the change fund, all demonstrate our commitment to ensuring innovative, high-quality services that improve people's lives. Our carers strategy supports unpaid carers, who, we must remember, are essential providers of health and social care. Just this week, we published our refreshed national performance framework, which includes a specific commitment to the wellbeing of older people. Much is being done, but we must go further.

There is now a consensus around the contention that separate and—all too often—disjointed systems of health and social care can no longer adequately meet the needs and expectations of the increasing number of people who are living longer into old age, often with multiple, complex, long-term conditions and who, as a result, need joined-up, integrated services.

It is important to stress at this stage that our ambition is not limited to improving older people's services. People can and do experience complex care and health support requirements at any age, and we need to ensure that our health and social care services apply the principles of integration to any area of service provision that needs them.

However, there is no getting away from the fact that the factors driving closer integration are particularly relevant to care and support for older people. We know that, too often, older people can be admitted to institutional care for long periods of time when a package of assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and support in the community, or indeed more support to their carers, might have served their needs and maintained their independence much better. Of course, more people are living longer and therefore, just like every other developed country, we must plan now for the needs of a growing older population.

It is against that backdrop that we have embarked on this programme of reform. The preliminary work that we carried out over the summer and autumn, with statutory and non-statutory partners and with professional bodies, has confirmed a number of issues that the integration of adult health and social care—along with other measures—must address. First, there is too much inconsistency in the quality of care for adults and older people across Scotland. Secondly, there is too much variation in the level of resources invested in care locally by health boards and local authorities and in the outcomes

that those resources then achieve. Thirdly, too many people are unnecessarily admitted to hospital or are delayed there when they are clinically ready to leave. Fourthly, for too many people, the experience of moving between health and social care services as their care needs change is not smooth enough.

Another key message that emerged from work over the summer was that wholesale, nationally driven, structural reorganisation of current statutory bodies was not the best way to address the challenges. Evidence shows that that is not the way to achieve better outcomes for people, and it is therefore not the route that we are choosing. However, I make it clear that we are determined to tackle the aspects of current structures that stand in the way of effective integration.

The approach that we intend to take is as follows. We will introduce legislation to bring about a radical transformation of community health partnerships. Community health partnerships—currently sub-committees of national health service boards—will be replaced by health and social care partnerships that are the joint and equal responsibility of the NHS and local government.

We will focus squarely on improving outcomes. A nationally agreed set of outcomes will apply across health and social care, and—through the new partnerships—we will hold the NHS and local government jointly to account for the delivery of those outcomes.

We will require statutory partners to integrate budgets, starting with budgets for services for older people. Within those integrated budgets—and, for me, this is a key point—where money comes from, be it health or social care, will no longer be of consequence. All that will matter is that partnerships can and do use the integrated budgets to achieve the maximum possible benefit for service users or patients, and to deliver the shared and agreed national outcomes.

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

As an MSP for the Highlands and Islands, I am aware of the significant structural change between NHS Highland and Highland Council. I believe that the change is on the way to success, and I had thought that the Government supported and favoured it. From what the cabinet secretary has just said, do I take it that the model is not one that she would support now?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** No, the member cannot take that from what I have said. I have said that nationally driven, structural change is not the way to go. I will talk about Highland a little later, but what the two bodies are doing there—the result of local agreement—is absolutely legitimate and I support it whole-heartedly.

I will finish my outline of the model that we propose. I have spoken about integrated budgets, and it is also important to talk about the role of a single, senior, locally accountable officer to ensure that partners' joint objectives are delivered. It will no longer be necessary, or indeed legitimate, always to refer back up separate lines of governance within health boards or councils when what would serve the needs of local people is a well-integrated approach, jointly led by both partners after they have engaged effectively with people in the communities that they serve. There will be a direct line of accountability for the performance of health and social care partnerships, via the chief executives of the health board and local authority to ministers and the council leader, and partnerships will be expected to publish regular progress reports for public scrutiny.

We will have to ensure that service planning and provision for older people is professionally led by clinicians and social workers, with appropriate input from the third and independent sectors. Again, I feel that that is a crucial point, because it concerns an issue that has got in the way of the success of community health partnerships.

Locality-based service planning and decision making will be key to such reforms. Within that local service planning, primary care will have an absolutely vital role. Primary care clinicians are at the heart of the NHS and will be central to the successful delivery of the improvements. More and more general practitioner practices are already working together in groups to consider local budgets and local options for improvement.

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife)**

**(Lab):** The cabinet secretary is making a particularly important point, and the concept of networked primary care is supported by the Royal College of General Practitioners. Local healthcare co-operatives are the embodiment of what the cabinet secretary is saying. There were 85 in 1999 but there are only 40 now, and there has been a critical disengagement of primary care and community staff.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I think that there is a point of agreement here. Richard Simpson will appreciate that at this stage I will not get into the number of locality-based groups that we might see, but I agree with him as I believe that the involvement, engagement and meaningful input of clinicians, particularly primary care clinicians, are crucial to the success of the reforms. That is why they are such a key part of our proposals.

It is fair to say that, in keeping with overall Government policy, our focus is on achieving a decisive shift towards preventative and anticipatory care. Our clear intention is that over time a smaller proportion of resources will need to

be directed towards institutional care, with more resources instead being directed towards community provision and capacity building. That will mean creating new and different job opportunities in the community to serve people where they want to be.

By making more flexible use of resources across health and social care, we can and will ensure that funding shifts to support that change. We will need to build on the work that we have already taken forward under the integrated resource framework to develop a fuller understanding of local patterns of resource allocation and use.

I have already referred to transformation. I want to be clear that there should be no mistake about the extent and ambition of the changes that we seek. We are determined to work with local leaders to shine a spotlight as never before on outcomes for patients and service users across the spectrum of adult health and social care.

We will, of course, take forward those improvements in the context of public sector reform more widely. For reasons that will be understood, I have talked a great deal about the central role of the NHS and local government, but the important role of other services in meeting the objectives cannot be overstated, whether they are housing services or the range of different services provided by the voluntary and independent sectors.

I have set out some very important principles. Another important point that I want to stress, which comes back to the issue that Mary Scanlon raised, is that our framework for integration is exactly that: it is a framework within which local professionals and managers will have and must have the room to make the decisions, choices and changes that best serve local people in their own areas.

In Highland the council and NHS already have ambitious plans for implementation of lead agency arrangements. I welcome that development, which is one example of the kind of delivery arrangements that can be used to improve integration across health and social care and, crucially, thereby improve outcomes.

There are other examples of work around the country, much of it now done with the support of the change fund, that demonstrate real innovation and strong leadership, whether that is from housing services and the third and independent sectors or from health and social care. Those are examples of innovation and leadership of the type that we need to drive forward the improvements successfully.

Taking forward the integration of health and social care as a priority was, of course, a specific recommendation to the Government by the

Christie commission. We are focusing on the priorities identified by the Christie commission more generally, as we are legislating in favour of preventative action, putting in place funding regimes that support integrated provision, applying commissioning standards more consistently and transparently across health and social care, and building public services around the needs of people and communities. The needs of people must always take precedence and priority over the needs of the organisations that provide services.

The reform that I have outlined today sits squarely within our wider approach to public service reform as set out at the time of the spending review. I am sure that all members agree that change on this scale and of this significance must be taken forward carefully and thoughtfully. We must do it in consultation and partnership with the NHS, local government, the third and independent sectors, and professional bodies. We are determined that, as we move forward into more detailed discussion and scrutiny of the proposals, the partnership approach that has characterised our work so far will continue.

We are a small country with a history of social co-operation and we are building this ambitious programme of improvement on an unrivalled foundation of professionalism, commitment and expertise. We will use all those advantages to ensure that our proposals make best use of all that expertise, experience and insight.

We are determined to put in place a system of health and social care that is robust, efficient and effective, that is fit for the 21st century, and that will reliably and sustainably ensure that the high quality of support and care that is right for the people of Scotland is delivered for the people of Scotland. I look forward to the debate.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the improvements achieved in terms of adult health and social care services since it was established; further recognises, particularly with regard to the needs of Scotland's older people, that the integration of services needs to be improved to deliver better health and social care services; notes that the cornerstone of reform should be nationally agreed outcomes and that these reforms will be judged by the delivery of specific goals, such as reducing the number of delayed discharges, which directly impact on the health and care experience of older citizens; notes that services should be characterised by strong and committed clinical and care professional leadership; notes that NHS boards and local authorities will work together to produce integrated budgets that will bring to an end the cost-shunting between the NHS and local authorities that currently occurs, and notes that the Scottish Government will continue to work with partners in the NHS, local government, the third and independent sectors and professional bodies to take these reforms forward.

09:30

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** This debate on the integration of health and social care is extremely welcome, albeit long overdue. I believe that the cabinet secretary's view of what the objectives should be in providing better—and better integrated—health and social care is shared across the chamber. We also agree on the important role to be played by all the stakeholders: not just the NHS and the local authorities, but the third and independent sectors and the many community groups such as those that operate in my local area to support older people in their community.

I do not think that anyone would disagree that the care of our older people is probably the most pressing social policy concern in this session of Parliament. No one can doubt the scale of the challenge that we face or the significance of the demographic change that we are experiencing.

We will undoubtedly trade our favourite statistics during the course of the debate, but it is worth repeating some of them. There will be an increase of 40 per cent in the number of people aged 65 to 74 in the next 20 years, and a staggering 83 per cent increase in the number of those over 75. Scotland's population is getting older, and people are living longer. We are thankful for the advances in medicine that have contributed to that trend, but it also creates a different set of challenges for us. I recall reading somewhere that, if we did nothing in the face of those changes, we would need at least 6,000 more NHS beds and about double the existing budget simply to stand still and meet the likely demand. Doing nothing is clearly not an option.

Let me digress for a minute, because it is important to make it clear that not all our older people need care. About 90 per cent of them are sustained in their own homes and communities, with very limited input from care services. We should therefore think about older people in the context not only of their care but of the contribution that they make to our communities, through their experience, time and knowledge. Many of them are the volunteers who make our communities strong, but they need to know that, should the time come when they need care, it will be there for them.

Scottish Labour started thinking seriously about the challenges more than 18 months ago. We set out our policy intentions last October, and followed that up with an expert group chaired by Sir John Arbuthnott and drawing in members with expertise in health and adult social care. I am grateful to them for their contribution in helping to shape the agenda before us today.

At the outset, we recognised that older people were falling through the gaps between health and social care. They were ending up in emergency care unnecessarily, often because of a lack of integrated care on the ground. We need look no further than our constituency postbags to find evidence of that. We have seen a postcode lottery of care, costs shunted between different public organisations, differential charging and an emerging lack of fairness and equity.

In an early Labour-led debate on Scotland's older people, we set out our view of the future. We said that the way to cope with the demographic change in relation to the care of older people was to integrate health and social care by having local services and local accountability. Based on reformed community health partnerships, and involving general practitioners much more in the design and commissioning of local services, delivery would be focused on the needs of the older person.

We suggested the need for a national framework, ending the postcode lottery of care and delivering better quality and better outcomes for older people. We also said that there needed to be one budget in order to stop health and local government playing pass the parcel with people's care. We went further, advocating a charter for care in Scotland to set out what an individual could expect in terms of outcome, equity and quality. I commend that to the cabinet secretary.

Members might be forgiven for thinking that that is all remarkably similar to the newly published Scottish National Party proposals. Let me reprise some of them. They include a national framework with agreed outcomes, an end to cost shunting, reform of CHPs, and clinical leadership. People say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so I am flattered. However, in the spirit of consensus, I say that I am pleased that the Scottish Government has taken much of our approach forward. We will work with it to ensure that any future system of social care is fair and robust.

We would have gone further because our vision was for a national care service as radical as the creation of the NHS, bringing fairness and raising standards in the provision of care. The SNP would have members believe that we were creating another quango or bureaucratic monolith, but that deliberately misunderstands the proposal. There would be no new body and no more civil servants; it would be about having national care standards for services that are delivered locally, which is a model that is currently used in the health service. It might suit the Government politically to rubbish Labour's proposal, but there is no doubt that key elements of what we proposed previously are before us today, and I welcome that.



The devil, of course, will be in the detail and we stand ready to engage positively in the debate. As I said earlier, we suggested a national framework because of the inconsistency of service provision. We have 32 local authorities, different eligibility criteria and different costs—in short, we have 32 different ways of doing things. We have seen the cost shunting that goes on between local authorities and health boards, whereby officials will openly say that they are cutting a social care budget because health will pick up the costs. Both are public sector bodies that use taxpayers' money, but in many areas they are fundamentally unable to work together. Where is the focus on prevention, never mind on the person needing care? All that has to stop. We cannot afford to play pass the parcel any longer.

I know that local authorities are struggling financially. For the first time, many of them are making substantial cuts and introducing charges for services, which are resulting in some older people cancelling services such as community alarms because they are worried about whether they will be able to afford the cost.

Neighbouring local authorities are taking different approaches to charging. I am bored raising the fact that a service costs £30 in one area but right next door the same service is £300. I first raised that point almost three years ago, but it is as true today as it was then. The Learning Disability Alliance Scotland provided us with illustrations for a previous debate as evidence. The criteria for charging vary widely. For example, Argyll and Bute considers 100 per cent of somebody's income, but across the water in Inverclyde only 25 per cent of their income is considered. How about the hourly rates for home care, which is just one social care service? The picture is one of different costs. In West Lothian, home care is £7.76 per hour, but in Angus it is £22 per hour, which is three times the amount. Clearly, that is not fair.

It would therefore be useful to know whether the cabinet secretary envisages the framework dealing with those inconsistencies and considering matters of eligibility, charging and outcomes. I agree with her that Scotland is not such a vast country that we should experience such wide variations and injustice in the provision of social care. Whether someone lives in my constituency in Dumbarton or in Dunbar, Dingwall or Dumfries, they deserve a care system that supports them to live as independently as possible and which offers access to the best-quality care possible. The basis of the system and how much people pay for it must be fair.

That brings me to the next point. When we access the NHS, we are provided with publicly delivered services that are based on need and

free at the point of delivery. However, the culture in social care is different. Social care is rationed, prioritised, charged for and often delivered by the independent sector. Clearly, those different approaches and cultures need to be thought through. There is the need for a wider debate about how we afford and pay for care in the future. I wonder whether the cabinet secretary has considered the outcome of the Dilnot inquiry. What approach does she believe that we need to adopt in the future to ensure the sustainability of care?

Preventing older people from requiring care in the first place is of course the real prize. I hope that that will feature explicitly in the outcomes in the national framework. It is the case that current eligibility is increasingly determined by the severity of need. That is understandable, but there are swathes of people with lower-level needs who will not be provided with a service because budgets are too tight. Even though we know that prevention is cost effective and that it is much better for the individual to be sustained in their own homes and community without the need for more formal care, we also know that cuts are being made to some community-based services that do not cost a lot of money but have such a huge impact on the potential for long-term savings. It is a matter of regret that such early intervention work and upstream activity, which is key to prevention, remains an aspiration rather than a reality. I hope that the cabinet secretary will use the national framework to change that.

I want to explore with the cabinet secretary how accountability will be delivered. We were clear that clinicians have to have greater involvement in the planning and commissioning of services, and we envisaged a system of local democratic accountability in which councillors would be given oversight in a context of reformed CHPs and reporting to ministers. Given that much of what the cabinet secretary has outlined relates to delivery by local agreement, how will she monitor progress towards achieving outcomes? Concern has already been expressed that single outcome agreements are not sufficiently robust to deal with the issue, lack independent scrutiny and contain little sanction for failure. What power does the cabinet secretary have to ensure that all areas make the progress that we want them to make?

On a different note, I understand that integration of health and social care is to be focused on older people. I agree with that move and welcome the cabinet secretary's commitment to the principle of applying that approach more generally to adult social care.

In the final moments remaining to me, I want to welcome the fact that, 10 months on and with a change of minister and a more robust approach from the cabinet secretary, it has been recognised

that legislative underpinning is needed. That conversion from the position outlined in Shona Robison's press release on 2 February is very welcome; indeed, such a move is necessary if we are to make the proposals work.

The issue is too important for us to fail. After all, the debate is ultimately all about people. It is about supporting and caring for our older people, providing that care, involving older people in shaping it, driving up standards and ensuring that we have care of the very best possible quality. Our social care system needs to be overhauled and today we are taking some welcome steps in that direction. However, we must continue to focus on the delivery of fairness, certainty and top-quality care for all Scotland's people.

I move amendment S4M-01585.1, to insert at end:

“, and welcomes the Scottish Government's acceptance of the need for legislative underpinning following the conclusions of the Expert Group on Future Options for Social Care established by Scottish Labour.”

09:41

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I am pleased to take part in this debate following the Scottish Government's announcement earlier this week of its plans to integrate adult health and social care. We welcome that move as an important step towards improving care services for older people and having services that are developed locally in partnership with Government, the NHS, local authorities and others, led by clinical and social care professionals and tailored to meet the needs of local people and their families and carers.

We all know about the problems of securing quality and consistency in care for older people and the difficulties in finding them appropriate community provision after discharge from hospital, often as a result of the failure to sort out funding between local authorities and the NHS—the so-called cost shunting that goes on. Although things have undoubtedly improved in recent years, there is no room for complacency. Delayed discharge is creeping up again and the demand for care for older people is set to rise steadily as the number of frail elderly people increases.

In these difficult times, we have to make the best possible use of resources, human and financial, and all parties have come to realise that that can be achieved only through effective integration between the NHS and local authorities. This year, all parties had an election manifesto commitment to that effect, although each set out a different approach to achieving that goal. My party went into the election seeking to merge the health and social care budgets and integrate social care

for older people into the general health budget under NHS control. Although that goes a step further than the current Government proposals, the decision in Highland to give adult social care powers to the NHS, with councils having responsibility for child community services, chimes well with our manifesto proposals.

As we know, the integrated resource framework model chosen by the SNP to develop systems for resources to follow the patient between partner organisations, with the intention of delivering care in the most appropriate setting for the patient, is being trialled in four different health board areas. We await the assessment of those trials with interest. The Scottish Government and Lord Sutherland favour the Highland model of lead commissioning, but the Royal College of Nursing, in particular, is flagging up difficulties in fully implementing it by the target date of next April. As she is much closer to the trial than I am, my colleague Mary Scanlon will deal with it in her speech.

Whatever model is used to achieve the integration of health and social care, the aim has to be better outcomes for patients, with improved local services that provide patient-centred care based on an assessment of individual needs and focused on helping more of them to live in their own homes rather than in a care home or hospital. However, in order to achieve that, we will need more input from social care professionals and clinicians into local service planning, and NHS boards and councils will have to be required to produce integrated budgets for older people's services, as proposed by the Government. Indeed, we are pleased with the proposals in that respect.

Attitudes have to change, too. We need strong leadership and co-operation between clinicians and social care professionals, who must put aside cultural differences and overcome the ingrained organisational practices that often get in the way of integrating and sharing services, such as segregated training and professional rivalry. I found the briefing paper from the Association of Directors of Social Work unhelpful in that regard. Such problems will need to be overcome by effective transition management if better integration is to be achieved.

The change fund has allowed the shift to community provision to begin. I agree that legislation will be needed to ensure the development of better local services for local people. The existing CHPs have become overly bureaucratic, and from their inception they have failed to engage clinicians, particularly at primary care level, as the cabinet secretary said, but also at secondary care level. They have also failed to bridge the gap between health and social care.

A radical overhaul is overdue—the British Medical Association made the point forcefully in its briefing paper. I welcome the proposed health and social care partnerships, which will be jointly accountable to the NHS and councils, as well as to the cabinet secretary, the local council leader and the public, for the delivery at local level of nationally agreed outcomes.

There is enormous enthusiasm for greater integration of health and social care for older people—from the RCN, carers organisations and Macmillan Cancer Support, for example. All those organisations are eager to become involved in helping to shape the change process and the new legislation, and it is important that such organisations are involved from the outset. I hope and am confident that the Government will welcome their input.

There is a fair wind behind the Government's proposals for shifting the balance of care. I hope that the framework that is proposed for the delivery of nationally agreed outcomes will allow delivery mechanisms and structures that best suit local needs and priorities to be developed locally.

We are at the beginning of what could become an exciting journey of achievement in patient care, but a great deal remains to be done to change attitudes and working practices. It is very much work in progress, which we will follow with interest. We support the motion in the cabinet secretary's name and the Labour Party's amendment.

09:47

**Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** The final sentence of the Health and Sport Committee's report to the Finance Committee on the health budget this year reads:

"The settlement for Health and Sport has been generous: it is beholden on all involved in these two sectors to demonstrate that in return they have placed quality and efficiency at the heart of their thinking."

I am glad that that statement received unanimous, cross-party support at the Health and Sport Committee. It acknowledges not just the generous settlement but the more important point that how much money is put in does not necessarily dictate the quality of the outcomes. Today's debate is all about ensuring that we get the quality outcomes that are essential.

Despite the generous settlement, we face financial and demographic challenges. By 2031, the number of people over 65 in Scottish society will have increased by 62 per cent, and every year over the next 10 years there will be an additional 10,000 people who are 75 or older, so it is clear that the Scottish Government is right to have a focus—although not an exclusive focus—on

integration of health and social care for the elderly as we go forward.

If someone is to have the best possible life journey as they get older, they need to be supported in their own home, with community health interventions as appropriate. The worst journey would involve unplanned admissions to hospital, prolonged hospital stays, delayed discharge and admission to residential care at an earlier stage than might otherwise have been necessary. We can all agree on that.

As we drive change, we are right to acknowledge that structural change as an end in itself will not achieve what we want and will be a costly distraction. What we need is cultural transformation in health and social care, underpinned by structural change where appropriate.

That is why I welcome the statutory reform of community health partnerships, changing them into health and social care partnerships. We can see that that underpinning is necessary if we look at the Glasgow experience, where a pilot project did not work because people would not get out of their cultural silos. I am therefore glad that we are taking that direction.

We have talked about pooling budgets, but I hope that that actually happens. It is easy to talk about pooling and sharing budgets, but we must insist that it happens. I believe that the mechanism that we have will help to achieve that. In the change fund for older people, which is £300 million over four years, the mechanism is that not one penny can be spent unless it is agreed by local authorities, the NHS and the third sector. That is an excellent model to ensure that change is driven.

Ahead of the debate, we received various submissions from voluntary sector organisations. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers stated:

"We ask for your support to ensure that the impact of these changes for Scotland's unpaid carers is fully recognised and that the needs of carers are a central focus in the development of the new integrated structures and the legislation which underpins this work."

The trust wants to ensure that it is "directly involved" in the formation of the new legislation and the guidelines that will help to underpin it. I am sure that the cabinet secretary will be able to give reassurances on that. Given that 20 per cent of the change fund will be specifically for carers, it is clear that the Scottish Government is mindful of that issue.

In future, the environment for carers will become more challenging. I am delighted that the Government is tackling the challenge of self-directed support, which will change the cultural landscape of care at home. The changes will

affect the individual's choice and how money is spent to support them in their homes. The issue is how we ensure that there are quality care standards at home and how that approach fits into the Scottish Social Services Council's qualifications framework. We are mindful of those challenges.

**Jackie Baillie:** We are mindful of the issue of self-directed support, too. Does the member believe that self-directed support can apply to health services as well as to social care, given that some people who receive that support will enjoy services from both areas?

**Bob Doris:** That is a reasonable point. People cannot work in silos in relation to self-directed support. We are talking about integration of services. We must tease out that issue as we make progress on the legislation, although we cannot take it as a given—we must test the evidence.

We have heard about cost-shunting issues. I believe that, in years to come, the fact that different institutions are being precious over their budgets will be seen as foolishly myopic. To understand that, we need only think about the elderly person who is at risk and who is not suitably supported in the community. It leads to greater overall costs if that person has an unplanned admission to, and a prolonged stay in, hospital. That is not the best use of our money or the best outcome for our elderly population.

My final point is on inspecting the care pathway and having an integrated care pathway for elderly people as they go through the care system. Perhaps in future, the health inspectorate and the care inspectorate will investigate not only care in hospitals at home and in residential accommodation, but—jointly, or perhaps as one organisation—the care pathway as people go through an integrated service. That might drive further change and reform.

09:53

**Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** Those who usually come to the chamber on a Thursday morning for a Donnybrook will be disappointed this morning, because there is a great deal of consensus. I certainly welcome the Scottish Government's moves. I will repeat some of the themes that my deputy convener on the Health and Sport Committee, Bob Doris, has just spoken about. It must be recognised that the Government is trying to address an imposing and complicated problem. I believe that it is an extremely worthwhile cause.

Jackie Baillie referred to cost-shunting issues, as did the cabinet secretary earlier this week. As Jackie Baillie described it, there is pass the parcel

between the national health service and local authorities. That is a good example of a serious failure of the current separated system, which all too often leaves elderly people with the short end of the stick.

Delaying elderly people in hospital beds at a cost of £2,000 a week when residential and nursing home services can cost a fraction of that is not only a blatant waste of funds but offensive to the high standards to which we hold our health service.

The integration of health and social care is a way in which to spend precious funding more effectively, and it should also be a way in which to provide higher-quality services to the elderly. As I said, it is an extremely worthwhile cause, but we all understand that it is not a cure-all for the issues that face the health and social care system as it applies to the elderly.

In 2002, the Parliament made the bold decision to provide free personal care for the elderly men and women of Scotland, and for nearly 10 years the Scottish Government, in one way or another, has paid the health and social care bills for nearly every Scot over the age of 65. However, as has been mentioned, much has changed in those 10 years. Scotland's demographic has been ageing and the cost of providing people with that healthcare has nearly doubled to a staggering £370 million a year. At the same time, we have seen the economy crumble around us. Budgets across the board are on the chopping block and the personal care funding gap has grown to about £40 million a year.

So far, the Scottish Government has stepped in to plug the gap, but the reality of Scotland's ageing population and the Government's diminishing funds in these difficult economic times have put the sustainability of the system under question. Experts challenge us with warnings to Government. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the independent budget review group, the Association of Directors of Social Work, the Centre for Public Policy for Regions and Lord Sutherland, who was the architect of free personal care, have all called into question the sustainability of the policy. Against that stark backdrop, those of us who support affordable, good-quality care for the elderly recognise that progress must be made and that the status quo is not an option. We also recognise that the integration of budgets is a step in a long but necessary journey, but that is not the only area in which we need integration in order to improve services.

The Health and Sport Committee recently produced our "Report on Inquiry into the Regulation of Care for Older People", in which we welcome moves towards greater integration of health and social care, and with it, the integration

of the regulatory regimes that oversee those services. In recommending a review of the national care standards, we believe that there is an opportunity to include

“the introduction of joint inspections of care pathways”,

which Bob Doris mentioned,

“including clinical care in the community and the inspection of social care for older people in ... acute services.”

The committee also recommends that the Scottish Government should consider establishing

“a single point of entry”

into the complaints procedure,

“with a view to greater integration in future.”

We all want to ensure the best outcomes for elderly people, but the integration and securing of care will be easier said than done. That is the challenge that the policy presents. However, I am sure that I speak for all members of the Health and Sport Committee when I say that we look forward to working with the Scottish Government to make progress in this challenging area and, through that, to keeping our focus on improving care for our elderly people in Scotland.

09:59

**James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** I thank the cabinet secretary for her speech and welcome the measures that she outlined. I was particularly pleased to hear her talk about giving people priority over organisations.

As has already been stated, Scotland faces huge demographic changes over the coming years, particularly with the 38 per cent increase in the 65 to 74-year-old population by 2031.

Already, £1.4 billion is spent on unplanned emergency admissions to hospital. Indeed, we know from clinicians, care managers and older people themselves that unplanned emergency admission to hospital is often distressing and leads to poorer health outcomes than might have been achieved by a package of primary and social care in the community, and lead commissioning can help us achieve that.

**Dr Simpson:** Will the member give way?

**James Dornan:** Already?

**Dr Simpson:** The member makes a very important point at the beginning of his speech when he asks what we can do at the moment to prevent emergency admissions, which cost us £1.4 billion. Does he agree that emergency planning for individuals who are receiving care is absolutely vital and that, without that, emergency admission is almost inevitable?

**James Dornan:** Some work is already being done to ensure that the number of emergency admissions is lowered.

Clearly, we should be focusing more on outcomes than on processes and looking for creative ways in which different levels of government can work together.

As a great man once said, we have “no monopoly on wisdom”, and that is why we should listen to what others have to say about the proposals. The chair of NHS Highland, Garry Coutts, said:

“I am convinced that staff will be much more able to organise services that best meet the needs of the people they are caring for if the artificial barriers between health and social care are broken down.”

The chief executive of NHS Tayside, Gerry Marr, said:

“The closer integration of social care and healthcare is the next step that we must take to ensure we can provide the best care for our older people into the future.”

Although the Association of Directors of Social Work has concerns about the move, its president, Andrew Lowe, said:

“We consider the announcement represents significant progress and we support the clear emphasis on making better use of joint resources.”

I know that there appears to be cross-party consensus about where we are heading—I will deal with the differences later on.

The ADSW already works closely with the NHS on many fronts and the approach is something that it can build on. As it says, it is the norm across Scotland for joint teams to operate in learning disability, mental health and addictions services. Joint service approaches in older people's services are now being developed further as the result of the implementation of the change fund.

I am a former member of the south-east Glasgow community health and care partnership. I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the partnership before its unfortunate and untimely demise. As the cabinet secretary knows, although there were difficulties, it managed to do to the best of its abilities what it was tasked with doing, and it enabled politicians, medical practitioners, social workers and, most important, members of the community to work together to deliver better outcomes for the people of the south-east of Glasgow. So, what happened to it? I believe that, although those at the ground level were keen and worked co-operatively, after initial difficulties and a lot of effort and commitment, the desire to hold on to power—and budgets—was too great for those higher up the food chain. I am not making a political attack; my comments are based on my experiences. As I was part of the executive committee that discussed the matter, I know that

Glasgow City Council was not willing to devolve money to the CHCP to deliver services and was much more interested in protecting its social work silos. I doubt that that was untypical of councils and health boards across the country. Members should not just take my word for it, though. The BMA says that resource transfer to community health partnerships

“has been a source of tension between the NHS and councils.”

It has also said that

“the barriers that exist within and between health and social care need to be broken down and replaced with greater collaboration, both financial and cultural.”

I was delighted to hear the cabinet secretary say that what is important is not where the money comes from but how it is used. If that approach had been taken with regard to the practical application of the CHCPs, we would not be in our current situation.

At this stage in the process, there are a number of questions. Bob Doris mentioned the issues around carers. I congratulate the cabinet secretary on her positive comments on the third sector and carers in particular. Where do carers fit into the policy, and how will the Government ensure that carers and carers organisations are directly involved in the planning and delivery of the legislation and the new partnerships from the outset? As has been said, if we do not ensure that the carers are on board, it is hard to see how the approach will work.

The challenge for the Scottish Government, local authorities and health boards is to ensure that we deliver the changes that are needed to meet the challenges that we face now and in the years ahead. However, those changes need to be flexible in order to accommodate the differing needs of communities across the country. Close co-operation is vital, and joined up thinking is crucial, but a one-size-fits-all approach would be wrong. We need to get local authorities and health boards to work together and then give them the space to meet the needs of their patients or clients. That is why, faced with all the evidence and statements welcoming the integration of health and social care and a joined-up approach across all sectors of local government and stressing the need for flexibility, I do not support the Labour amendment. In my view, a national care service is not the answer to Scotland's care challenges.

However, it is coming up to Christmas, so I will be more charitable than I normally am. I am honestly in no doubt that all members sincerely want Scotland to have a first-class health and social care system that is fit for the 21st century, that has the people at its heart, that is publicly

accountable, that involves partnerships across all areas and levels of government—where that makes sense—and, most important, that delivers for the people of Scotland. It would be a very good sign if the Parliament sent a message as one, and I therefore ask the Labour Party to support the motion.

10:05

**Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Lab):** We have heard talk of consensus and working together. I understand why Jackie Baillie made the point that much of what is being looked at came from recommendations that were made in work that the Labour Party asked for, and why the cabinet secretary wants to take credit for what she proposes. However, fundamentally, the issue is how we can work together to make a lasting change that will benefit the people whom we represent. We all want to get in our own particular points about who said what, but I was disappointed by James Dornan's conclusion, as he distorted what Jackie Baillie said. He said that the SNP would not support the Labour Party's amendment because it looks for a statutory national service. I suggest that James Dornan should read Jackie Baillie's amendment again, as that is not what it says.

One of the problems that we have with how the public sector works in Scotland is the length of time that it takes to change anything. In the Public Audit Committee, I have seen some of the problems that relate to entrenched attitudes and the difficulty of getting change. In listening to some of the speeches in the debate, I have reflected on the fact that it was 10 years ago that Malcolm Chisholm and I were appointed as health ministers, and one of the first things that we had to look at in our portfolio was how to get health and social work budgets to work together to bring forward a common agenda. We are still talking about the same problem 10 years later. That is not because the ministers in the previous Labour-led Administration had a lack of political will, and it is not a reflection of a lack of will by the ministers who have served since 2007; rather, it is a fact that there is a bureaucracy and there are vested interests that are very often resistant to change. We need to think about how we can think outside the box and beyond our own safety and comfort zones about how we will force change.

We can talk about delayed discharge statistics and statistics on how much things cost, but at the end of the day, it is human stories that count: the distress and anxiety that families feel when they see a loved one kept in hospital for longer than they have to be; families' worries when they know that someone is relying on a vital care service and costs are shooting through the roof; and families'

worries about what will happen when the length of time for carers is cut.

**Bob Doris:** Hugh Henry is quite right: this is about the direct human experience. However, he mentioned delayed discharges. We have to monitor outcomes somehow. Does he believe that it is reasonable to measure unplanned admissions and delayed discharges to see whether the approach is having an impact?

**Hugh Henry:** By all means. They are among a number of factors that have to be taken into account, but at the end of the day, we need to force the pace of change. That is why I support what the cabinet secretary said. Legislative underpinning is vital in achieving that.

Bob Doris referred to the Princess Royal Trust for Carers. It is not only the trust that has talked about what needs to be done—Macmillan Cancer Support and others have also done so.

The change fund is to be welcomed, and I seek a guarantee that it will be protected and will not be sliced in other directions as other pressures emerge. Bob Doris mentioned that 20 per cent of the fund is for carers, and I seek a guarantee that that element will be protected and will not be taken in other directions.

Change comes slowly—

**Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Hugh Henry:** No, thank you—I have a couple of points to make before I finish.

The cabinet secretary made her announcement at the magnificent new Barrhead health and care centre in my constituency, which leads me to reflect on how long that welcome project has taken. The money for it was signed off in 2006, when Andy Kerr—who is no longer in the Parliament—was a minister. It was driven by local councillors Roy Garscadden and Danny Collins, who are no longer councillors in East Renfrewshire. That is how long it takes to deliver vital services, and we must find a way to change that and make things happen more quickly.

What we have discussed today is welcome, and it would be petty of the SNP to reject Jackie Baillie's amendment at this stage.

Strathclyde Regional Council was much derided, but it delivered fantastic initiatives in health and social care and education. That Labour-dominated authority had officer/member working groups that brought together politicians from all parties with council officers and outside experts to come up with a range of reports on poverty, education, early years, social care and so on. We could consider replicating that model if we want change that everyone will buy into over the

longer term: change that does not just come from the Government, but which has the support of every member in the Parliament.

10:12

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** I thank the cabinet secretary for bringing the debate to the chamber, and I declare an interest as a sitting Renfrewshire councillor. As many members who have been elected councillors will know, we are effectively at the coal face. As MSPs, we receive letters in our mailbags about social work cases, but as councillors, we receive all the information.

There is much that can be done, and nine times out of 10 I can find a solution to the situation with which I am presented. However, there are inevitably cases in which I feel that I just have to deal with the issue to the best of my abilities.

Hugh Henry is right to say that we must work together. I have enjoyed the consensus in the debate, because I know that, outside the chamber, people are concerned only about the service and its delivery, and what that means for their families and friends. The professionals who work in health and social care are also concerned about how they can deliver—there are many motivated professionals out there who want to make a difference and who want to deliver.

I like the idea that health and social care partnerships will be integrated and accountable, and it is important that we involve the public and the third sector. It would be good if there was a way in which service users could feed into the partnerships, perhaps through community planning groups. If someone uses a service, they will get involved and engaged only if they are gaining from that process and having some input from the other side.

We must look at the accountability of local authorities and elected members. It is very important that there is an accountable officer in the partnerships, but it is also important for the leader of the council to take an active role. When I was working in my own area for Renfrewshire Council, it was ably led by Councillor Derek Mackay. He is now Minister Mackay, and I wish my good friend all the best for the future. I am extremely proud of everything that he has achieved, and I know that he is the man for the job. I will go on to a best man speech in a minute.

As council leader, Derek Mackay was very motivated by the idea of getting involved with the community health partnerships. The CHPs in our area worked because of focus and direction, which came from a political level as well.

The current social work model works well. Nationally, social work deals with a diverse group

of 650,000 adults, who feel that they are treated with dignity and respect. We need to remember that social work is based locally, in local authorities, which deal with cases day to day. Authorities also deal with housing and other issues for adults and young people. Social work deals with difficult and challenging cases and it is important for us to move things forward.

**Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP):** Social work works well, but does George Adam agree that it could do better? I do not support the tone of the ADSW's briefing, but I think that the ADSW recognises that, although social work does a good job, it could and should do better.

**George Adam:** I agree that everyone should challenge themselves and do better all the time. All that I add is that a lot of good, radical work is being done in social work departments the length and breadth of the country. It is important that we keep focused and remember that, but I agree that social work departments can achieve a lot more, as we all can in day-to-day life, too.

It is important that older people in our communities are supported to remain in our communities. In my time as an elected member, I have noticed that it is better for families and individuals to be together in their areas. Our area has had various housing schemes such as high flats with social areas where older people can congregate, so that people can stay together all the time. That has been good and successful, to the extent that people have become almost clannish and allow into their own wee area no one other than people in their own block.

The agreed national outcomes are important and involve local authorities and the NHS working together in a focused partnership. In relation to partnership, no one will be surprised that I will talk about carers. I emphasise that we must ensure that carers are equal partners in the new organisations. We must not lose sight of the fact that husbands and wives look after their life partners in older years as time moves on.

The cabinet secretary is correct to say that much has been achieved, but we must go much further. As elected members, we all know people in our communities who use the services that we are discussing. They are the important people in the debate. Health and social work professionals throughout Scotland must deliver the agreed national outcomes, and all elected members must remain focused on that. That will be difficult, but nothing that is worth while is not difficult. It is important to get the system correct.

The debate has been consensual and is extremely important to me and other members. All

that we have to do now is stay focused and deliver what is needed.

10:18

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I welcome the opportunity to discuss and support integrated health and social care. As Nanette Milne said, we support the Government's motion and Labour's amendment. Until James Dornan stood up, I had planned to say that, unusually, I agreed with all the speeches, but he spoiled that line.

Jackie Baillie outlined Labour's approach, which we have supported. The one inconsistency that she did not mention is that the cost of self-funded residential care can vary from £460 a week to more than £900 a week, depending on where somebody lives. I feel strongly about that issue, which we could go on about.

It is worth looking at how integrated care has been dealt with in the Parliament's lifetime and particularly at the attitude that Hugh Henry highlighted. In the Parliament's first eight years, the Labour-Liberal Scottish Executive introduced several initiatives—all of which we supported—including the joint future group.

I found a letter to all health boards, councils, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, directors of social work and many more from Malcolm Chisholm when he was the Minister for Health and Community Care in July 2002. He wrote to promote community health partnerships and said that they would

"seek to bridge the divide that has existed for too long between primary and secondary care and between health and social care."

Today, nine and a half years later, we have a Government motion—which we support—which states that

"the integration of services needs to be improved to deliver better health and social care services."

I acknowledge that some progress has been made since 2002, but it is not enough. The evidence that the Health and Community Care Committee took on the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Bill in the first session of Parliament was overwhelmingly in favour of having one organisation and one budget for care for the elderly, although there was no unanimity on what that single authority should be. At that time, up to 3,000 people were waiting in hospitals for councils to fund home care or residential care. Those people had delayed discharges or were bedblockers through no fault of their own.

There are also examples, which Richard Simpson mentions quite often, of health and social



care working together that have had to be abandoned.

Millions of pounds have been spent over the years on initiatives to tackle bedblocking, and we also supported those initiatives.

In 2004, we got the community health partnerships, whose main purpose was to integrate NHS and social care. Audit Scotland criticised the CHPs for their “duplication” of

“existing health and social care partnership arrangements.”

Not only did they not achieve integration, but it was found that any attempt to integrate often resulted in a duplication of existing services.

That brings me to the £70 million change fund, which, again, we support, some of which will be used for health and social care partnerships to implement local plans for better integration of their services. Today, we hear that the community health partnerships are being replaced by new health and social care partnerships that will be jointly accountable to NHS boards and local authorities. The CHPs should have been doing that work since 2004. Excuse my frustration, but we have been here before.

The Audit Scotland report “Overview of the NHS in Scotland’s performance 2010-11”, which was published today, states:

“Improvements in partnership working are needed to deliver more efficient and effective services. ... joint working could be improved by tackling differences in organisational cultures”—

which Hugh Henry mentioned—and

“planning and performance and financial management arrangements.”

That was highlighted in evidence as far back as 1999-2000, yet today we have an Audit Scotland report highlighting the same problem.

I trust that, within the programme for improvement outlined by the cabinet secretary, organisational cultures will no longer stand in the way of patient care and support. I agree with Nanette Milne—I think that Dennis Robertson alluded to this, too—that some of the briefing papers for the debate have been considerably unhelpful.

Against that background, I commend NHS Highland for taking the courageous step of becoming the lead agency for care of the elderly, working with Highland Council, which will become the lead agency for children’s services. I have already found that the single-agency model is very helpful for my constituents.

Why do we need the integration of health and social work? As Malcolm Chisholm said back in 2002, it will

“enable health and social care ... to look at the whole picture”.

In a country of 5 million, it is unacceptable to have people working in silos, allowing patients and others to be marginalised behind bureaucracy, budgets and a dogged refusal to put the needs of ordinary people before organisational cultures.

I support the Highland lead-agency model to integrate home carers into the NHS. I hope that the home care workforce to be redeployed from the council to the NHS will be given more training and support and will be better co-ordinated with other health professionals in their team.

The Highland process of change has faced many challenges along the way, with NHS staff moving to council employment and council staff moving to the NHS. There are challenges ahead, but we should all commend what Highland Council and NHS Highland are doing.

10:24

**Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP):** It is always a pleasure to follow my good friend Mary Scanlon. [*Interruption.*] Anything George Adam can do, I can do better.

I welcome this debate on the integration of health and social care. Social care is pivotal to the care of all who require the service. A social work department in any council deals with the range of needs across a wide remit and must react to meet those needs. Many improvements have been achieved in adult health and social care services, but I agree that the integration of services to Scotland’s older people needs to be improved to deliver better health and social care services. We need to continue to reduce the number of delayed discharges because that impacts directly on the health and care experience of older citizens.

For too long, there has been a silo mentality in social work and the health service. Each blames the other for the delays that they both cause, and each watches its own budget too closely. They now have to learn to work together to release the potential that has always been there to improve the quality of care for our elderly citizens. I read with interest the parliamentary briefing on social care and health integration from the Association of Directors of Social Work. It says:

“We acknowledge that there are things we could do better and there are issues that politicians are concerned about and we are keen to assist Government in addressing this.”

It then goes on to say why social work should stay in its silo. Frankly, like Nanette Milne, I was not impressed by the submission, which continually states “We must keep”. Yes, social work can keep, but it must also work with other agencies to improve the quality of care in our society. We must

put an end to cost shunting between the NHS and local authorities. Too often, that ends up with older people being delayed in hospital longer than they should be and not getting the standards of care that they deserve.

Like many others, I have personal experience of the delay that can arise when a family member is unable to go home because they have to wait for the hospital and local social work to agree on the best action. I will not go into that case because it is personal. However, I will talk about the case of one of my constituents, who was stuck in hospital in my region. We all have such cases and Jackie Baillie mentioned one. My constituent's relation, Mr John Love, who stays in Motherwell, contacted me to gain my support. Mr Love had tried without success to resolve his relation's problem. Mr Love was going between the hospital and social work and getting nowhere. I was lucky enough to know who to phone in the social work department and, within a few hours, Mr Love was able to talk to the people who could really help him. I was happy with the outcome.

If we can use common sense and working together to solve one constituent's problem, we can solve most of the problems that face social work in local hospitals. We cannot go on any longer suggesting that the problem cannot be solved. We cannot hide in our local silos and suggest that another department should bear the costs. I therefore welcome the health and social care partnerships that will replace the community health partnerships. The new partnerships should be accountable to ministers, leaders of local authorities, MSPs, councillors and the public for delivering new nationally agreed outcomes. Reform is vital to ensure the long-term sustainability of adult care in Scotland. We need closer working.

I welcome the comments of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers about the proposal. I agree with it that

"Carers play a crucial role in the delivery of health and social care in Scotland."

I note that the Princess Royal Trust for Carers has tabled a number of questions in its submission. I am sure that the cabinet secretary will respond to them in due course.

I also pay tribute to the work that is done by various organisations that deal with patients who have cancer. The submission from Macmillan Cancer Support details what we can do to help people who have cancer and to improve services if we start to come out of our silos: we can reduce avoidable emergency admissions to hospital and the length of stay in hospital, improve follow-up, support patients to return to or stay in work, and

support patients to die at home rather than in hospital.

I welcome also most of the comments from the Royal College of Nursing, which looks forward to working with the Government to progress the proposal. I welcome the proposal.

10:30

**Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD):**

The cabinet secretary is to be commended for her determination to bring about transformational change in the delivery of health and social care. I have listened with interest to the detail that she has presented this morning.

The contributions from Hugh Henry and Mary Scanlon served to remind us all just how difficult it is to achieve change. There seems to be so much inertia in the system. Leadership nationally and locally will be essential to taking the proposal forward.

I am pleased that the cabinet secretary has decided not to create a new statutory organisation, separate from the NHS and local authorities, and her acknowledgement that that approach would have created further barriers to integration. Her decision instead to build on community health partnerships is a commonsense approach to the reform that is needed.

**Dr Simpson:** Who actually suggested that separate super-quango? It was not the Labour Party.

**Alison McInnes:** The Labour Party is on shifting ground on that matter.

**Dr Simpson:** Only the Lib Dems portrayed it as such.

**Alison McInnes:** All along we have advocated that sort of commonsense approach to the reform that is needed. We have opposed the centralisation of care into a single national care service.

As an aside, I draw Kenny MacAskill's attention to what Nicola Sturgeon said earlier this week:

"We are keen to avoid the pitfalls that can accompany centrally directed, large-scale structural reorganisation".

It is not too late for Kenny MacAskill to ditch his centrally directed, large-scale reorganisation of the police service, but that is for another day.

As Scotland's population ages, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that care is provided in a joined-up and personalised way that can respond effectively to local needs. Liberal Democrats are committed to enabling older and disabled people to live independently and with dignity in their own homes for as long as possible. Bridging the gap between health and social care is

essential if we are to make that a reality. This is an opportunity to put people not process at the heart of health and social care services.

Liberal Democrats believe that health care should be delivered as locally as possible. Despite much rhetoric on shifting the balance of care, most spending is still directed towards acute services. Often, people are being cared for in hospitals miles from their homes when they would receive better and more cost-effective care closer to home in the community.

More than 60 per cent of Scottish Government spending on care for older people is still on care in hospitals and care homes and almost a third is spent on emergency or non-elective hospital admissions. Only 6.7 per cent of the budget is allocated to providing care at home. Earlier this year, NHS Grampian's medical director warned that, unless health services, local authorities and individuals work together, we would have to build a new, 600-bed hospital in Scotland every year from now to be able to cope. In addition, he reckoned that every person leaving school would have to find a job in the NHS in order for us to provide enough care for the elderly.

As well as being better for the individual, supporting an older person to retain their independence is much cheaper. Reducing delayed discharge and unplanned admissions to hospital and increasing the number of older people who live at home rather than in a care home or hospital are not new ideas, but it is proving difficult to achieve the switch in resource. The reality of what has happened with the change fund demonstrates that good intentions are not enough.

**John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Alison McInnes:** I have quite a lot to get through.

We believe that the principle behind the creation of community health partnerships remains sound and that the CHPs are the correct vehicle to integrate the provision of health and social care in the community. They can deliver improved health outcomes locally. However, as we all know from experience and of course from the Audit Scotland report, the outcomes for patients across Scotland are too varied at the moment. CHPs are extremely variable in quality. Some are little more than large and unwieldy talking shops and, in other areas, the relevant health boards and local authorities have failed to co-operate. In many areas, that has led to general practitioners completely disengaging from CHPs.

I share the cabinet secretary's ambition that the reform should be transformational and I agree that nationally agreed outcomes, integrated budgets and leadership are the foundations for change.

However, it is important that local responsiveness is not lost, and I welcome the Government's recognition of that point, too. We need to treat people as partners in their care. Social care services should build people's capabilities and wellness in older age rather than react to crisis when it is reached.

The RCN is right to point out the need for shared purpose and mutual respect as the reform rolls out.

Only a couple of weeks ago, we debated the role of carers. Much in that debate should inform the cabinet secretary's work on the reform that we are discussing now.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers has asked that, from the outset, carers and carers organisations be directly involved in shaping the proposed new care bill and any supporting guidance. It rightly points out that we cannot focus on tackling challenges such as delayed discharge and shifting the balance of care without ensuring that the needs and contribution of unpaid carers sit at the heart of plans to bring services closer together. Carers organisations have a crucial role to play in the process.

How do we ensure that GPs are returned to the heart of local healthcare delivery? They have largely turned their backs on the CHPs—the BMA called them “bureaucratic monoliths”—but, if health and care in the community are to be joined up properly, it is vital that the biggest providers of healthcare in the community be fully involved.

Will the Scottish Government include carer-specific outcomes in the national outcomes for the new partnerships and, through those, in single outcome agreements? Are single outcome agreements the best way to measure progress? How do the reforms fit with the proposed bill for self-directed care?

There are many questions to be answered. This is simply the start of a long process. It is essential that we get it right. Scottish Liberal Democrats will work with the Government on this essential reform to get the best possible outcome.

10:36

**Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP):** I congratulate the cabinet secretary on her positive comments on the integration of health and social care. She said that we were not starting off with a blank sheet. That is correct, because there are already many examples in our communities of positive integrated approaches to health and social care. I will come back to that point in a minute.

I also congratulate the convener and deputy convener of the Health and Sport Committee on

the tone of their comments on integrated services. They are to be welcomed.

While I am in a congratulatory spirit, I thank Jackie Baillie for highlighting the fact that the majority of our older people—I think that she said 90 per cent of them—do not require care. However, we must ensure that, when they require care, the facilities and resources are available to provide it.

I welcome the briefing from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the questions that it poses to the cabinet secretary. I am sure that she is listening to the questions that are being asked and to the other briefings that we have received. Macmillan Cancer Support provides an example of an existing joint approach to the provision of care between the health service, local authorities and the third sector. It provided some excellent examples in its briefing.

I commend the ADSW for the good work that it does. Being a former social worker and having spent 32 years in the social care sector, I am well aware of the complexity of the work in social work departments. However, the tone of the ADSW briefing was less than desirable for this debate.

I agree with Nanette Milne, Richard Lyle and Mary Scanlon that, if we are going to work in partnership, we need to be more positive. We cannot afford to remain in our silos and try to be autonomous.

I will give a good example of what I consider to be integration that works. It concerns the work that Optometry Scotland does with the Royal National Institute of Blind People and the third and independent sectors. The SNP Government provided money from the Scottish eye care fund to enable community optometrists to start to deliver much improved services in the community. They now have the facility in their community optometry practices to take electronic images to send direct to ophthalmic services, thereby obviating the need for the patient to go to an ophthalmology outpatient appointment. That approach is welcome. I commend that model, because it encourages patients, when they have a sensory problem, to go to their local optometry practice rather than to their GP or to ophthalmic services in hospitals. That is definitely the right approach, as early intervention and prevention are the way forward in an integrated service.

The debate has been consensual and it has been welcome to hear everyone's comments. I am sure that when the cabinet secretary dips her hand into her Christmas stocking this year, she will pull out the *Official Report*, which will probably just say, "Consensual."

10:40

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** This week, the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy announced a radical rebranding of community health partnerships, which will now be health and social care partnerships, on a visit to open Barrhead's new health and care centre. In the minister's words, the reforms

"will deliver a system that is effectively integrated, leading to better outcomes for older people and better use of resources."

How will that suddenly be achieved through health and social care partnerships, and why could it not be achieved through community health partnerships?

Ms Sturgeon's announcement on Monday indicates that the key elements of the new system will make health and social care partnerships accountable to local authorities and ministers, will create new or different job opportunities in the community—at a time when the SNP Government is cutting nurses from the NHS—and will ensure that NHS boards and local authorities will be required to produce integrated budgets, which will bring an end to the cost shunting that currently takes place.

Accountability has always been an issue in the integration of health and social care. Who will be responsible when staff, service users or the public make a complaint about the service?

Another aspect of accountability is the regulation of health and social care professionals. Will that be in the remit of the care inspectorate or that of health boards? There also needs to be accountability for the finances of health and social care partnerships. If integrated budgets are to end cost shunting, will the resources come from the change fund, local authorities or health boards? What will be the contribution from each body involved?

As local authorities and health boards have had their budgets cut, can the minister assure the Parliament that the change fund will not be used to plug the gaps that have been created by underfunding by the Government? I have raised that issue previously.

In recent months, care homes have closed after the parent company has entered administration, leaving many of our elderly people unsure about how they will be looked after. Therefore, not only must we regulate the financial accountability of health and social care partnerships, but there must be greater financial regulation of all social care organisations.

The integration of health and social care cannot be fully achieved without input from the third sector and carers. What measures will be in place

to engage fully with the third sector on how to maximise the integration most effectively? When legislation is brought before the Parliament on integration, I hope and have no doubt that Ms Sturgeon and the Government will fully consult the third sector.

A recent survey shows that senior executives in local authorities believe that the third sector should be more involved in delivering services, with 86 per cent believing that the third sector could provide services as effectively as councils. That shows how important a role the third sector can play in shaping our services and our legislation.

It is also vital that carers be given a greater say in how services are run locally and nationally. We all agree that Scotland could not survive without those selfless people and that our NHS would be bankrupt without the fantastic care and support that they provide, so we must utilise their experience and ideas to help to deliver more integrated services that join up the dots between health and social care.

A key element of the health and social care bill that is to be introduced will be to strengthen the role of clinicians and social care professionals in the planning of services for our elderly. That can be achieved only through competent leadership from the Government, local authorities and health boards that creates a shared purpose between the professionals, as well as mutual trust and respect.

One of the biggest criticisms of CHPs came from health and social care professionals who found that they could not work together or that their skills were seen as less important than those of others. In other words, there was a lack of respect between the professions, even though their purposes are very connected.

In fact, that criticism has been highlighted by GPs since the inception of CHPs. Brian Keighley, the chairman of BMA Scotland, recently said:

"The failure of CHPs has been highlighted by GPs since their introduction in Scotland in 2004 and more recently by Audit Scotland. They have become bureaucratic structures, caught up in their own internal processes rather than influencing planning, funding and development of local services to meet patient needs. It has been widely accepted that they have failed to bridge the gap between health and social care."

Dr Keighley added that, for the reforms to succeed, it was essential to involve clinicians from secondary and primary care.

I would like to highlight two final issues. The first is the variation in charges for services implemented by local authorities, and the fact that that adds to the many existing barriers to integration that the health secretary wishes to remove. The other relates to the comments made by the Royal College of Nursing on self-directed

support. It has expressed concern that self-directed support will be introduced in advance of a national debate on whether that is the best way of allocating health services.

10:46

**Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):**

It was all going so well! Before I was elected, I used to coach school debating teams. The kids used to say to me, "I want to turn up at the debate with a pre-written speech." I offered them two pieces of advice. The first was, "Don't." The second was, "If you do, be flexible enough to change the tone of your speech if the tone of the debate does not match what you prepared for." I now extend that advice to Mary Fee.

The submission from the Association of Directors of Social Work was unfortunate. The message that we should send back to the ADSW is that the proposals represent an opportunity, not a threat, and that it can work with us to deliver an integrated service. I hope that it will choose to do so.

I welcome the framework's focus on outcomes. All too often, in politics in general, we get hung up on input measures. I have an example of that from my experience as a councillor in Aberdeen. The learning disability budgets there were focused on what was spent on the packages, and people were being provided with very expensive packages of support that were not necessarily appropriate to their needs. Indeed, it was pointed out to us that if Birmingham City Council, which had a learning disability budget of £50 million, had spent the same amount per head as Aberdeen City Council was doing, its budget would have been £85 million. The crucial factor, however, was that the outcomes were not up to standard. Change and reform were therefore necessary. We must ensure that we reform and transform services.

**Kevin Stewart:** Mr McDonald has given us a good example. Some bureaucrats prefer to focus on packages rather than on outcomes. Does he agree that some of the new learning disability packages being delivered in Aberdeen by organisations such as Cornerstone are much more outcome based?

**Mark McDonald:** Indeed I do. The third sector will have a crucial role to play in the integration of social care and health, and I shall say more about that later.

I have said before that it is incumbent on us to highlight best practice where it exists and bring examples of it to the chamber. It is all very well for us to talk about what is going wrong and what could be done better—we might hear more of that later—but we also have a duty to highlight examples of good practice. I have spoken here in

the past about Rosewell house and Smithfield court in Aberdeen. They are good examples of places in which the health service and the social care department are working closely together to deliver services for elderly people.

Another example of good practice in Aberdeenshire is the Old Mart community resource centre in Maud, which provides a multi-agency support network involving health, council and third sector services. A range of services is delivered by health visitors, community nurses, physiotherapists, mental health teams and home care support, and the GP practice delivers a twice-weekly surgery. That is an example of a number of sectors coming together to deliver. I believe that the framework that will be established will enhance provision and provide opportunities to roll it out further.

I welcome the fact that the debate and the Government's agenda will address some of the issues that the audit of community health partnerships identified. Although I am soon to be a former member of the Public Audit Committee, depending on how the vote goes at decision time today, I took part in committee discussions on the community health partnership audit that made it clear that issues needed to be addressed. Indeed, one of the first recommendations of that audit is that the Scottish Government should

"work with NHS boards and councils to undertake a fundamental review of the various partnership arrangements for health and social care in Scotland to ensure that they are efficient and effective and add value".

I welcome the fact that the Government has clearly grasped that thistle and will introduce legislation, as outlined by the cabinet secretary.

We should be aware, however, that there are often gaps in provision. One of the glaring gaps in the Grampian area is around advocacy, particularly mental health advocacy. My colleague Councillor Jim Kiddie, the chair of social care and wellbeing in Aberdeen City Council, has pushed very hard over many years to get NHS Grampian to advance advocacy services. Some funding has been unlocked—£75,000 over a three-year period—but the problem is that that is non-recurring expenditure and it will not necessarily lead to properly planned and resourced advocacy. One of the key points about such advocacy for mental health sufferers is that it can save substantial amounts of money in other areas. I hope that when the cabinet secretary looks at the framework in general she will take a look at how advocacy services can fit within it to ensure that we deliver appropriate advocacy across the nation, particularly for people who have mental health problems.

10:52

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** I will start by putting on my hat as convener of the cross-party group on older people, which I think is the longest running cross-party group. As members can imagine, the subject of integrated care comes up constantly at our meetings and has much exercised us in our discussions, so I welcome the debate. The group had a meeting yesterday at which there was excellent discussion of the issue, as others who were there have said.

Although it is unfortunate that Mary Fee referred to supposed cutbacks in the number of nurses, the debate has otherwise been constructive and members have focused on improvements and reform, regardless of our political differences. As Jackie Baillie said, the issue is people and we should not forget that.

I have long questioned the community health partnership situation in Glasgow, and other Glasgow MSPs have referred to it, too. My concerns in that regard are well documented, so I will not reiterate them, but I will give an example of what happened to one of my constituents. I am sure that other members can talk about similar examples from their constituencies. An elderly gentleman was taken into hospital and it was decided while he was there that, because care services could not be provided for him, he could not go back to his home and should go into a care home. The family and others duly rallied round and looked for a suitable care home near them that met the gentleman's needs, but it took months to find a suitable one. Not even a letter from the doctor, stating that the man's health was deteriorating while he was in hospital, helped in getting the local authority to reach a decision on finding him a place in a care home.

Last week, Richard Simpson referred to a charter for whistleblowers. I found out that Glasgow City Council had a moratorium—or, I should say, ran a quota—on admissions to care homes every month only because someone in the health service told me about it. It is really important that we look at integrated care services and I entirely agree with Hugh Henry, who made an excellent speech, and other members that the biggest challenge that we face with the proposed health and social care partnerships is getting rid of the attitudes at the top. People at the bottom desperately want to help and integrate social care and hospital services but the problem lies with those at the top. The various partners have to work together because we simply cannot allow people to languish in hospital; that is costing the health board a fortune and it is happening only because some local authority wants to save money from its budget. Who is suffering in all this?

**Dennis Robertson:** I am sure that the member agrees that the issue with earlier discharges is not just the cost of keeping patients in hospital, but the quality of care for individuals when they go back into the community.

**Sandra White:** Absolutely. Indeed, in the case that I highlighted, the doctor wrote a letter saying that the health of the man in question was deteriorating in hospital. However, if we can bring budgets together, we can secure the best for patients and older people. Far too much empire building is going on in the NHS, local authorities, social work and so on and, as Hugh Henry and others have pointed out, the people at the bottom are suffering as a result. I have cited one particular case, but I am sure that members can mention many others.

I agree with most of those who have spoken that the Association of Directors of Social Work's briefing is most unhelpful. I hope that the ADSW will get round the table and share its concerns. I am sure that the cabinet secretary has met its representatives and that it will come to the table and work in partnership.

As others have pointed out, we need legislation to ensure that the reforms are carried out. That will not happen overnight—this is not some magic wand—but, although it might take some time, we desperately need to make the approach work, not just for the people whom we represent but for all our sakes. We should give our all to ensure that people such as the gentleman I mentioned do not languish in hospital; that doctors do not have to keep writing letters to local authorities or social work or social care departments; and that what we do in here is for the good of the people we represent, not for social work departments, local authorities or health boards.

I am pleased to have been involved in this debate on the reforms. I congratulate the cabinet secretary on what she has done and look forward to seeing what she—and indeed all of us—can achieve with this. The job will be hard but we have to get it done for everyone's sake.

10:58

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** One of the great strengths of the Scottish NHS compared with the English health service this century has been its tendency to progress through evolution instead of structural upheaval and we have another fine example of that before us. I welcome the proposed development of CHPs into health and social care partnerships and the focus on “nationally agreed outcomes”,

“clinical and care professional leadership”

and integration, especially the integration of budgets.

As other speakers have emphasised, the prize in all this is achieving the shift in the balance of care required by demographics as well as improving the quality of care. The prerequisite in that respect is better working together, not only between health and social care without the perverse incentives and “cost-shunting” referred to in the motion but—and we must not forget this—between community clinicians and specialist hospital clinicians. After all, that was part of the drive behind the establishment of the CHPs in the first place.

I am very well aware that I and others were making many of these comments seven years ago when CHPs were set up—and, indeed, nine years ago, when the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 was being considered. I thank Mary Scanlon for reminding us of that, although I am sorry to say that I was not in the chamber at that moment.

There has been progress since then but, in retrospect and having watched developments over the past few years, I make three observations. First, there was not enough prescription on pooled budgets in the legislation. Secondly, I do not think that there was enough autonomy, including budgetary autonomy, for community health partnerships. Thirdly, I do not think that there was enough clinical leadership in practice in community health partnerships, although when CHPs were set up it was certainly the intention that there should be clinical leadership.

Budgets will be central to what is proposed. As some members will remember, there was provision in the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 for facilitated pooled budgets, but in practice very few areas have taken them up. I assume that the forthcoming legislation will require pooled budgets to be set up. There are a lot of questions about how the budgets will operate in practice. A difference between what is proposed today and what the Arbuthnott report proposed is that budgets will be subject to local decision making; I understand that Arbuthnott suggested that they should be distributed centrally, on the basis of a funding formula that is similar to the one that applies to health boards—or indeed the one that applies to local authorities. I do not have particularly strong views one way or another, but if we are to have local decision making it is clear that questions will be asked about how that works in practice, because if local authorities or health boards can adjust their contributions each year there could still be cost shunting. I presume that the matter can be sorted, through legislation or guidance.

We must ensure that we get as much of older people's services as possible into the community health and social care partnerships. Indeed, as far as possible, we should get all older people's services into the new partnerships, including geriatric beds in NHS hospitals—I am not sure that that is still the correct terminology. I accept that the intention is to start with older people, but it is clear that the more that we can get other care-group budgets and perhaps specific disease budgets into the health and social care partnerships the better, in terms of shifting the balance of care.

As I said, and as the BMA briefing reminded us, greater integration of community and hospital services is crucial for the health and social care partnerships, as it was in the context of the setting up of CHPs in the first place. In preparation for my speech, I looked into the archives last night and found a speech that I made to the NHS Confederation, which is a United Kingdom body, on 25 June 2003. I was speaking to mainly English health leaders, who thought that Scotland was in the stone age at the time, and I had to explain what we were trying to do. I said:

"Tomorrow in our Health Reform Bill we shall be establishing Community Health Partnerships, which will empower frontline staff in the community and give them the resources and flexibility to deliver services in new ways and bring community and specialist hospital staff together to design services for patients in a way which ensures their journey of care across the NHS is smooth, integrated and effectively managed."

I am sure that that is still our objective, even though it has not entirely worked out in that way—although as we look across the border to the NHS in England I suppose that we might ask who is in the stone age now.

As the motion emphasised, clinical and care professional leadership is fundamental. That was the intention behind CHPs in the first place, but mechanisms must be established to ensure that such leadership happens in practice.

The focus on national outcomes is absolutely right, but along with that there must be local flexibility and local empowerment, so the forthcoming legislation will have to establish the balance. I remember debates on the issue when community health partnerships were set up. In general, the cabinet secretary has got the balance right and I commend her proposals.

11:04

**Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** I have worked in the NHS and in social care, so the question of how to achieve closer working between health and local authority social work is familiar to me, as it must

be to everyone who has worked in the sectors in the past 20-odd years.

I share Malcolm Chisholm's and Mary Scanlon's frustration. We have been discussing the issue for at least 20 years, right back to the introduction of care in the community. From joint futures through to local healthcare co-operatives and community health partnerships, there have been many names for the approach and a variety of structural arrangements, but the common hope has always been that in one way or another the differences and separations between agencies could be overcome sufficiently to enable service users to access the much-wished-for seamless service. The fact that we are still talking about the issue is enough to tell us that that ambition has never quite been achieved.

That is not to say that there has not been progress. There are superb examples of integration that has delivered significant improvements for service users. We have heard several examples of that already, and I add one from my area—the integrated learning disability service that is delivered jointly by NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council. However, the reality is that the examples of excellence are often driven by enthusiastic and committed individuals and teams, rather than emerging from an organisational culture that prioritises consistent integration across the full range of services.

Without a clear statutory underpinning, genuinely integrated services have remained an option rather than an essential. That means that the good examples are too often isolated rather than mainstreamed and that service users still end up on the receiving end of failures in communication, knowledge and understanding between agencies that fall far below the exemplar standards of integration that we all want. We have heard several examples of that. That is why, although I am happy to praise the council and the NHS board in my constituency when they work together as they should, my constituency case load contains plenty of examples of people who have been let down by services on which they rely because staff in one agency have not spoken to or shared information with staff in another or—worse—because staff in different departments of the same organisation have not communicated properly. I am sure that members will be familiar with that scenario. I can see lots of heads nodding.

Do not get me wrong—I do not blame staff. When there is a lack of a clear and shared understanding within and between organisations about what integration means and what it is intended to achieve, it is all the harder for individual staff to fully meet service users' needs. I therefore believe that the Scottish Government's



plans, as set out by the cabinet secretary, will be welcomed by not only service users and their representatives across Scotland, but people working in health and social care, notwithstanding the ADSW briefing.

I pay tribute to my constituent Robert Anderson, who runs the Lanarkshire Carers Network and whom most members from Lanarkshire will know. He has been a formidable campaigner for carers and, in turn, has changed policy and informed me in my quest to support my constituents, as he has done for other members. Campaigners such as Robert Anderson deserve our thanks and, importantly, our support.

The proposals achieve a good balance between setting down the specifics of principles, structure, resources and accountability and enabling local health and social care partnerships to respond flexibly to local circumstances and needs. From my experience of having been a member of staff in the NHS and in local authority social care, I believe that staff will welcome that firmness and clarity of purpose, which will empower them to do what it takes to achieve the best outcomes for their patients and clients. Setting out clear requirements and duties, far from constraining individual staff, frees them to use their professional skills creatively in the context of that clear vision for integrated care.

The proposals on structural change also achieve a good balance. We are neither throwing the baby out with the bath water nor inventing brand new organisations; we are keeping what works in the existing structures and making the changes that need to happen now to make the vision a reality and to deliver genuinely integrated care once and for all.

We have already heard that the growing number of older people in the Scottish population means that we can delay changes no longer. We need to ensure that genuinely integrated care happens properly and happens now. Older people will not be the only ones who benefit from the improvements that the agenda will bring about. Everyone who, for whatever reason, relies on NHS or social care services, or a combination of the two, to help them in their daily lives needs us to make the changes and will be better off as a result. That is why I support the cabinet secretary and the Scottish Government in their aspirations for a quality service.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** We turn to the closing speeches. I remind all members that, if they participated in the debate, they should be in the chamber for the closing speeches. We have a little time in hand for interventions if members want to take them. I call Jackson Carlaw, who has approximately six minutes.

11:10

**Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. If you had told me that I had a little time in hand in any other debate, I would have been delighted, but I am bewildered as to how I will fill in the time with my summation this morning, because to a large extent I am inclined to say, "Much of all of the above", and then sit down.

I start on a consensual note by entirely agreeing with Malcolm Chisholm, who said that, after 13 years of Labour, the NHS in England is struggling to emerge from the stone age. At least, I think that that is the import of what he was trying to say.

**Malcolm Chisholm:** As the member well knows, I was referring to the current proposals of the current Government in London.

**Jackson Carlaw:** Oh dear. There was me being consensual, too. However, let me also note the blushing pride with which Malcolm Chisholm acknowledged all the progress that has been made by the SNP in the past few years. I am sure that there is a consensus on that.

I come bearing gifts, because I can say to Jackie Baillie that, being the season that it is, I am happy to support her amendment. I know that that will come as a terrible surprise to her.

I will pick out a couple of themes that emerged from the debate. Jackie Baillie started by talking about the ageing population, but I think that we sometimes forget that that is her and me. *[Interruption.]*

**Jackie Baillie:** I think that the member would be well advised to change his last comment. *[Laughter.]*

**Jackson Carlaw:** Well, we are all getting older. Even the younger members of the Parliament are getting older.

Jackie Baillie picked out in particular the increasing incidence of older folk falling between health and social care, and the inappropriate admissions to emergency departments.

I want to digress slightly on a theme that I developed when I held the health brief previously, and which I moved forward. We know that there is an ageing demographic, and when we talk about cultural change, one of the cultural changes that we, as politicians, must achieve is a greater understanding of the responsibility of everybody in society for their own health. We all cherish and admire the health service. We all want the best for it in the future, and we recognise that there are emotional, human issues that have to be dealt with, but if it is not to find itself under an intolerable strain, there is a need for everybody in society to

recognise that they have a responsibility for their own health, too.

**Dennis Robertson:** I am trying to help the member out with his time allocation. Does he agree that that is the essential part of a person-centred approach to the integration of the services?

**Jackson Carlaw:** Yes. It has a lot to do with the preventative agenda to which we are all committed in the development of health.

Hugh Henry touched on the key issue of the ability to influence change. Mary Scanlon detailed at some length the history of all the good intentions in the Parliament. As someone who came to the Parliament from a business background where business acquisitions, mergers and changes of culture were always prevalent, I have seen for myself how difficult it often is for people who have come from different work experience, possibly even nominally wearing the same hat but in a different area or a different authority, to translate change into practical action, and that was in the private sector, where to some extent—I mean this in the nicest possible way—people can be quite dictatorial in trying to drive things forward. In the public sector, the problems are even more manifest. It is easy for us to be naive about our ability to make change happen.

We should absorb the lessons of what was intended for community health partnerships and what actually happened. The cabinet secretary mentioned the need for planning to be professionally led and for the CHPs to have effective budgetary control, but if we look back, what happens in the absence of clinical leadership is that the good intentions become a set of dry rules on a sheet of paper and people adhere to them in a bureaucratic fashion. Interest, enthusiasm and motivation are lost and all the intentions that underpinned what was originally planned somehow dissolve and are not realised. It is fundamental that the opportunities that exist, the cabinet secretary's emphasis on the spotlight on outcomes and the requests that there have been for consultation and engagement are embraced and remain the focus of attention. That is what is needed if we are not continually to have this debate.

James Dornan reminded us that a “great man” once said that the SNP has “no monopoly on wisdom”. When I heard that, I reflected that, if only that great man believed anything he said or acted on it, how much better off we would all be.

Richard Lyle made a blunt contribution, and talked with candour about some of the vested interests that exist and the opportunities that we have to address the situation.

Alison McInnes reminded us that, as they are fewer in number now, the Liberal Democrats have to multi-task in their contributions to debates, and gave us something of a polemic against Kenny MacAskill on police reform, which left some of us a bit bewildered. However, I am sure that the front bench will send a billet doux to him to ensure that he is kept up to speed on that.

Dennis Robertson gave us one of his characteristically stylish contributions.

With regard to Mary Fee's speech, I say to the SNP members that they should not be unduly sensitive if a member poops on their parade. It is part of the responsibility of members occasionally to say in the chamber things that are slightly awkward.

I hope that that phrase was not too indiscreet, Presiding Officer.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** It is said now.

**Jackson Carlaw:** I offered it in the general, not in the specific.

I enjoyed the speeches of Mark McDonald, Christina McKelvie and Sandra White.

This is one of those debates in which we are all agreed. We are all determined that there should be progress. We must translate the will of this chamber to a will among those who are going to have to deliver the objective that we seek.

11:17

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I always enjoy Jackson Carlaw's speeches, although his remarks about my colleague should more properly be addressed to me, as I am the second-oldest member.

I draw members' attention to my various declarations of interest with regard to my membership of a variety of colleges, which have some of the vested interests that we are trying to tackle.

It was at a time of even greater austerity than that which we face today, when deficits were not 60 per cent to 80 per cent of gross domestic product but 250 per cent, that the post-war Labour Government implemented the Beveridge reforms to bring about the NHS, an institution that, despite its minor failings, has embodied principles that are embraced by all but a few Britons. It has delivered healthcare free at the point of need for more than 60 years. Moreover, notwithstanding the massive changes that have been proposed in England, about which I have huge concerns, it is to remain free.

The integration of health and social care as delivered to individuals in need is the pre-eminent

challenge of this generation. It must be done within a national framework—not a national super-quango, which is how the Liberal Democrats constantly try to portray Labour's position—with a national set of standards and outcomes.

**Alison McInnes:** I am taken aback by Richard Simpson's loss of memory, because I sat with Labour candidates on hustings across my region, and they all proposed a new national organisation.

**Dr Simpson:** No, they did not. As I have just indicated, they proposed a national framework and national standards. Why do we propose that? Because, as Jackie Baillie has just said, our freedom of information inquiry found a tenfold variation in charges for the same services across local authorities. I am not saying that variations should be eliminated, but the costs should be managed within a national framework, so that we do not have such gross differences.

I acknowledge that progress has been made on delayed discharges, an issue that was the big challenge in 2001-02.

Many members have quoted the figures on the growing size of our elderly population. We have been told by Audit Scotland that, without a radical change, we will need many more hospital beds, reversing the trend of the past 25 years to reduce their number. As Duncan McNeil said, the associated costs will overwhelm our budget—whether Scotland has devolution or is independent. We must change or face being overwhelmed by the situation.

Many members, including Nanette Milne, Richard Lyle and Mary Scanlon, have indicated a certain disappointment with the briefing from the Association of Directors of Social Work. A briefing that starts by saying that the Kilbrandon report separated us and that that is where we want to remain indicates that there has been a certain lack of thinking, but the ADSW makes the important point that institutional change alone will not deliver what we want. That said, there is legislation in many areas—I refer to the requirement to provide emergency planning for carers, for example—that the ADSW has not implemented. Even some of the basics that would prevent unnecessary admissions have not been followed through by those in social care and social work. Therefore, even in the current situation, things need to be addressed.

Many members have said that if health services are not to be overwhelmed, a shift in the balance of care is needed. We have talked about that for many years, but we know again from Audit Scotland that addressing of the matter has been minimal. If the ADSW understands the changes that all four parties in the Parliament now propose as being a means for the medical model to

overtake the social care model, I say to it that nothing could be further from the truth. This is about engaging the social care model and reducing the medical care model and making it more effective.

Mary Scanlon made an excellent speech that was redolent with institutional memory. Like Malcolm Chisholm, she reminded us that we have had good intentions for 10 years. A pilot was established in Perth and Kinross that included a shared budget and staff on shared terms and conditions, but it failed. We must start with a resolve not to repeat the mistakes of previous attempts—I fear that that may be being done in Highland. I urge the Scottish Government to talk to the joint futures group and everyone involved in that failure to ascertain why it occurred. I have already done so. There was a lack of consensus on what constitutes a model of care and the desired outcomes, and there was a failure to build on the micro examples of existing good co-operation and practice in the area. Many members, including Dennis Robertson and Mark McDonald, have referred to good local examples. They must not be destroyed by any institutional change that we create; rather, they must be enhanced.

**Mark McDonald:** I hear what the member is saying, but does he agree that the proposed changes would enhance many of those current examples? Indeed, in the conversations that I have had with NHS Grampian, it has welcomed what the Government is bringing forward, as it sees it very much as an enhancement of the work that is being done locally, not a threat to it.

**Dr Simpson:** Like Mark McDonald, I hope that that will occur. I am merely saying that ministers' intentions were the same in the first parliamentary session, but the pilot failed.

There was a lack of adherence to the key worker principle in the pilot. There was competition between nurses and social workers. As an elderly person, it does not matter to me whether my key worker is a social worker or a nurse, but I want a key worker who is responsible and accountable and can determine the budget for the care package that will come to me. We need to recognise that the pilot fell apart. Worse than that, the process undermined the effective micro joint working that existed.

The CHPs have been subject to an Audit Scotland review, which confirmed that they have largely become creatures of the health boards and that many of them have poor governance and lack transparency. There is little evidence of resource transfer either from the acute sector to the community or between health boards and social care. Perhaps the worst failure is the failure to enhance preventive services. Those sub-health

board structures should have grown organically from the local health care co-operatives, of which there were 85. The Royal College of General Practitioners has recommended the networking of primary care groups and their engagement. Contrary to the good intentions of ministers to involve professionals and have them leading, in practice the professionals have withdrawn from the community health partnerships and are totally disengaged. Therefore, whatever legal structure comes forward must seek to re-engage them, as the cabinet secretary said. To go further, it must engage patients, carer groups and voluntary organisations, and it must ensure that there is accountability.

In my view, elections to health boards have not delivered in the way that we would have liked. Engaging local councils through the reformed community health partnerships will produce the degree of strengthened local accountability that—along with an accountable officer—is necessary.

Do I have a little more time, Presiding Officer?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You do indeed, as you took two interventions.

**Dr Simpson:** Thank you.

Unison and the RCN have already indicated the hurdles that they will face in transferring staff between the local authorities and the NHS, and we should not underestimate the difficulty of that process. However, there are situations in which that type of joint approach has worked well—in Lothian, for example, where Peter Gabbitas was given a joint appointment between NHS Lothian and the City of Edinburgh Council.

In future, we cannot have an opt-in and opt-out approach. Some members have referred to the CHPs in Glasgow, where the system just fell apart. It must not fall apart because the people at the top decide that they do not want it to work and undermine local efforts. We need a legal underpinning, which is what our amendment says—it does not call for a national group, but simply mentions legal underpinning, which the SNP now accepts is necessary. The Government specifically said in February that legislative change should not happen and is not required, but it now says that we need legislation. I very much welcome that change.

Bob Doris reminded us of the importance of self-directed support as a means of rebalancing power between the institution and the individual.

This issue is the biggest challenge that we face. There is a measure of consensus across the chamber, the likes of which we have rarely seen. The opportunity is there for the Government to engage with Opposition party spokespersons in the post-consultation and pre-legislative phase to

ensure that we get something lasting and sustainable, which delivers the good intentions that each previous Parliament and Administration—including this one—has had with regard to integration.

11:27

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** The debate has been very positive. There are occasions on which the Parliament comes together to develop a consensus on an issue, and this has been one such debate. It is clear that greater integration of health and social care is supported by members from each of the different political parties.

I have no doubt that the dialogue will continue as the consultation takes place and we move towards progressing legislation to enact some of the changes that we wish to introduce. As a Government, we will be open to dialogue with representatives of the different political parties in the chamber and with other stakeholders.

Hugh Henry, in his contribution, hit the nail on the head. He made an important point about past attempts to bring about greater integration of health and social care. I acknowledge the previous Administration's actions to try to bring about greater integration, but I say to Hugh Henry that the issue goes back further than 10 years. It goes back—as I have said in the chamber on a number of occasions—to the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990. That legislation was intended to bring about greater joint working and integration of services, but over the years that has failed to happen consistently and effectively.

**Hugh Henry:** I acknowledge the minister's point. Will he consider setting up a group—as I suggested—along the lines of the Strathclyde Regional Council officer/member working groups, so that we can embed joint co-operation between every member in the Parliament?

**Michael Matheson:** Our consultation will involve looking at how we can ensure that health and community care partnerships are working effectively at a local level, and at how local engagement operates within that. I have no doubt that Hugh Henry will wish to express his view during that process. We are open to considering how we can ensure that there is effective engagement with local officers, healthcare professionals, the third sector and those in the various statutory organisations.

It is important to recognise that there have been attempts in the past to bring about greater integration of services. There have been successes and examples of integration working well in parts of the country, but often in a limited way or in the provision of a specific service.

Malcolm Chisholm made the good point that some errors of the past involving not being direct enough about how pooled budgets should be used might have contributed to the lack of further integration.

Some integration has taken place, but aligning services has at times been a mistake for integration. Some local authorities and health boards have tried to align services more closely but have not integrated them effectively so that they are joined up for the individuals who receive them. It is clear that the change that the Government proposes can address that fundamentally.

We as a Government do not underestimate the challenge in taking forward integration. Part of the challenge is to move beyond the organisational and professional interests that can often act as barriers to creating the necessary integration. Nanette Milne, Bob Doris and Mary Scanlon referred to the need for attitudinal and cultural reform in how some of our community health services and social work services are provided in communities.

**Dr Simpson** *rose—*

**Michael Matheson:** I give way to Dr Simpson. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I ask for Dr Simpson's microphone to be switched on.

**Dr Simpson:** The responsibility for that was mine and not officials'.

An important point that I failed to make in my speech is that neither undergraduate training nor continuing professional development is undertaken jointly. I lectured in social work for 19 years and when I attempted such joint training, I found it extraordinarily difficult. Serious leadership from the top will be required to ensure that it happens, so will the minister invite NHS Education for Scotland and the appropriate social work groups to get together as soon as possible?

**Michael Matheson:** The professional bodies, along with higher education institutions, have a good opportunity to look at how they arrange their training and how they can embed more joint training. When I trained as an occupational therapist, I had no joint lectures with physiotherapists or speech therapists, although they were in the department next to me and were often in the lecture room next to me for lectures on anatomy or whatever they were learning about. We need to look at how we can embed greater joint working in training where possible. Professional bodies and higher education institutions could give that further thought. I have no doubt that NES will want to discuss that with higher education institutions.

Attitudinal and cultural reform will present one of the most significant challenges in taking integration forward. We as a Government are keen to ensure that that reform occurs.

A number of members highlighted the demographic challenge. I will not point the finger at any particular person in the chamber who might be contributing more to that than anyone else, but I will say that the cabinet secretary and I do not consider ourselves to be part of that challenge yet. This is not change for change's sake; it is change because we as a nation face a demographic challenge. The number of over-65s will rise by 62 per cent by 2031 and, to add another item to the growing list of demographic changes that we have been presented with in recent months, the registrar general for Scotland projects that the number of people who are aged over 75 will grow by about 10,000 every year in the next decade.

A big part of the agenda is ensuring that services are sustainable and shifting the balance of care more from the acute end to the community setting. It is fortunate that people are living longer, but many will have a long-term condition. Part of the challenge is in supporting people to self-manage their condition in the community. Shifting the balance of care will assist us in achieving that objective.

From the speeches this morning, it is fair to say that our approach to CHP reform and the national framework strikes the right balance. That is about setting a course nationally and accommodating local flexibility to allow health boards and local authorities to determine how they translate the national approach into local action on the ground.

On the points that Nanette Milne and Mary Scanlon made about the lead commissioning approach that Highland is taking, which I support, it is important to have flexibility, because the approach in Highland would not necessarily be suitable for greater Glasgow, given the rurality and the way that services are delivered in Highland.

We as a Government are trying to ensure that we get a level of consistency in the outcomes from services that people will receive, as well as allowing flexibility for services to be delivered and planned in a way that recognises local needs.

Nanette Milne raised concerns around delayed discharges. A number of members referred to cost shunting, which can contribute to that, and local authorities either taking responsibility or leaving it with the health board. The only point of correction that I would make is to tell Nanette Milne that delayed discharges are down; they are not rising at the moment and we as a Government are keen to continue to make progress on that. Our approach, with integrated budgets, allows us to get away from the cost shunting to which a

number of members referred, so that there is no debate around where the budget should come from for arranging care for someone who is ready to be discharged from hospital into the community. It is not about where the money comes from; it is about where it is used.

**Mary Scanlon:** On delayed discharge, I note that the Government motion refers to working with the independent and third sector. Will the Government consider using the up to 5,000 empty beds in the independent care home sector for respite care and to allow earlier discharge from hospital?

**Michael Matheson:** Mary Scanlon refers to the use of independent care home beds. An important aspect of this is enabling services to support people to live as independent a life as possible. We should not get drawn into the narrow view that if someone gets discharged from hospital, the next port of call for them is to go into a care home.

**Mary Scanlon:** I was talking about rehab.

**Michael Matheson:** Yes. It is extremely important that we look at how we can plan enabling and rehabilitation services to help to support people within the community as effectively as possible. As we take this agenda forward, we will have a good opportunity to plan services in that way.

A number of members referred to self-directed support. The approach that we are taking will help self-directed support. The bill that we are planning to introduce next year will embed the existing strategy in legislation.

Jackie Baillie said that part of the difficulty is that those with complex care packages can at times be funded by the NHS board and might not be able to access individual payments under the present arrangements. One of the benefits of the integrated budgets approach is that we no longer have to worry about whether the money is coming from the health board or the local authority; it is a single budget, so it is not about where the money is coming from but about what it does. The approach that we intend to take, with integrated budgets, will allow us to take away the type of difficulty that some people with a complex care package might experience at present.

A number of members referred to the important role that carers play. We had a debate on carers recently and this Government recognises the very valuable role that carers play in Scottish society in supporting people within their own home.

**Hugh Henry:** Will the minister guarantee to protect the change fund and the carers element of it?

**Michael Matheson:** We have made very clear our commitment on that. As of next year, for the

following three years, 20 per cent—not up to 20 per cent—of the change fund will be for the purposes of carers services. We must look at how we can take that forward. The guidance that has been issued to local authorities and health boards makes it very clear that the money should be used to help to support the development of carers services and to work with other services in supporting carers' needs.

In recognising the role of carers, Richard Simpson made a point about emergency admissions. It is fair to say that emergency admissions are down at present, but support to carers can play an important role in helping to avoid such admissions. Some of the work that we are taking forward—with funding—with Enable will allow us to look at how we can make more of emergency planning for carers, to avoid unnecessary emergency admissions within the NHS. That in itself will help to embed that practice across local authorities. There is further work to take forward in that area.

It is clear that the message from this chamber and this Government is that change is going to happen in how we deliver health and social care in the community.

Notwithstanding some members' concerns about the ADSW's views on the issue, it has been helpful to the Government in our dialogue in recent months and weeks and I have no doubt that it will play a constructive part in the future.

The debate is not about whose proposal is better or whether Labour proposed a national care agency or not; it is about getting this right and making sure that we focus more on outcomes. It is about delivering services that are in people's best interests. On that basis, I ask members to support the motion and the amendment and to recognise Parliament's commitment to the proposal.

## Scottish Executive Question Time

### General Questions

11:40

#### Ovarian Cancer (Awareness)

**1. Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what initiatives there are to raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer to allow early diagnosis and treatment. (S4O-00479)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (Nicola Sturgeon):** Earlier this year, I launched the detect cancer early initiative. During the summer months, we undertook engagement with stakeholders, and the implementation plan is being finalised. While the focus of the initiative will be on lung, breast and bowel cancer in the first instance, I am confident that the programme will also help to tackle fears about and negative attitudes to cancer and its treatment more generally and so encourage people to present earlier with any suspicious signs or symptoms.

**Linda Fabiani:** I welcome that action plan. As with other cancers, the key to dealing with ovarian cancer is awareness and early detection. The awareness level is low among women and sometimes even among health professionals. Could consideration be given to a specific campaign to raise awareness of ovarian cancer?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I am always happy to consider such proposals. I agree strongly with the thrust of Linda Fabiani's question that key to our battle against cancer is the raising of awareness among the public—women in this case—and health professionals so that people can be diagnosed earlier and given treatment earlier.

In the region of 600 cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed each year, so an individual general practitioner might see a case of ovarian cancer only once every five years. We therefore need to ensure that we raise awareness and understanding among GPs and other health professionals. Of course, referral guidance was published in 2007 that encouraged GPs to look for signs of suspected cancer. I absolutely agree with Linda Fabiani and will continue to look at what more we can do.

#### A9 Upgrading Works

**2. Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Executive when it will

publish a detailed timetable for the A9 upgrading works between Perth and Inverness. (S4O-00480)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment (Alex Neil):** We intend to announce more details on our timetable in 2012.

**Murdo Fraser:** I am sure that we all welcome the announcement that the A9 dual carriageway between Perth and Inverness will be completed in fulfilment of a Scottish National Party manifesto commitment from 2007. However, local people want to know when exactly the works will be done, how they will be funded and where the money will come from. Can the cabinet secretary be precise? When will we have that clarity?

**Alex Neil:** Early in 2012, I will announce the details of each stage to complete the dualling between Perth and Inverness. Some of that is already built into a programme, but most of it will be in the period beyond 2015. We will be specific about the sequence in which we undertake the works and when we hope to start and complete each stage.

**Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary will be aware that orders are about to be laid for another two-plus-one overtaking lane at the northern A9 at Black Mount near Carrbridge, just south of the Slochd. What does the cabinet secretary think about not proceeding with that proposal but going straight to dualling, given that the Government has committed to dualling, rather than spending a lot of time and money putting in the overtaking lane and then having to tear some of it up to dual not very much later?

**Alex Neil:** Mr Thompson makes a worthwhile point and we are considering it during the compilation of the schedule that I referred to in my previous answer.

#### Long-term Medical Conditions

**3. George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it helps people with long-term medical conditions. (S4O-00481)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (Nicola Sturgeon):** Our healthcare quality strategy aims to ensure that people with long-term conditions receive high-quality, safe, effective and person-centred care. We want to put people with long-term conditions at the heart of the national health service, enable them to be treated closer to home and offer support so that they are better able to self-manage their condition where that is appropriate.

We are seeing on-going improvements in services so that they are better designed for people with long-term conditions. For example, in

2009-10, older people required 125,000 fewer days in hospital and 29,000 got telecare at home instead of care in a hospital setting. We have also had very positive feedback from the 76,000 people who are now managing their medicines better through local pharmacies' chronic medication service.

**George Adam:** As the cabinet secretary knows, Scotland has the highest incidence of multiple sclerosis per head of population in the world. Does she agree that, in tackling MS, it is important to deal with many national and local partners to determine the causes and possible treatments of the condition?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I very much agree with George Adam that, in tackling multiple sclerosis and supporting people who have it, we need to consider a range of joined-up and integrated approaches. That includes research into the condition, ensuring that we have services in place for people with the condition, providing services as close to home as possible and, as is the case with other long-term conditions, ensuring that we are supporting people to self-manage their condition. I assure George Adam that that will remain central to our work as we move forward.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** I welcome the work of the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland and its approach to self-management, which is supported by the Government. In relation to another long-term condition, what action and resources are in place from the Government to deal with chronic pain?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** As the member will be aware, I took the step some years back of recognising chronic pain as a long-term condition. That was acknowledged by all those involved in work in that area as a key step forward in improving services for those with chronic pain and ensuring that there are pain management clinics and other services for people with chronic pain. We will continue to push forward with that work.

I spoke relatively recently at the conference of those involved in chronic pain, where it was recognised that while there is more to do, there is real progress in that area of work. More generally, I put on record my continued support for the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland and its work on self-management.

#### **Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivors (Identification)**

**4. Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Executive what it is doing to improve the early identification of adults who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse. (S4O-00482)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** In 2005, the Scottish Government

launched the national strategy for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. As part of the strategy, we have funded awareness raising and training for staff in statutory and voluntary organisations to help them to support adults who access those services to disclose their abuse.

Since 2008, a national programme of work on improving the healthcare identification and management of gender-based violence has taken place throughout NHS Scotland. To date, approximately 2,800 staff from mental health, substance misuse and maternity services have been trained in routine inquiry.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I thank the minister for that full answer. He will be aware from the physical health groupwork project undertaken by Open Secret as part of the national strategy for survivors of childhood sexual abuse that such survivors have an increased risk of experiencing a wide range of medical conditions, including chronic pelvic pain, non-epileptic seizures, gastrointestinal problems, gynaecological problems and immune disorders. In view of that, what is the Scottish Government doing to help to increase awareness among medical professionals of the causal relationship between physical ill health and childhood sexual abuse in order to improve the early identification of survivors and encourage trauma-informed practice in treatment and the promotion of and access to appropriate services for survivors?

**Michael Matheson:** The member referred to the Open Secret physical health service, which has been funded for the past two years by the Scottish Government because we recognise the importance of that area of work.

The member will be aware that the Government recognises the need to increase awareness among professionals of the physical effects of childhood sexual abuse. That is why physical health and complex trauma continue to be a priority for the national strategy and in our funding of that strategy.

We will continue to work with Open Secret to consider further measures that we could take to ensure that there is greater awareness among other healthcare professionals and that they are sensitive to the needs of survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

#### **Reserved Matters (Scottish Government Position)**

**5. Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind):** To ask the Scottish Executive, in order to inform voters ahead of the proposed independence referendum, when it will publish its position on the issues that are currently reserved. (S4O-0048)



**The Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business and Government Strategy (Bruce Crawford):** The Scottish Government sets out its position on reserved matters regularly. Details on a range of key issues related to constitutional reform have been included in Scottish Government publications including “Choosing Scotland’s Future: A National Conversation: Independence and Responsibility in the Modern World”, which was published in 2007, and “Your Scotland, Your Voice: A National Conversation”, which was published in 2009.

**Margo MacDonald:** I apologise for having missed those two publications. I ask for something a bit more high profile, as it would take at least a year to embed any new concepts that would be inevitable if, for example, pensions were to be run from Edinburgh and not London. We see the confusion that has arisen over defence—at least, I hope that it is confusion and not the policy. People need to know not only about defence but about the euro. They need to know who will pay their pensions and how they will be paid. People need that sort of information and it does no members of the Parliament any good if misinformation is peddled.

**Bruce Crawford:** Margo MacDonald’s question is understandable. The Scottish Government will ensure that voters have all the information that they need about the referendum and independence to be able to take an authoritative, well-informed decision about Scotland’s constitutional future. Well in advance of the referendum, the Scottish Government will publish a white paper detailing the positive platform for Scotland’s future on which Scottish voters will be asked to decide.

#### Hidden Waiting Lists (NHS Lothian)

**6. Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive when it will publish its response to the investigation by NHS Lothian of so-called hidden waiting lists. (S4O-00484)

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (Nicola Sturgeon):** I received NHS Lothian’s report earlier this week and I am giving it my full consideration. A copy will be placed in the Scottish Parliament information centre early next week and I am happy to ensure that Sarah Boyack gets a copy as soon as it is available.

**Sarah Boyack:** Following the acceptance that patients had been offered unreasonable appointments, I welcomed the First Minister’s assurance that the patients concerned were now receiving treatment locally. However, subsequent reports have suggested that some of those patients could be among the 700 in NHS Lothian’s

area who are to be treated by private providers at public expense.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that the use of private providers by the national health service should be a last resort, not the default position? Is the sustained use of private providers by NHS Lothian an inevitable consequence of Scottish Government cuts, now that 270 nursing and midwifery posts have been lost in the past year and 300 more are projected to be lost in the months ahead?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The cost of using private providers is reducing. I am on record as having said and I put it on record again now that the use of private providers should be at the margins and a last resort for any NHS board. That is in marked contrast to the position of the previous Administration, which set up Stracathro hospital under private stewardship. Under this Administration, that hospital has been fully restored to the national health service.

I am proud of our position and our record on that matter and I will continue to ensure that the national health service provides quality care to patients in every part of Scotland. I assure Sarah Boyack that, if there are any lessons to be learned and actions to be taken as a result of the NHS Lothian report, they will be learned and taken.

#### Single Police Force (Headquarters)

**7. John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government when a decision will be made regarding the location of the headquarters of the proposed single police force. (S4O-00485)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** The Government intends to introduce a bill to Parliament early in the new year to establish single police and fire services. We have begun preparations for transition to the new police service, working with the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and other partners. I expect a decision on the location of the headquarters to be an early outcome of that work.

**John Mason:** Does the minister accept that, whatever the national position is, there will be a need for a major office in Glasgow and the west of Scotland and that an early move from Pitt Street to, perhaps, Dalmarnock would be a cost saving and a boost for the local area?

**Kenny MacAskill:** I have no doubt that that would be a boost to the local area and I accept the challenges that exist in Pitt Street. Some progress has been made in moving forensics out, and we must also take cognisance of the new Gartcosh campus.

There will have to be specific arrangements for the city of Glasgow and the west of Scotland. However, those matters are best dealt with by the new authority once it is established, in conjunction with the new chief constable, whoever he or she may be.

### **Grampian Police and Judicial Services (Discussions)**

**8. Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with the police and judicial services in the Grampian force area. (S4O-00486)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** We regularly meet the police and judicial services throughout the country, including the Grampian area, to discuss a range of issues. I last met Grampian Police on 31 August. My officials last met the chief constable of Grampian Police on 7 December.

**Maureen Watt:** The cabinet secretary will be aware, in the light of the construction of HMP Grampian and the closure of HMP Craiginchies, of the need for remand facilities in Aberdeen. Given the inadequacy of the holding cells in the Queen Street police headquarters and in the court buildings, will he facilitate a meeting with all relevant parties in the north-east to see how the provision of the necessary facilities can be brought about?

**Kenny MacAskill:** Obviously, police cells are fundamentally a matter for the chief constable and the police board. I recognise that there are particular difficulties in the city of Aberdeen, especially as we move towards the opening of HMP Grampian. I am more than happy to meet the member or other parties—as I do regularly—to discuss what solutions may be available.

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** The cabinet secretary will be aware of widespread concern about the proposals to abolish volunteer groups that monitor conditions in prisons and replace them with a Government-run advocacy service. Will he therefore take the advice of his Aberdeen City Council Scottish National Party colleague, Councillor Jim Kiddie, who is convener of the council's social care and wellbeing committee and the Aberdeen prison visiting committee, who is said to be dismayed at the Government's plans? Will he do what Councillor Kiddie has urged and think again?

**Kenny MacAskill:** I met representatives from the prison visiting committees an hour ago. I did them the courtesy of meeting them and indicating that I will consider and reflect on the issue.

We are in a time of limited resources. There is a problem with those who go into and out of prison

on a revolving-door basis. We require to monitor prisoners and safeguard their rights. That is done in a variety of ways, which range from the work of the chief inspector of prisons through to the Parliament's requirement to comply with the European convention on human rights. We also require to meet the needs of prisoners, and there is a specific need to ensure that an advocacy service is available for that purpose.

I can say to Nanette Milne exactly what I said to the representatives from the prison visiting committees: I will reflect on the issue, but I believe that an advocacy service is essential.

### **Winter Resilience**

**9. Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it considers that there is adequate winter resilience preparation across the country. (S4O-00487)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** Winter preparedness is an on-going process rather than a one-off event. As Scotland experienced its first severe winter weather of the year last week, I commend all those involved in the preparation and response. I am satisfied that the measures put in place were effective, although we will continue to learn lessons and improve.

Over the past year, public, voluntary and private sector organisations have worked with the Scottish Government to identify and learn from the lessons of last winter and have conducted exercises together to deal with a range of severe conditions. On 26 October, the Scottish Government led a debate on winter resilience, during which a wide range of members voiced their support for the findings of the winter weather review group and for the Scottish Government's major ready for winter initiative. Although disruption can never be ruled out, particularly when the weather reaches damaging levels, I am content that arrangements have been put in place all across the country to ensure that Scotland is as prepared for winter as it can be.

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** I ask members to settle down a bit, because there is a bit too much noise.

**Patrick Harvie:** One of the complaints that I heard most frequently last winter was that, once gritting got under way, the roads were treated but the pavements were not. Many of the most vulnerable people do not have private access to a car and rely on their feet to get them about, even if it is only to the bus stop. Will the Government work with local authorities to impress on them the importance of ensuring that pavements, not just roads, are gritted?

**Kenny MacAskill:** Absolutely. I know that my colleague the Minister for Housing and Transport

has raised that issue. Clearly, there were reasons why there were particular difficulties last year as a result of the severe snow, which closed roads and impacted on pavements. Equally, as the member correctly points out, local authorities have an obligation to deal with the issue and many authorities have been investing in equipment that was previously lacking.

I know, anecdotally, that steps have been taken in the city of Edinburgh to ensure that matters are dealt with by the local authority, by other organisations charged with responsibility and by citizens who are prepared to look after both themselves and their neighbours. I take the point on board and will raise it with my colleague the Minister for Housing and Transport.

## First Minister's Question Time

12:00

### Engagements

**1. Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the First Minister what engagements he has planned for the rest of the day. (S4F-00351)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Later today, I shall be witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Scottish and Southern Energy, Dundee City Council, Forth Ports and Scottish Enterprise, which will secure Dundee's position as a vibrant hub for Scotland's developing offshore renewables sector. Scottish Enterprise analysis shows that Dundee port has the potential to support around 700 jobs in offshore wind-turbine manufacturing, with further job opportunities in supply-chain development in the Dundee area. The announcement today is proof of our ambition to bring world-class offshore suppliers to Scotland.

**Iain Gray:** Of course I welcome the potential for those jobs in Dundee, but the announcement comes at a time when 400 jobs are going every day. By Saturday, we will have lost more jobs than that memorandum of understanding promises. Four weeks ago, I asked the First Minister how many Scots had to be unemployed before he would admit that his plan MacB was not working. Since then, another 25,000 Scots have joined the dole queue. Will he now admit that it is not working?

**The First Minister:** Before I disagree with Iain Gray, I shall say a few words to the chamber about him. He has served his party with distinction as a minister and, most recently, as leader of the Opposition. I have greatly enjoyed our weekly jousts in the chamber and I know that, whoever his successor might be, he or she has a hard act to follow. I am certain that Iain Gray has a major role still to play in public life, and I wish him well for the future.

I have been looking across the range and, first, there is no disagreement between Iain Gray and me on the fact that unemployment, jobs, the economy and the interruption of recovery that is now a substantial threat are the most serious issues of all. I would, however, like to give him some comparisons. Under this Scottish National Party Government, the month-by-month statistics show that for 72 per cent of the time, Scottish unemployment has been better than the United Kingdom average, and that for 87 per cent of the time—including this month—Scottish employment has been better than the UK average. The figures when Labour was in control of this Parliament

were 10 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. So, although we jointly agree that this is the most serious issue of all, I hope that we can also jointly understand that demand in the economy at present is overwhelmingly controlled by the UK Government. We should, therefore, put our claim for increased demand to confront the economic recession to the people who currently have the powers over us. Of course, I hope that we can also agree that those are exactly the powers that should come to this Parliament.

**Iain Gray:** I thank the First Minister for his kind and gracious words, and I certainly accept them in the spirit in which they were said. I am going to miss this, so I hope that he will forgive me if I also disagree with him.

To try to play with the figures by looking at previous months and a particular aspect of the statistics is not to treat with respect the problem that so many Scots face. The 229,000 Scots who are on the dole do not believe that we are outperforming the UK. That is not just spin; that is what the Americans call “post-truth politics”—just repeating the same thing over and over again, even though it is demonstrably not true.

It is only three months ago that the First Minister was touring the TV studios, boasting:

“Scotland is the only place in these islands—the only nation, the only region, the only place—where unemployment is falling. Therefore, there must be something distinctive happening which is not happening in economies elsewhere in these islands. Plan MacB has a great deal to recommend it.”

Now he says that the problem lies somewhere else. He loves to claim the credit when things go well, but is he big enough to take responsibility when things go wrong?

**The First Minister:** On 3 November, the Labour Party in Scotland published a five-point plan for growth. Four of the five points were directed at the UK Government and one was directed at the Scottish Government—to bring forward a long-term investment project plan, which Alex Neil has done in spades, as members will acknowledge. The four points that were directed at the UK Government were on bank bonuses, VAT and national insurance reductions.

Iain Gray said that I have been “touring the TV studios”, which is not something that I normally do, as members well know. However, in May, June, July, August, September and October, when the statistics showed that Scottish unemployment was falling, we put forward the argument that initiatives such as the acceleration of capital spending were a large requirement in, and a large part of the reason for, that falling unemployment. We asked the United Kingdom Government—not just on our own, but in conjunction three times with the other

devolved Assemblies across the United Kingdom—to implement similar plans: that is, not just increased capital spending for 2014 and beyond but increased capital spending now, as we accelerated capital spending last year to impact directly on the economy at the time.

I can quote from each of those months as I toured the television studios. In each of those months I warned that unless that action was taken by the United Kingdom Chancellor of the Exchequer, there was every chance that recovery in Scotland would be derailed. Given that Labour acknowledged in its own plan where demand management lies in the United Kingdom at the present moment, and given that in each of those months when the Scottish employment provision was improving I pointed to that very fact, cannot we in this last exchange between us unite to agree that we should have in this Parliament the responsibility for bringing jobs and prosperity to our people?

**Iain Gray:** Of course we agree that the action that the UK Government is taking is wrong and is not working, but the action that Mr Salmond and his Government are taking is not working, either. That is probably because, in essence, they are doing the same thing: they are slashing the public sector and slashing capital investment.

However, the First Minister’s answer goes to the heart of the matter, because on Tuesday he claimed yet again that the answer to the problem is his referendum on separation and more powers, and he has repeated that today. In all sincerity I say this to him: 229,000 Scots on the dole need urgent action. If he really believes that the referendum is the answer and is really telling those unemployed Scots that his referendum is the solution that they need, why is he telling them that they must wait three, four or five years for it?

**The First Minister:** Let us deal first with capital investment, because it is something that Iain Gray has unwisely brought to the chamber a number of times. Thanks to the initiatives that are being taken by John Swinney in transferring from revenue to capital over the period of the spending review, and thanks to the non-profit distribution programme, capital spending will rise from this year at £2.685 billion to £3.365 billion in 2014-15. The point is that by taking the measures that we are taking we can increase capital spending over the next few years. Among the key components of the plan that we put to the chancellor was that something should be done about demand now. That can be done only by an increase in direct Government capital spending, which lies within the province of the United Kingdom Government.

The United Kingdom Government’s argument, incidentally, is that it is doing exactly the same thing as Alistair Darling planned: deeper and

tougher cuts than Margaret Thatcher's. However, Iain Gray and I should be able to unite in saying that that is not the right way; the right way is to increase capital spending now, as well as in the next few years.

In terms of the support for a variety of constitutional options, I will stick to the timetable that I laid out to the people in the election campaign. However, we had—had we not?—an interesting insight into the political support for the options or for political parties in Scotland just last Friday in a MORI poll that showed that not only is support for independence increasing, but that the percentage of people who want all economic powers to come before this Parliament is now running at 70 per cent. I say to the Labour members that, in that poll, their support was at 26 per cent, which I understand is an historic low for the Labour Party in Scotland.

**Iain Gray:** The last poll I saw at the weekend said that two thirds of Scots want the referendum to be done quickly and out of the way.

I have been doing this for quite a while now, so I know that when Alex Salmond starts talking about what other people—Alistair Darling, Ed Miliband or whoever—have said, he wants to run away from what he has said. He said that in Scotland our economy was growing, our employment market was strengthening and we were outperforming the UK, but it was not true.

However, it is not just Alex Salmond. Nicola Sturgeon told us that she was not cutting the national health service, but today Audit Scotland has said that she is. Kenny MacAskill told us that he was cutting knife crime; this week, it turns out that knife murders in Scotland have soared. Mike Russell has been telling us for months that class sizes in our schools were falling; last week, we discovered that they have gone up. I saw that Alex Salmond arrived in China last week without his treds. Is that not the perfect metaphor for him and his whole Government? Even on their own beloved referendum, are they not always all mouth and no trousers? [*Applause.*]

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Quiet!

**The First Minister:** Not for the first time in answering Iain Gray's questions, I have a range of possibilities to choose from. First, I gently point out to him that page 5 of the Audit Scotland report states:

"Territorial boards have received a real-terms increase in funding in 2011/12".

Iain Gray will remember that during the election campaign he refused to commit himself to putting all the consequential into health.

The MORI poll that Iain Gray refers to also shows SNP support at 51 per cent and satisfaction

with this Government at 62 per cent. Whatever he and his band in this Parliament think, a lot of folk in Scotland think that this SNP Government is acting in the interests of our people and doing its best in difficult economic circumstances.

I have been thinking back on our exchanges over the past four years. Perhaps the highlight for both of us was Gypsy Amalia. I have reconsulted Gypsy Amalia, who is very optimistic about Iain Gray's prospects and says that new opportunities will beckon in the new year. She understands that Labour leadership positions might be opening up in London; I think that Iain Gray would be the ideal candidate.

### **Secretary of State for Scotland (Meetings)**

**2. Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con):** As this is Iain Gray's last First Minister's questions, I give him the best wishes for the future from the Conservative benches. He will now have more time to spend walking the fields of East Lothian. I know that he will continue to make a big contribution both to the debates ahead and to this chamber.

To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Secretary of State for Scotland. (S4F-00340)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** I have no plans to meet him in the near future, although I watched him denounce the Prime Minister on television on Tuesday night.

I congratulate Ruth Davidson on appointing Michael Tait as her press adviser. I understand that, last night, he won what the press call the tartan bollocks award for the most incredible story with no factual foundation during the year. It sounds like she has the ideal man for Conservative party material.

**Ruth Davidson:** I am sure that the First Minister will remember that when he appointed a male journalist as an adviser to his team, that journalist also won the tartan bollocks. The difference between the First Minister's adviser and mine is that at least mine had the balls to go and collect his award.

In 2007, the First Minister told the Parliament that his Council of Economic Advisers was

"our best chance in several generations to tackle the problem of systemic economic mediocrity."—[*Official Report*, 28 June 2007; c 1329.]

The council is supposed to meet every quarter. Can the First Minister tell me when it last met?

**The First Minister:** The Council of Economic Advisers was appointed last month and will meet in January. I am sure that Ruth Davidson will acknowledge that, with two Nobel laureates on it, the council will provide the Parliament and the

Government with valuable advice. I know that Ruth Davidson has done her research—with the help or otherwise of Michael Tait—so she will know who Joseph Stiglitz is, unlike her predecessor.

**Ruth Davidson:** Despite that slightly patronising brush-off, the fact remains that the First Minister's Council of Economic Advisers—his hand-picked group of experts; his wise men—has not met since September 2010. That is 14 months ago. In the 14 months since the council last met, we have been buffeted by debt crises in Greece, Portugal, Italy and Ireland and there is turmoil in the euro zone. In Britain, we have had a three-year spending review and an autumn statement, and the Scottish Government has put out a new economic strategy and a draft budget. There has been a raft of economic data, and in the most recent quarter alone unemployment in Scotland has gone up by 25,000.

In the light of all that and on reflection, why the silence, while the First Minister was touring the television studios, as he told us? Why did not the council meet?

**The First Minister:** The Council of Economic Advisers, according to the plan that was set out, is reappointed after a parliamentary election. It would have been rather presumptuous to have reappointed it before a parliamentary election. The council was drawn together and announced last month, and it will meet in January.

Ruth Davidson talks about all the things that have buffeted Scotland. What is buffeting Scotland at the moment is the disastrous economic policies of her Government at Westminster and the comprehensive spending review.

Given that Ruth Davidson has introduced the European issue to the debate, let me say that we have a Prime Minister who, in effect, sabotages the prospects of a deal in Europe to stabilise the euro zone, isolates this country, jeopardises key Scottish issues, such as fishing, and does that without so much as a by-your-leave and without consultation of any of the other countries of the United Kingdom. I am sure that Ruth Davidson was as much in the dark as Nick Clegg was about the Prime Minister's tactics. Is it not rather a high price to pay for Scotland to be misrepresented in European councils? Does not she realise that more and more people in Scotland would prefer independence in Europe to isolation with Britain?

**Ruth Davidson:** Does the First Minister acknowledge that an election campaign lasts six weeks, whereas the council has not met for 14 months?

I am happy to stand by my Prime Minister's actions in sorting out the best deal for the whole United Kingdom. Does the First Minister

acknowledge that Scottish National Party member Joe FitzPatrick has signed an amendment to a motion that my deputy, Jackson Carlaw, lodged to exactly that effect? Members on his own benches are on our side on this one, too, as well as the country.

**The First Minister:** I heard Jackson Carlaw on the radio. He was talking about a Tobin tax, which was not even on the table. This is the first time in history that a Prime Minister has vetoed something that was not even on the table, which would have no effect on the things that he says he is worried about. The *Wall Street Journal*, which knows a thing or two about the financial sector, says, "UK Banks Fear Fallout From EU Rift".

It was the height of irresponsibility not just to sabotage prospects of solving the euro zone crisis and stabilising a great threat to our economy, but to isolate key Scottish industries from European influence. Will the fishing talks this week be helped or hindered by David Cameron's irresponsibility? Is not there a high price for Scotland to pay because David Cameron is frightened of 80 Tory Eurosceptics and Boris Johnson?

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** The First Minister will be aware of media reports of the suspension of the national convener of Children's Hearings Scotland and the air of mystery surrounding the situation. Can he confirm to me and the 2,500 children's panel volunteers, of which I used to be one, that the timetable for reform of the panel system has not slipped and that plans for new area support teams will be agreed by the end of January?

**The First Minister:** I can give the assurance that the timetable has not slipped and will not slip, and that measures have been put in place to ensure that the necessary changes to the children's panel system, which has served Scotland extremely well, will be continued and matters will go forward.

**Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP):** The First Minister will be aware that, this week, the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills set out and opened the formal process for deciding the location of the green investment bank, and that a wide coalition of organisations, including Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, has been at the forefront of the campaign to bring that £3 billion institution to Scotland. Will the First Minister add his personal support to the cross-party support that has already been received in the Parliament and outline why he thinks Edinburgh would be the best and the natural choice for the institution?

**The First Minister:** The Government has supported Edinburgh's green investment bank bid since its inception and we continue to do so. I

have been in communication with UK ministers to support Edinburgh as the best location, as have my ministerial colleagues. There is wide civic support in Scotland for the green investment bank to be located in Edinburgh and the business case was debated and given the full support of the Parliament in June. I am sure that members will join me again today in confirming that all-party support.

### **Cabinet (Meeting)**

#### **3. Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):**

To ask the First Minister what issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the Cabinet. (S4F-00342)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** We will discuss issues of importance to the people of Scotland.

**Willie Rennie:** I, too, wish Iain Gray well in the future. He has been a great servant in the Parliament and I am sure that he has much more to contribute.

September's unemployment rates showed a slight improvement but, like December's, they were nowhere near good enough anywhere in the United Kingdom. Iain Gray is right that, in September, the First Minister claimed that those slightly better rates were a clear sign of his miracle cure—plan MacB. At that time, the First Minister said that plan MacB was “bearing fruit” and producing “dividends”. That was then, but now he blames the UK. With the First Minister, it is, “Heads I win; tails you lose.” However, there is no magic left in that trick. I am pleased that he is prepared to co-operate with the UK Government to meet that big challenge. Is he now prepared to work with the UK Government on its £1 billion youth contract, which has £100 million for Scotland?

**The First Minister:** We have welcomed that and we will of course continue to work with the UK Government. I hope that Willie Rennie will support the conclusions of the Smith group on areas in which the Parliament could have much more active responsibility, for example, in controlling Jobcentre Plus. Just to nail the issue, I will read exactly a quotation that I made in those months. Let us have it exactly, just so that members remember it. I said:

“While the Scottish labour market continues to outperform the UK as a whole—with lower unemployment, higher employment, and lower economic inactivity rates—today's figures reinforce our urgent and consistent demand that the UK Government must deliver a ‘Plan MacB’ approach immediately, to ensure that the recovery being built in Scotland is not derailed by Westminster's wrong-headed economic policy.”

Consistently, as the Scottish figures improved, John Swinney and I pointed to the fact that the key

economic levers lay with Westminster. We signed three joint declarations with Wales and Northern Ireland, which have exactly the same problem.

I understand that Willie Rennie belongs to a party that is not really unionist, if I am to believe the Secretary of State for Scotland's comments this week. Will Mr Rennie now tell us that at least he is a real devolutionist and agree that real economic powers should lie with the Scottish Government and Parliament so that we can set the economy to rights?

**Willie Rennie:** He ducks and he dives, but we know what he said and we know what he meant.

**The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Stewart Stevenson):** We know what he said.

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Stevenson—that is enough.

**Willie Rennie:** The First Minister can no longer duck and he can no longer dive. My concern is that he says that he wants to co-operate, but on the announcement of the youth contract, he immediately talked down the £100 million that is available for it. He said that it was £6 million a year and he completely dismissed the £82 million extra, in addition to the £18 million, that the Scottish Government will get. Either he did not understand it, or he was trying to sabotage it. What is the point of trying to sabotage that major scheme? Scottish businesses need to know that the youth contract applies to them. Will the First Minister make it absolutely clear that it is a big scheme and that it is good for business and Scottish young people? Is he prepared to work with the UK Government to make the scheme a success in Scotland?

**The First Minister:** Let me see if I can disentangle that amazing question. I said “yes” the first time, so I will say “yes” again. I do not understand why Willie Rennie thinks that that is ducking and diving. “Yes” just means “yes”.

The point about the £100 million is that the Scottish consequentials were £6 million a year. Over a three-year period, that is £18 million. We did not stick at £18 million but put it up to £30 million, which is the additional fund—in addition to the £2 billion that we already provide—that Angela Constance is taking into the battle against youth unemployment.

I quoted the Smith group—a cross-party group of excellent, estimable Scottish businesspeople—which recommends that Jobcentre Plus be devolved to this Parliament for the more effective use of resources. I hope that Willie Rennie, who claims to be a devolutionist, will support that proposal.

We have already met the Department for Work and Pensions. Of course, we will co-operate in

every single way to bring every single job that we can possibly bring to the young people of Scotland, just as, incidentally, we will oppose the DWP plans, which would impoverish some of the poorest people in Scotland.

#### **Prime Minister (European Union Summit)**

**4. Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's assessment is of the economic impact on Scotland of the Prime Minister's actions at the EU summit last week. (S4F-00345)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** The Prime Minister's actions were irresponsible in deploying the non-veto at last week's summit. The summit was intended to endorse at political level stronger fiscal rules to govern the conduct of member states inside the euro zone. Those rules would then be taken to the Court of Justice to give them legal backing. They would then have been the justification for the European Central Bank to act decisively to stabilise the euro area. Instead of that, thanks to the Prime Minister and the Tory Eurosceptics, that plan is completely up in the air.

Not only that, but we go into vital fishing talks this week. Does anybody in the chamber believe that our hopes of mobilising support and agreement to turn over some of the Commission's more disastrous proposals will be aided by the Prime Minister's actions in Europe last week? He said that he wants to support the financial services industry, much to the bemusement of the industry, which had not asked for the veto. However, what about the fishing industry? What about all the other industries of Scotland that are endangered by the Tory policy of isolation in Europe?

**The Presiding Officer:** I call Stuart McMillan. Briefly, please.

**Stuart McMillan:** Given that the euro area accounts for some 42 per cent of Scottish exports and represents such a vital market for Scotland, does the First Minister agree with the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee's statement in its report on trade from September 2010 that we should build on the existing network of Scottish Development International's overseas offices and consider the Scotland house model that operates in Tallinn? Does he agree that that is one way in which to try to circumvent a Prime Minister who is not only isolated in his own party on Europe, but is trying to isolate the economic prospects of Scotland and all the other nations and regions in the UK?

**The First Minister:** While Stuart McMillan was speaking, I heard the deputy leader of the Conservative party say, "We're still in there." Yes, but clinging on by our fingertips would be my estimation of the situation.

It is abundantly clear that, for Scotland to have its interests properly represented, we need a seat at the top table when vital discussions about matters that affect Scottish life take place. Ministers in this Government will ensure that they engage with a range of our stakeholders, who know the importance of European decision making to Scotland, in order to try to bring that to best effect. However, after the events of the past week, I do not think that anybody will ever again trust the United Kingdom Tory Government to represent Scotland in Europe. Why do we not just do it for ourselves?

#### **National Health Service (Spending Balance)**

**5. Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's position is on the balance of spending between administrators, beds and nursing staff in the NHS. (S4F-00357)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Health service boards make local decisions on how best to allocate their resources in a way that improves the health and wellbeing of the communities for which they are responsible. The Parliament will be aware that spending on the health service is at record levels, and the Government has delivered on its pledge to protect the health budget. As the report that the Auditor General published this morning makes clear,

"Territorial boards have received a real terms increase ... in 2011/12".

That is a real-terms increase to protect front-line services in our national health service.

**Jackie Baillie:** This week, the Auditor General reported that half of the 2,500 national health service staff who have left their jobs since 2009 are nurses and midwives. Does the First Minister agree with the comments of the Scotland Patients Association's chief executive, Dr Jean Turner, that

"It is crazy to train them and then lose their expertise and experience."

**The First Minister:** I am sure that Jackie Baillie knows that there are more people working in the national health service today than there were when we took office. The Auditor General's report says that, with the exception of unallocated staff, the biggest percentage reductions in staff have been in administrative and support services, which fully carries forward Nicola Sturgeon's plan to slim down the bureaucracy of the national health service and ensure a better result for patients.

Every statistic in the Auditor General's report makes it clear that our national health service is performing extraordinarily well under the most difficult circumstances. Does anyone really believe that those circumstances would have been better if Labour had been in power and did not protect



the national health service budget? On 8 September 2010, Iain Gray said:

"We wouldn't ring fence the health budget."

That is just one of the reasons why Jackie Baillie is sitting where she is and this Government is standing where I am.

### "Powering Scotland"

**6. Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister what assessment the Scottish Government has made of the Reform Scotland report, "Powering Scotland". (S4F-00343)

**The First Minister:** The Reform Scotland report is the latest of a number of reports to confirm that Scotland has fantastic energy resources in its people, its geography and its natural resources. It confirms that there is a massive economic value of electricity exports from Scotland that is worth £2 billion a year, even on the lowest estimates.

**Jamie Hepburn:** Does the First Minister agree that in two senses the report calls into question the judgment of renewables naysayers? First, it shows that there is absolutely no need for a new generation of nuclear power stations in Scotland and, secondly, it demonstrates that those who have jumped on other reports with relish and used them to claim that renewables are not sustainable in the context of independence were totally wrong to do so.

**Alex Salmond:** I agree with Mr Hepburn. The report also argues for greater powers over energy for the Scottish Parliament in order to enable us to deliver an even more attractive investment environment, a stable regulatory framework and closer integration with European electricity markets.

The Reform Scotland report should be read by every member of this Parliament, not least because the Reform Scotland advisory board contains old friends including Wendy Alexander, Jeremy Purvis and Derek Brownlee. An organisation with that cast of brilliance at its very heart should be listened to and recognised by every person in this chamber.

**Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** Given the huge potential that Scotland has for green energy, particularly in marine energy, surely we need to do everything we can to retain the United Kingdom electricity market and the massive cross-subsidy that Scotland gets for our renewables and our grid upgrades.

**The First Minister:** Scotland will produce potentially the cheapest marine energy in Europe. It will be a commodity that will be very much in demand. It will be required south of the border and, over time, on the continent of Europe. Only in

the mind of the Labour Party could a massive asset that would be wished for by every country in the continent—25 per cent of the potential resource—be a potential disadvantage to Scotland. The rest of us realise that it is a resource.

Of course, Sarah Boyack is probably one of those people who said that North Sea oil was not really worth anything and we should give it away and allow Westminster to run it. I think that all our resources should be put with the people of Scotland, so that we can bring about the prosperous society that we want.

12:33

*Meeting suspended.*

14:15

*On resuming—*

## Scottish Executive Question Time

### Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth

#### Employment Opportunities

**1. Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what success it is having in increasing employment opportunities. (S4O-00489)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The Scottish Government is deploying significant effort to increase employment opportunities during these challenging times. In 2010-11, the work of Scottish Development International generated more than 9,300 planned jobs. During the same period, £52 million of regional selective assistance funding was accepted, leading to the creation or safeguarding of more than 7,000 jobs in Scotland.

**Malcolm Chisholm:** I welcome what the cabinet secretary has said, but he will know of particular concerns about the alarming levels of youth unemployment. Therefore, while welcoming the community jobs Scotland initiative, which is supporting 2,000 work opportunities in the third sector, will he give serious consideration to using some of the new resources announced for youth employment to expand that scheme within the voluntary sector and into the private sector, as happened with the future jobs fund, which the United Kingdom Government mistakenly abolished when it came into office?

**John Swinney:** The Government made clear in the Labour Party debate on youth employment a couple of weeks ago our determination to use the additional £30 million that we have allocated to support new projects that would involve dialogue with our local authority partners, colleges, the third sector and the private sector. Those issues are under consideration by the new Minister for Youth Employment, Angela Constance, and some initial information will be shared with Parliament before the Christmas recess. As we speak—or certainly this afternoon—Ms Constance is in discussion with a range of partners and stakeholders on how those issues will be taken forward. I will ensure that Mr Chisholm's points are considered as part of that.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The generators are being switched over because

of a fault with the power system. We will keep going.

**Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP):** What impact will recent high-profile investment announcements by companies locating to Scotland have on increasing employment opportunities?

**John Swinney:** We have been successful in a number of different discussions with companies about investing in Scotland. Amazon, Aker Solutions, Avaloq, Vion, Dell and FMC Technologies are among the companies that we have successfully recruited to Scotland. They have created or plan to create more than 2,400 jobs in a range of sectors and geographic areas, which will contribute to the creation of new economic and employment opportunities for the people of Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am told that we will have to endure this gloom for a further five minutes; thereafter we should get the power back on.

#### Aberdeen City Council (Meetings)

**2. Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government when the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth last met the leader of Aberdeen City Council. (S4O-00490)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** Presiding Officer, I hope that your reference to the gloom was no reflection on my answers.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** None whatsoever.

**John Swinney:** I am sure that it was not.

I last met the leader of Aberdeen City Council on 18 October 2011.

**Kevin Stewart:** I am sure that the cabinet secretary will not keep me in the dark with his answer to this question.

The next time that the leader of Aberdeen City Council meets the cabinet secretary, I am sure that he will thank him for the increased amount of money that is heading towards the city of Aberdeen—£5.3 million this year. Does the cabinet secretary intend to discuss with Aberdeen City Council and other councils the business rates incentivisation scheme to help encourage sustainable growth?

**John Swinney:** I would be very happy to discuss the business rates incentivisation scheme with the leader of Aberdeen City Council. As I announced in my statement on local government

finance last Thursday, we have come to an agreement with local government on the new scheme, which will take effect from 1 April 2012. The provisional individual local authority targets for 2012-13 will be issued before Christmas, after which each local authority will discuss and agree its own targets with the Scottish Government during the consultation period.

The purpose of the scheme is to encourage local authorities to take pragmatic and positive steps to encourage economic growth in their localities, and to share some of the benefits in a fashion that will strengthen local opportunities and increase non-domestic rates income into the bargain.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 3 has not been lodged by Jim Eadie, although we have received an explanation and an apology.

### **Job Creation (Inverclyde)**

**4. Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to create jobs in Inverclyde. (S4O-00492)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish Government is committed to supporting sustainable economic growth and job creation throughout Scotland. We are prioritising spend on capital and investing in a supportive business environment to maximise the impact on jobs.

On Monday, the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment launched our regeneration strategy, which includes details of the £50 million Scottish partnership for regeneration in urban centres fund. He also announced that the Riverside Inverclyde urban regeneration company will benefit from an additional £1.5 million in 2013-14, on top of the £2.5 million that will be provided in 2012-13.

I am delighted that the contract that has been signed between Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd and Ferguson Shipbuilders to build the world's first sea-going hybrid ferries will secure around 75 existing jobs in the Port Glasgow and Inverclyde area and create around 100 more. In addition, Ferguson Shipbuilders is expected to create 20 new apprenticeships as a direct result of the contract.

**Duncan McNeil:** The minister will be aware that, according to the unemployment figures that were released last week, Inverclyde suffered the biggest rise of any area in Scotland in the past year. With year-on-year cuts in the urban regeneration company budget, the challenge of attracting jobs and businesses gets ever more difficult.

Against that background, does the minister recognise the efforts to attract green manufacturing jobs to Inchgreen dry dock? Will he and the Scottish Government take that into consideration when they designate their enterprise zone areas later this year?

**Fergus Ewing:** Duncan McNeil makes extremely fair points. We are all concerned about the levels of unemployment. The statistics that I have suggest that the employment rate for people between the ages of 16 and 64 in Inverclyde was 70.4 per cent in the year that ended in March 2011, which was in line with the rate for Scotland as a whole.

However, we are aware that the problem is a serious one indeed. Mr McNeil's suggestion about the possibility of encouraging regeneration through the creation of sustainable jobs in the renewables sector is reasonable, and I am happy to work with him towards that end.

As far as enterprise zones are concerned, we are looking carefully at the matter. Many candidates from all over the country have applied for enterprise zone status, as the member would expect. The decision will be made fairly soon.

**Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP):** I welcome the money that has been announced for the building of ferries in Port Glasgow, and the additional money for Riverside Inverclyde. Over the past four years, some £99 million of investment has been put into social housing in the Inverclyde area, which has kept a large number of apprentices and skilled employees in work.

However, does the minister agree that the failure of the Labour, Tory, Liberal and independent administration in Inverclyde to bid for the £3 million contract with River Clyde Homes will put in danger the jobs of a number of skilled tradesmen in the area? As I understand it, 11 skilled tradesmen's jobs are under threat because of that failure.

**Fergus Ewing:** I was not aware of that matter, so it is probably correct that I decline to comment, other than to say that, plainly, all of us across all political parties welcome the taking of every practical and effective step to generate jobs and to create apprenticeships and youth employment in the area. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on a situation the details of which I am unaware of.

### **Growth Forecasts**

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We come to question 5 from Richard Baker, as we emerge into the sunlight.

**5. Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab):** As I rise, Presiding Officer. [*Laughter.*]

To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will reassess its growth forecasts in light of the revised forecasts for United Kingdom growth by the Office for Budget Responsibility. (S4O-00493)

He is not going to resist, is he?

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** I am looking forward with optimism to the supplementary question, which I am sure will be a bundle of cheerfulness and sunshine.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** Just like you.

**John Swinney:** I hear Jackie Baillie saying, "Just like you." That sums up the position. *[Laughter.]*

The Scottish Government monitors economic developments in Scotland, the United Kingdom and overseas continuously and makes use of a wide variety of indicators to inform our outlook for the Scottish economy.

It has been clear for a number of months that the recovery in both Scotland and the UK was fragile. For example, back in August, the chairman of the Office for Budget Responsibility said that he did not expect the UK economy to match the official growth forecasts made in March. The revised forecasts by the OBR that were published last month simply confirmed that assessment of the outlook.

**Richard Baker:** Given the revision downwards in the growth forecasts both by the OBR and, for the Scottish economy, by the Ernst and Young independent Treasury economic model—ITEM—club report, does the cabinet secretary intend to produce Scottish Government forecasts for economic growth and supply such figures to the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee? Given the worrying growth trends that we are facing, will he rethink key aspects of his spending review, including his proposals on college budgets and to reduce the budget for affordable housing?

**John Swinney:** The Government has at no stage set out economic forecasts for the Scottish economy. We have set out an economic horizon and a set of targets, aims and ambitions, which is the correct thing for the Government to do.

On the spending review, Mr Russell announced last week additional resources to support the transformation of colleges. In the youth employment debate in which Mr Baker participated, the Government also set out the additional resources that we are making available to tackle youth unemployment, which will have implications for the college sector. We will continue to review all those interventions to maximise the economic effectiveness of our approach.

On affordable housing, the Government has responded to the calls that were made to us before the election that over the next few years we should allocate a sum of about £600 million to support the Government's target of 5,000 affordable houses being completed in each calendar year. We have delivered that in our forthcoming financial priorities, but the Government will continue to keep the issues under review as the programmes are deployed.

**Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con):** Given the downgrades, will the Scottish Government undertake modelling to see what impact the reduced growth could have on its business rates collection?

**John Swinney:** As I have made clear to Parliament before, I keep the issues of business rate collection under constant review. That is a routine part of Government activity, and I monitor those returns on an on-going basis during the financial year. I also monitor closely another factor that impinges on the issue, which is the pattern of appeal losses as a consequence of revaluation, to determine that they are within the boundaries that I established in my assessments.

Once again, I give Mr Brown the assurance that the issues are kept under constant review. If I feel that there is any need to revise the forecasts, I will of course come to Parliament to do so.

**Paul Wheelhouse (South Scotland) (SNP):** Does the cabinet secretary agree that, rather than being anchored to the dead weight of the Con-Dem coalition, we should have all the financial powers here in Scotland so that we can implement our own policies to achieve growth and not be dragged under by poor decisions by Messrs Osborne and Alexander?

**John Swinney:** As a matter of fact, I agree with Mr Wheelhouse. Indeed, I think that we could all do with hearing a bit more from Mr Wheelhouse. A lot of people would benefit—it might even make some more people cheerful on a Thursday afternoon.

I agree with Mr Wheelhouse: I consider that full financial responsibility would give the Scottish Government greater responsibility and greater opportunity to enhance the long-term competitiveness of the Scottish economy, which is one of the Scottish Government's central objectives.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We regret that Hugh Henry has not lodged question 6.

#### **Small Business Bonus Scheme**

**7. Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how many

businesses are receiving financial support from the small business bonus scheme. (S4O-00495)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The latest official statistics, published on 27 October 2011, show that 85,000 premises in Scotland, or two out of every five commercial premises, are currently in receipt of the Scottish small business bonus scheme.

**Stewart Maxwell:** Many businesses across Scotland are continuing to operate as a direct result of the small business bonus scheme. What does the minister believe the impact would be if the Labour Party's plan to take away the scheme were to be implemented?

**Fergus Ewing:** I am pleased to reassure Scotland that, for the next five years, the small business bonus scheme will remain firmly in place. From what I understand of the Labour Party's proposed reforms, given the limited amount of detail available, they would place administrative burdens on councils, which would need to monitor the number of employees in each property. Entrepreneurship would be stifled, and many sole traders would simply not qualify. Perverse incentives, such as an incentive to replace full-time staff with part-time staff, would also be created. In any event, the amount that would be saved by the proposals for the small business bonus scheme would, in many cases, be insufficient to employ anyone. I think that we would be better sticking with the Scottish National Party Government and our secure, robust, guaranteed offer of the small business bonus scheme for the next five years.

#### Capital Investment in Glasgow

**8. Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how its capital investment in Glasgow will assist in both sustaining and creating employment. (S4O-00496)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The significant capital investment programme that is being undertaken in Glasgow will support jobs through the construction phase and will create a legacy of assets that have long-lasting economic benefits.

**Bob Doris:** I welcome particularly the long-term approach that the Scottish Government is taking to capital investment in Glasgow; that approach is illustrated by the £285 million upgrade to the subway by 2019, for which I have long campaigned, and the new City of Glasgow College, which will get £200 million of expenditure and which will be completed by 2016. When work begins as a result of significant capital investment in Glasgow, will local companies and my

constituents benefit through contracts being awarded, jobs being created and skills opportunities such as apprenticeships being developed?

**John Swinney:** I can certainly assure Mr Doris that the Government has every intention of embarking on a procurement process that will deliver as many opportunities as possible for companies based in Scotland. The public contracts Scotland portal is a convenient and effective way of ensuring that companies in Scotland are informed and advised about the opportunities that exist in that respect.

I can also assure Mr Doris that the Government is placing within all its procurement activities of this type an obligation to recruit apprentices. We have seen that happening on major infrastructure projects such as the Forth replacement crossing. We are also ensuring that apprenticeship opportunities are created through the regional selective assistance grants. Those are two illustrations of how the Government is determined to use the procurement processes that are under our control to maximise the local economic impact. That approach is being taken forward operationally and in legislative terms by my colleague the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment.

#### Small Businesses

**9. Colin Keir (Edinburgh Western) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it is helping small businesses to ensure that they remain at the heart of local communities in the current economic climate. (S4O-00497)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** Scotland's small businesses are key to sustainable economic growth and we are committed to ensuring that we have a supportive business environment. Official statistics published on 27 October 2011 show that 85,000 properties, or two in every five commercial premises, were in receipt of a tax break through the small business bonus. In addition, support from the business gateway is helping record numbers of start-ups and existing businesses.

**Colin Keir:** In my constituency, the Edinburgh 21st century homes regeneration project has given way to the demolition of more than 900 homes in Muirhouse. The previous Labour administration's decision to demolish those homes en masse has resulted in businesses struggling and many of them closing. Will the minister look into the matter to see how the businesses can be assisted throughout the regeneration phase?

**Fergus Ewing:** Plainly, the events that the member described amount to a change for the worse in the trading expectations and patterns of

the businesses concerned. Members will appreciate that I used to be a bit of an anorak in respect of business rates—used to be—so I can advise members that valuation joint boards are independent of Scottish ministers and that all businesses have a right of appeal for rateable value assessments where there has been a material change in circumstances. I would therefore recommend that the member pursue that point with the businesses concerned and perhaps ensure that they are aware of the potential right of appeal.

### **Solar Panels (Domestic Use)**

#### **10. David Stewart (Highlands and Islands)**

**(Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what actions it is planning to stimulate domestic use of solar panels. (S4O-00498)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** I have seen for myself the success of solar photovoltaic businesses in Scotland and I met representatives of the sector last Thursday to discuss how we continue to support its growth beyond the current difficulties caused by the United Kingdom Government's review of the feed-in tariff.

The Scottish Government already funds the Energy Saving Trust to provide a range of support for microgeneration, including solar PV, from home visits to interest-free loans. We are working with industry to look at additional actions to support the sector and will set those out in more detail in the microgeneration strategy to be published in the new year.

**David Stewart:** I agree with the minister that the UK Government's reduction of the feed-in tariff has been very damaging to the solar panel industry. Does the minister share my view that the three crucial benefits from the solar panel industry are employment, its helping us to meet our climate change targets and its being excellent in relation to our renewables targets? Would the minister consider using the fossil fuel levy of £110 million, which has now been ring fenced, for a Scottish equivalent of the feed-in tariff scheme that would ensure that over the next 12 months there is employment in the solar panel industry and that we continue to meet our climate change targets?

**Fergus Ewing:** I agree with Mr Stewart about the three benefits. However, the feed-in tariff scheme is reserved to Westminster. I am always happy to look into a suggestion, but I suspect that we do not have the legislative powers that are required in this case, although I hope that Mr Stewart will support our moves to acquire them.

Further to my meeting last week, I shall urge the Department of Energy and Climate Change to ensure three things: first, that customers who

placed orders before the consultation paper was put out have their orders honoured under the pre-existing system; secondly, that the FIT budget be looked at so that social housing can be allowed the benefit of solar panels and lower-rental properties are not cut out of the scheme, which has been advantageous to many people who live in fairly substantial properties, as the member will know; and thirdly, that we bring forward measures for the long-term stability of the solar PV sector. We understand the difficulties that the UK Government faces and do not belittle them, but we are concerned about the way in which the FIT reduction was introduced, as is the industry in Scotland.

#### **Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):**

A 200-signature letter and a 17,000-signature petition were yesterday handed in to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister by industry representatives. What representations does the minister plan to make to the UK Government to try to have it reverse what I believe to be an illogical decision on the feed-in tariff for photovoltaics?

**Fergus Ewing:** I wrote to Chris Huhne on 24 October and 3 November to express my concern and met, at my behest, a number of solar energy companies last Thursday, which members will recall was not a particularly sunny day. There was huge concern around the table about the number of job losses in Scotland, which could reach the high hundreds, or more.

I do not want to make political capital out of this; I want to work with DECC to ensure a fairer solution as a result of the consultation paper. Mark McDonald referred to the level of concern. I very much hope that our colleagues in DECC will consider carefully what can be done. I believe that the three measures that I have proposed today are modest and achievable. We are not asking for too much or trying to score political points on the issue; rather, we want a solution for the people and businesses involved.

### **Council Tax Benefit**

**11. Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will maintain the level of council tax benefit going to local authorities in any revised system from April 2013, despite a 10 per cent reduction in the funding transferred by the United Kingdom Government. (S4O-00499)

**The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Derek Mackay):** The UK Government is abolishing council tax benefit and removing altogether from the social security system support to help individuals to meet their local taxation liabilities. We have been working with local government colleagues to explore future means of

providing relief to individuals in meeting their council tax liabilities and will consult in due course.

**Jackie Baillie:** I thank the new minister for his response. Given the critical importance of council tax benefit to people on low incomes, I am sure that he shares my regret at the 10 per cent cut that the UK Government has imposed on it.

However, I believe that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has been told to expect the cut to be passed on. As it is so close to Christmas, will the new minister take the opportunity to protect the most vulnerable people in our community and keep council tax benefit at current levels, or is COSLA right that he is simply going to pass on the cut?

**Derek Mackay:** No decisions have been taken on how the measure will be applied in Scotland. It is wrong to assume that we will simply accept the UK Government's decision. The Scottish Government continues to challenge the UK Government on the decision about, and direction of, the policy and we also challenge the timescale for the 10 per cent cut, the logic of and rationale behind such a move, the impact on people, and the baseline figures. I ask Jackie Baillie to join me and others in putting maximum pressure on the UK Government to steer away from what is a very reckless decision for Scotland.

### **Economic Growth (Capital Spending)**

**12. Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee City West) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to boost economic growth through capital spending. (S4O-00500)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The "Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011", which was published on 6 December, sets out our ambitious programme of capital investment from now to 2030 and explains how the spend will help to boost economic growth.

**Joe FitzPatrick:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that the recently announced capital investment programme, which includes a £32 million investment for Harris academy in Dundee, a £20 million investment in an unlicensed medicines unit in Dundee and a £9.2 million investment in a child and adolescent mental health facility, also in Dundee, will not only provide maximum value for taxpayers' money but deliver world-class education and health facilities that are fit for the 21st century? Does he share my hope that many of the jobs in constructing the facilities will create and sustain employment in the local economy?

**John Swinney:** I welcome Mr FitzPatrick's remarks. The projects that he referred to come on top of the Government's existing commitments in

Dundee, not least of which is the commitment that we were able to fulfil in the spending review to supporting development of the Victoria and Albert museum, which will have a transformational effect on the city.

I assure Mr FitzPatrick that maximising value for money for taxpayers is paramount in all our initiatives on and approaches to capital investment. We have charged the Scottish Futures Trust with delivering on that very task, and it is able to deliver those commitments and significant additional benefits as a consequence of effective stewardship of our procurement programme. Those approaches will be taken forward through the Government's infrastructure programme.

### **Wind Farms (Guidance on Siting)**

**13. Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Executive when it will provide strategic guidance on the siting of wind farms. (S4O-00501)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** Paragraphs 187 to 191 of the "Scottish Planning Policy" document set out the strategic approach to dealing with wind farms, including siting. The document is available on the Scottish Government's website.

**Alex Johnstone:** I thank the minister for his answer, but in practical terms we are experiencing a periodic free-for-all in applications. Local authorities that address their responsibilities in this respect are being immediately inundated with applications, as a result of which hotspots exist and continue to form around the country. Will the Government accept its responsibility for this ill-advised energy policy and shoulder its responsibility to provide real and usable strategic guidance on the siting of wind turbines?

**Fergus Ewing:** Guidance was put in place in 2002, 2006 and 2009, and—as I said in the debate a couple of weeks ago at which Alex Johnstone was present—further guidance on cumulative impact will be issued shortly by Scottish Natural Heritage.

These are serious matters, so it does not help to conduct the debate in such stentorian and hyperbolic tones. We need a little more light and a little less heat.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** The minister was present at the members' business debate on wind farms two weeks ago. He will have noticed the significant level of public and cross-party interest in the issue. Will he commit to a debate on this important issue in Government time early in the new year?

**Fergus Ewing:** I am aware of the debate the other week, which Neil Findlay led. I thought that

members from all parties made useful contributions, which we are studying. I expect that we will debate matters further in the Parliament as time goes on.

However, the first step should be to consider the guidance to which I referred, following its publication, and recent announcements of other measures, such as Scottish and Southern Energy's announcement that it will increase the amount of community benefit that it pays to £5,000 per megawatt. This is a dynamic area of policy. I assure the member that we will keep Parliament fully informed and involved at all times. I welcome his question on the matter.

#### **Fossil Fuel Levy (Energy Demand)**

**14. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether part of the funding from the fossil fuel levy account can be applied to reducing energy demand. (S4O-00502)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The provisions of the Energy Act 2004 that apply to the fossil fuel levy funds state that they must be used

"for the purpose of promoting the use of energy from renewable sources."

That means that the funds could have a role to play in helping to moderate demand or at least make it more sustainable, for example by helping to fund district heating schemes that incorporate renewable fuels.

**Rob Gibson:** I welcome the potential for using the fund in the broadest fashion. Could the infrastructure for renewables development benefit from the fund through the development of ports and means of communication, to link places where developments are taking place in the renewables sector with the rest of the country?

**Fergus Ewing:** We will be happy to consider whether it will be possible to use fossil fuel levy funds for such purposes.

Yesterday, I was pleased to meet Community Energy Scotland, which does much work to support communities that want to promote community renewables schemes. There are a number of hugely successful schemes in Scotland, which are helping to power homes and revitalise communities. That is a positive story, which I am sure all members welcome.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Does the minister intend some of the fossil fuel fund to go to yards in the Highlands and Islands, such as the Nigg yard, to give them the opportunity to play a key role in wind farm construction? When will the allocation of the fund be announced?

**Fergus Ewing:** I am pleased to say that I understand that the Nigg development, which we all welcome and which will bring around 2,000 jobs to the Highlands, is already being assisted by public funding, through Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Whether there is a need for further public funds is a matter that we would look to, and we would do so sympathetically.

Scotland is on the verge of some of the most exciting opportunities that the country has faced and I am pleased that Mary Scanlon has greeted the Nigg development with such enthusiasm. I hope that that enthusiasm is emulated across the Parliament.

#### **Small and Micro Businesses (Highlands and Islands)**

**15. Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it will take to improve employment opportunities in small and micro businesses in the Highlands and Islands. (S4O-00503)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** We are committed to offering a range of support, through Skills Development Scotland, to make it easier for smaller local businesses throughout Scotland to hire staff and take on one of the 25,000 apprenticeship opportunities that are available this year. The support includes access to £1,000, to support 16 to 19-year-olds who have completed pre-employment training into a job or an apprenticeship, and access to £5 million to help employers to recruit people aged over 18 who are struggling to find work. For businesses that have fewer than 50 employees, £2.5 million is also available, in the form of £1,000 rebates for the additional recruitment costs that small businesses incur.

**Jean Urquhart:** Does the minister agree that by far the majority of businesses in the Highlands and Islands are small and micro and that there is a particularly high rate of membership of business organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry? Will Skills Development Scotland use those organisations to promote employment initiatives? Traditionally, take-up of such initiatives has been fairly low, so it would be good if better information was delivered through business organisations.

**Fergus Ewing:** Jean Urquhart makes a good point. By sheer coincidence, I met business organisations this morning and discussed those and other matters with them. As Jean Urquhart said, in the Highlands and Islands there is a high rate of membership of organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses, which provides comprehensive services to small businesses, as I



well know. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure that businesses are aware of the support, assistance, advice and mentoring services that they can get from business bodies such as the FSB, the SCDI, the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the Institute of Directors.

### **Renewables Projects (Employment and Economic Growth)**

**16. Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what the expected impact on employment and economic growth is of the finance that it has committed to renewables projects. (S4O-00504)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The “2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland” set out the scale of opportunity for economic growth and job creation that is associated with renewable energy in Scotland. It highlighted the potential for renewable energy to create tens of thousands of jobs and secure billions of pounds of investment in our economy. The £200 million that has been committed to renewable energy as part of the spending review, along with the additional £103 million from Scotland’s fossil fuel levy surplus, will act as a significant lever to private sector investment and will help to deliver our ambitions.

**Bill Kidd:** The cabinet secretary will be aware of the long history of engineering in my constituency of Glasgow Anniesland and the essential role that apprenticeships play in the sector. How will future investment in renewables benefit Clydeside?

**John Swinney:** The city of Glasgow has a long history of innovation, invention and engineering excellence and many of those skills remain to the fore in the city. I have every confidence that many areas such as Mr Kidd mentioned will benefit from the engineering and technology developments that will be associated with the renewables revolution. Major investment is taking place in the city through Gamesa and through the University of Strathclyde’s international technology and renewable energy zone—ITREZ—project. A number of interventions are taking their course and I am sure that there will be many more as the city increases its presence in renewables activity.

### **Hotel Bed Levy (Edinburgh)**

**17. Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on a hotel bed levy as considered by the City of Edinburgh Council. (S4O-00505)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** We have no plans to introduce a bed tax and there are no existing legal

powers for local authorities to levy a local bed tax or tourism tax.

**Marco Biagi:** The minister will be aware that the City of Edinburgh Council has voted to investigate the possibility of such a levy and to come back with detailed proposals within the local government framework. Does he agree that it might make sense for there to be contact between the council and the Scottish Government to allow the council to tap into the Scottish Government’s expertise and network of contacts to ensure that all parties find a productive way forward?

**Fergus Ewing:** I read about the bed tax proposal in the newspapers. Obviously, we are always ready to engage with local government, but there is a high risk that a visitor levy could damage the industry’s competitiveness, especially in the current economic circumstances. Price is a key threat to the United Kingdom’s competitiveness. Unfortunately, the UK ranks 135th out of 139 for price competitiveness. All but three members of the European Union have lowered VAT rates for hotel accommodation and some have done so for other tourism services. The UK VAT rate on hotel accommodation is high, at 20 per cent. Some people would say that we already have a quasi bed tax and that it is called VAT.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 18 has regrettably been withdrawn by David Torrance. Question 19 is from Anne McTaggart. Quickly, please.

### **Credit Unions (Membership)**

**19. Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to encourage growth in credit union membership. (S4O-00507)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The Scottish Government supports a range of initiatives that are designed to improve money management and tackle poverty and they signpost credit unions as an alternative to banks.

**Anne McTaggart:** The United Kingdom Government’s Welfare Reform Bill will put significant financial strain on a number of our most vulnerable groups. Does the cabinet secretary agree that credit unions will have a crucial role to play in providing ethical financial support and advice, particularly to those who are most affected by the bill? Furthermore, does he agree with me—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Cabinet secretary. [*Laughter.*]

**Anne McTaggart:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that credit unions require additional assistance from the Scottish Government?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I apologise.

**John Swinney:** I acknowledge the interest that Anne McTaggart has taken in credit unions in her role as vice-convenor of the cross-party group on credit unions. I endorse the role that they play in supporting individuals on low incomes and those who face financial hardship. Advice from and participation in credit unions is infinitely preferable to some of the other money-lending opportunities that are all too readily available to vulnerable individuals in our society.

The Government has provided financial support to credit unions. There are different mechanisms through which that can be secured, not least of which is the enterprise growth fund that the Government supports.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I inform members that the mains power supply to the building was—self-evidently—interrupted this afternoon due to a fault that is affecting central Edinburgh. Scottish Power advises that interruptions to its customers might continue until 4.30 pm. To avoid further disruption, a decision was taken at 2.15 to switch to our standby generator. We apologise for the short interruption to the lighting in the chamber. We are assured that there should be no further interruptions to the rest of today's business.

## Infrastructure Investment Plan

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The next item of business is a debate on the infrastructure investment plan. I call Alex Neil.

14:57

**The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment (Alex Neil):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. In the light of your announcement, perhaps I should emphasise that electricity supply is not part of my infrastructure responsibilities.

I welcome this debate on the long-term plans for infrastructure investment in Scotland. I will begin by explaining why infrastructure is so important and by putting the infrastructure investment plan in the context of our longer-term plans for the Scottish economy. As the Parliament knows, Mr Swinney published "The Government Economic Strategy" about two months ago, we published our "Infrastructure Investment Plan" about two weeks ago, and the Deputy First Minister will publish the cities strategy shortly. All those documents need to be read together as part of our overall plan to achieve long-term, sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

Part of our strategy in the GES as well as in the IIP is to increase, where we can, the overall level of capital spending. We want to do that for two reasons. First, it is generally accepted that spending on capital investment has a significantly higher multiplier impact on the economy than resource spending. Every additional £100 million of capital that is invested per year is estimated to generate £160 million-worth of economic activity and support 1,400 jobs. In the climate that we are living in, both nationally and internationally, that is a major consideration.

Secondly, I point out that, contrary to some claims that I have read about our plans for capital investment in the three-year period that starts next April, it is not true to say that we will be reducing the Scottish Government's overall capital investment, in terms of both our direct investment and the capital investment that that leverages from the private sector and others.

There are broadly five sources from which we can raise money for capital investment. The first and most obvious one is the capital grant that we get from the Treasury every year. That was cut by Alistair Darling—a cut that was confirmed by the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, when he came into office. That cut represents a real-terms cut to the Scottish Parliament of 38 per cent every year. As a result of last week's autumn statement, the cut has been reduced to 32 per cent. However, that is still,

basically, a one-third reduction in the level of capital investment that can be funded from the capital grant from Westminster and means that, instead of having about £3.5 billion a year to invest, we have something like £2.5 billion a year, over the period of the current spending review. Therefore, as announced by Mr Swinney, the Scottish Government will transfer over the next three-year period a total of more than £700 million from the resource budget to the capital budget. Over the piece, taking the £2.5 billion as the base, we will increase the level of capital spending despite the cut in the capital grant from Westminster.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland)**

**(Lab):** Does the minister plan to publish details of that resource-to-capital transfer? If so, when?

**Alex Neil:** Absolutely. This is an open and transparent Government. We have nothing to hide and a lot to boast about in terms of that figure.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** Mr Neil will know that the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee has requested that very information from him on four separate occasions but we still await it. Why will he not release the information to the committee when asked to do so?

**Alex Neil:** I am afraid that the member is out of date. The information is en route to the committee this very minute. As I say, there is nothing to hide. We are proud to boast of the fact that we are transferring £700 million of resource to make up for the cuts that Mr Findlay's chancellor imposed on the Scottish Government.

The second source of capital funding is the non-profit-distributing investment programme, which will invest £2.5 billion over the next few years—£1 billion on transport, mainly to fund the M8 bundle and the Aberdeen western peripheral route, when the courts allow us to do so; about £750 million on health, mainly to pay for the Royal hospital for sick children and other such worthy causes; and £750 million on education, mainly for the college sector and schools. That money is also part of our strategy for filling the black hole that has been left by the cuts from Westminster that were imposed by the Tories, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. I see that we have one Liberal Democrat in the chamber—the party's full membership from the Borders.

The third major source is what is called the regulatory asset base—RAB—which funds our investment in Network Rail infrastructure. That will be well over £1 billion in the next few years. Two major projects alone will come to more than £1 billion—the upgrade of the Glasgow to Edinburgh link and the reopening of the Borders railway. That represents significant capital investment, funded through the RAB mechanism.

The fourth source is a variety of innovative types of funding that we are employing in order to leverage additional investment from other sectors. I will give two of many possible examples.

Two months ago, Keith Brown and I announced a £460 million programme of investment to build more than 4,300 new houses in Scotland. If members look at the profile of that £460 million, they will see that £110 million is Government money and the other £350 million will be leveraged from other sources: a combination of local authority borrowing for council houses, housing association borrowing and private sector borrowing. Four years ago, for every £2 of Government investment in housing, we got only £1 of investment from elsewhere. We have now completely reversed the situation so that, for every £1 of Government investment in housing, we get an additional £3 of investment from other sources. That is why we are able to spend the money that Shelter asked us to spend over the next three years in the housing programme, but we will get much more out of it in terms of new affordable houses over that period. We are therefore very confident that we will meet our target of 6,000 new affordable homes in Scotland over the next three years.

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** Mr Neil keeps mentioning 6,000 promised affordable houses, but the Scottish National Party's manifesto referred to 6,000 socially rented houses. There is a muddling of words. Does Mr Neil admit that his manifesto was mistaken, or has he done a U-turn?

**Alex Neil:** Coming from a Liberal Democrat, that surprise question really poses me enormous difficulties. The Liberal Democrats are the last people to talk about muddled words or muddled thinking. They are the prop for the Tory party throughout the country.

The other example is tax incremental funding. We have announced six pilot projects throughout Scotland that will leverage substantial amounts of private sector investment. That will help to generate economic growth in the areas concerned and contribute enormously to the infrastructure.

The fifth source from which we can raise money for capital investment is the borrowing powers that we do not currently have but will get, I hope, in the not-too-distant future. We will put those powers to good use to invest in the future: in our infrastructure, in capital investment and in sustainable economic growth for the benefit of the people of Scotland.

**Lewis Macdonald:** I took careful note of the figures and examples that Mr Neil quoted. Will he confirm that he has told us that capital spending by the Scottish Government at its own hand is

down from around £3.5 billion to, according to his numbers—and including the resource-to-capital transfer—something in the order of £3.25 billion?

**Alex Neil:** Mr Macdonald misses the point, which is that, despite the cuts from his chancellor, the repeated cuts from the Tory chancellor and the cuts that he has just enunciated, over the next three years we will invest between £11 billion and £12 billion in the Scottish economy because we are taking an innovative and dynamic approach that is unprecedented in the history of the Parliament.

I wish Mr Macdonald all the best when the results of the Labour Party's deputy leadership contest are announced on Saturday. I believe that there are three candidates. Although the bookies' choice is Anas Sarwar, I am sure that Mr Macdonald will give him a run for his money. We look forward to the results.

The infrastructure investment plan, which goes up to 2030, is about roads, railways, houses, harbours and rolling out broadband.

**John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con):** Will the minister give way?

**Alex Neil:** I bet that this will be a question about the Scottish Borders.

**John Lamont:** That is great foresight.

Why have the A1 and other significant trunk roads through the Borders not been identified for improvement between now and 2030? Is it because those roads go to England and the rest of the world?

**Alex Neil:** They may go to England, but perhaps they do not go to Europe any longer via England.

As we spelled out in the plan, which no doubt John Lamont will have read diligently, the individual projects that are listed in it are those that cost more than £20 million. Therefore, if the Borders roads are not in the list of projects in that plan, I can assure him that when we publish our transport refresh early in 2012, we will consider all the appropriate opportunities for investment in the south-east of Scotland, despite his Government's massive cuts in our capital budget.

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alex Neil:** Of course—I will cover the south-west as well.

**Elaine Murray:** With regard to the south-west, will the planned but currently stalled improvement schemes for the A75 now go ahead, and will the cabinet secretary consider the A76 action plan?

**Alex Neil:** As the First Minister announced two weeks ago when he opened the new Stena Line link at Cairnryan, we have brought forward the Maybole and Dunragit bypass timescales, and we will deliver those projects. Labour members had 13 years to deliver those projects and did not deliver any of them.

That is what our plan is about, and we intend to deliver on all of it. No previous Government set out a plan for dualling the A9 between Perth and Inverness, on which we will make a start in January, or for dualling the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness. When we carry out those improvements, every city in Scotland will be joined up by motorway or by dual carriageway. That is a major achievement to help to make Scotland competitive and grow in the 21st century.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the importance of infrastructure investment to delivering sustainable economic growth, managing the transition to a low-carbon economy, supporting delivery of efficient and high quality public services and supporting employment and opportunity across Scotland; notes the significant investment underway in a wide range of projects to deliver new schools, hospitals, houses, roads, water infrastructure, community facilities and improved availability of high-speed broadband across Scotland; supports the long-term commitment to continue and build on these investments; supports the Scottish Government's use of a broad range of funding methods for investment to help offset the 32% real-terms cut to Scotland's capital budget inflicted by the UK Government, and welcomes the publication of the Scottish Government's *Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011*, setting out the Scottish Government's intentions through to 2030.

15:11

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland)**

**(Lab):** I thank Alex Neil for his best wishes. He clearly knows more about bookies' odds than I do, but fortunately the decision is up to neither the bookies nor Alex Neil. [*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Neil might want to switch off his microphone.

**Lewis Macdonald:** When we debated infrastructure and capital investment in June, I called on Alex Neil to publish an update of the infrastructure investment plan. He promised that he would, and I welcome the fact that he has now done so.

In September, I asked Mr Neil again about his plan and whether it would include comprehensive information on the whole-life costs of capital projects and their impact on future revenue budgets, as Audit Scotland had said that it should. Mr Neil's answer was carefully worded. He said that he would

"include in the plan as much information as it is possible to provide at the time."—[*Official Report*, 15 September 2011; c 1787.]

He was wise to be cautious then, but he has not been quite so careful in these past few days. He proclaimed last week that the plan was a £60 billion “mega-plan” for future investment, but even the most cursory examination shows that it is nothing of the sort. It appears to be mysteriously unrelated to other proposed long-term plans that are also the responsibility of the Scottish Government, and of this ministerial team in particular.

The plan declares support for high-speed rail links between Scotland and London, with Scottish Government support for the £8 billion or £9 billion of investment that is required in new rail infrastructure in Scotland itself, albeit not until 2025. At the same time, “Rail 2014”, which was published just a few short weeks ago, proposes to stop existing cross-border services at Edinburgh, which would end existing direct services to London from Aberdeen, Dundee and Inverness.

**The Minister for Housing and Transport (Keith Brown):** Has Lewis Macdonald not yet been able to read the document sufficiently well to understand that it is a consultation document? The example that he gave is not a proposal, and never has been. It is mentioned as an option for people to debate.

**Lewis Macdonald:** It is an interesting proposition that a document with the photographs, signatures and names of the two ministers who are before us today is not their responsibility. I will quote from the ministerial foreword to the document, which states:

“We believe that we can achieve a distinctly Scottish railway”.

That presumably means not having trains that serve Scotland’s cities under franchises that are awarded by Westminster ministers.

Indeed, it is striking that the ministers who are with us today have both attached themselves to “Rail 2014”. Presumably, by the time that the document was published the First Minister had not yet told them that his Government was so efficient that it needed only one transport minister. If they had been in the chamber yesterday, they would have heard Mr Salmond say precisely that.

Mr Neil and Mr Brown will also want to be aware that, as we speak, rail unions and rail customer groups are out campaigning at stations around Scotland calling for these proposals, among others, to be rejected. The same ministers who are proposing “a distinctly Scottish railway” during their term of office are quite happy to promise that a future Government will fund a multi-billion pound high-speed link to London in 2025.

Another document that ministers should have read is the rail industry’s initial industry plan, which

was published in September and which lays out the key choices and options facing Scottish ministers in specifying the future outputs of the railway and the levels of funding required for the control period 2014 to 2019. Ministers have not yet responded to the initial industry plan, which perhaps they might have done first. However, what is remarkable is that the plan they have published in their own names seems to make very little reference to the plan that has been brought to their attention already by the industry.

The Aberdeen to Inverness railway line is a route that I know well—it is the route by which I went to school for five years. The industry proposes an hourly service and a journey time between Aberdeen and Inverness of two hours or less, with new stations at Dalcross and Kintore, at a total cost of up to £202 million. However, ministers propose a phased programme over the period 2015 onwards, but with a price tag not of up to £202 million, but in the range of £250 million to £500 million. The major improvements proposed by the industry have not yet been approved by ministers, yet here they are proposing to spend more than twice as much apparently on the same scheme for the same line.

On the Highland main line, the industry proposes an hourly service and a two-hour journey time between Inverness and Perth at a cost of £37 million to 2019. Ministers propose spending up to £600 million to 2025. Even if it wanted to, the rail industry might find it hard to spend that sum on that line over that period of time. In the circumstances, it is no wonder that ministers have not included a credible funding proposal in their plan. We call on them to do so today because so many of the numbers in the infrastructure investment plan seem to bear no relation to other proposals that are on the table.

Yesterday, the Parliament’s financial scrutiny unit added up all the capital projects in the plan to see whether they really did come to £60 billion over 20 years. They did not. The total capital value of all the projects in the plan turns out to be between £25 billion and £31 billion—barely half the sum that the cabinet secretary wanted to claim credit for in announcing his £60 billion mega-plan last week.

The figure of up to £31 billion includes precisely the items that I quoted merely as examples—the £300 million on the Aberdeen to Inverness route and the £500 million on the Inverness to Perth route—over and above the major investments that have been proposed by the rail industry itself and which still await ministerial approval.

The Centre for Public Policy for Regions offers an explanation: perhaps half the money in the plan is not new investment at all, but simply routine maintenance spending that would have to be done

whether or not there was a long-term investment plan.

The Scottish Government appears to have offered the financial scrutiny unit a more imaginative explanation for its figure of £60 billion. The overall capital funding available in the three years of the current spending review period is, as Mr Neil stated again this afternoon, said to be £12 billion, including a large sum of private money. That number has then apparently been multiplied by five. It appears that this is how the Government plans for Scotland's capital investment from 2012 to 2030: it estimates what it might spend and what others might spend on its behalf in the first three years, and then it multiplies by five.

That is a very peculiar approach to economics. Perhaps it is independence economics—it is not unlike the Government's approach to working out the value of future oil revenues—but even apart from the apparent innumeracy, that is surely no way to run a country's budget. Perhaps the truth is that the numbers have simply been made up and the whole £60 billion mega-plan is simply a mega-con—an exercise in mega-fantasy along the lines of “think of a big number and then double it.”

Within the plan there is also little evidence of prioritisation—other than, of course, through what is not in the plan. There is, for example, absolutely nothing in the plan about investing in housing for social rent.

There are lots of different private finance initiatives, some of which the Scottish National Party inherited, such as the non-profit-distributing model, and some of which it describes as innovative or pioneering, such as the national housing trust, to which Mr Neil referred, which involves the Scottish Government underwriting local authority borrowing to build homes for mid-market rent, which will eventually be paid for by selling the homes to the tenants. There is nothing wrong with that, but there is nothing in the plan that will build homes for social rent, which is why Mr Neil received a letter last week from a range of stakeholders representing housing providers, builders, housing professionals and construction workers calling for him to act to make social housing a Government priority. I hope that he will listen to them.

Another innovative funding approach that has been mentioned is tax increment financing, whereby councils invest by borrowing money that they then repay from the increased business rates that their development creates.

Mr Neil mentioned six projects. One of the projects that he has encouraged to go forward is in my home city of Aberdeen, where the council would like to borrow £70 million but has told ministers that the development would generate

additional rates income of only £200,000 a year. It will be interesting to see how that can be justified in terms of innovative funding and what confidence it can give in the Government's stewardship of public finances going forward.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** Mr Macdonald, please draw to a conclusion.

**Lewis Macdonald:** I shall indeed.

Simply publishing a wish list of projects that it would be nice to have, with no indication of priorities, no clear timetables or detailed plans for many of them and no credible funding statement is not the way forward. That is why we are calling on ministers to accept that the document is at best work in progress, to prepare a detailed funding package to support the list of projects and to bring the plan back to the Parliament in the new year.

I move amendment S4M-01584.3, to leave out from second “notes” to end and insert:

“welcomes the publication of an updated infrastructure investment plan (IIP), but regrets the hiatus in commissioning new schools and hospitals in the last parliamentary session, the delay or abandonment of major infrastructure projects included in the previous IIP and the Scottish Government's decision to cut the funding of new social housing in half in the next two years, all of which will lead to further loss of jobs, skills and capacity in the construction sector; believes that the aspiration to lay out long-term strategic objectives is undermined by the lack of prioritisation of projects, the absence of clear links to other proposed long-term plans and the failure to provide a credible funding plan, and calls on the Scottish Government to publish details of anticipated investment and maintenance costs on an annual basis and to make a statement early in 2012.”

15:21

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** Governments are often accused of being relatively short term and it is in the nature of politics that short-term decisions are the priority of the day. However, we can always trust Alex Neil. He is the man who will come up with not only the long-term proposals but the ultra-long-term proposals that disappear towards the horizon—there in the distance, we can actually see the vanishing point. The plan extends so far into the future that Alex Neil and perhaps even I have little chance of ever seeing the end of it, even if it is all successful. The plan is so long term in its objectives that it is difficult to cost and difficult to work out what can be achieved within it.

The six strategic priorities set out by the Government are ones on which I think we can all agree. Maintaining and developing a supportive business environment are crucial to the long-term future of Scotland's economy. Driving the transition to a low-carbon economy is a justified objective, whether one takes the green point of view or whether one simply accepts that oil and

gas will not last for ever, in which case a low-carbon economy becomes a necessity. Supporting learning, skills and wellbeing is also a very valuable objective to pursue, as is the strengthening of communities through infrastructure and development. Maintaining effective government and ensuring equity are also important. Those objectives have been set out in a plan that I propose to look at point by point to try, in the limited time available to me, to work out exactly what we are trying to achieve here.

On transport, the Scottish Government plans to “have dualled the A9 between Perth and Inverness”

by 2025 and completed

“the dualled road network between all our cities by 2030”.

However, as we heard from John Lamont earlier, where is the A1 in the plan? As Elaine Murray said, where is the A75? I found the answer given to John Lamont quite intriguing. If the completion of the dualling of the A1 from Edinburgh to the border is on the list of projects that are likely to cost less than £20 million, perhaps the minister has discovered a funding mechanism to which we should all be paying rather more attention. I doubt whether it is on that list.

**Alex Neil:** Is there a split in the Tory party? Mr Fraser has been issuing press release after press release demanding that the A9 be the overriding priority for road investment.

**Alex Johnstone:** The A9 is a priority. The problem is that the minister has set his priorities in a particular light, and the omission of the A1 and the A75 indicate that he is more interested in what goes on inside Scotland than in what we do to improve Scotland's links with the outside world and to improve trading opportunities.

On the roll-out of broadband, the Government has given a commitment within the plan, but when giving evidence—[*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am sorry, Mr Johnstone, but can I stop you for a moment? Could Mr Neil's microphone be switched off now, please?

**Alex Johnstone:** When giving evidence to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee this week, leading players in the industry said that the Scottish Government was not yet providing the leadership necessary to see that work through.

The plan states:

“On energy and renewables—by 2020, 30% of our overall energy demand and 100% of electricity will be generated from renewables”.

Unfortunately, that can be achieved only if the cabinet secretary twists the definitions. I suggest that those targets are unachievable.

The plan also states:

“On water—through to 2030 we will continue to deliver improvements to drinking water quality, protecting the environment, and reducing leakage”

while pursuing the public sector model, which is the most expensive option for the tax payer.

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention on that point?

**Alex Johnstone:** No. I must make progress.

The Government says that its priority for education will be further and higher education, but Scotland's colleges and their students continue to flood my e-mail in-box with complaints that the Government is ignoring their needs.

The plan states:

“On housing—through to 2030 we will deliver a step change in the provision of energy efficient homes through new-build programmes and the retrofitting of existing homes”.

However, units delivered by the national housing trust are well under target and the system might result in more people having to be rehoused in the long term as they reach the end of their tenancy.

On funding methods, the Government has outlined—in fact, the minister did so at some length—the options that exist under the Scottish Futures Trust. He talked about the non-profit-distributing method, but that method must produce profit or it will not attract investment. The Government is misleading us by taking us down that road and misrepresenting the position. There can be an effect through RAB—a great deal of resource can be brought out through that. Tax incremental financing, which has been mentioned, is also a way in which we could raise more money.

However, those methods and the others that the Government has proposed are all methods of turning revenue into capital. They are, in effect, all methods of borrowing. The Government has criticised previous Governments for borrowing too heavily. Even if the Government can justify that borrowing by saying that it will regulate the profits and margins, it is still borrowing.

The infrastructure investment plan is an optimistic list and can only ever be funded if every single funding proposal that it contains works to the maximum possible benefit. Anyone who has ever run a business or tried to regulate the economic impact of such methods will realise that we cannot expect 100 per cent success all the time.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Johnstone, I have to ask you to conclude now.

**Alex Johnstone:** The plan is a wish list. In the paperwork we can see that the Government

intends not to exceed the 5 per cent cap on revenue finance investment. I do not believe that it is possible to achieve its objective while maintaining that self-discipline. I just do not believe it.

I move amendment S4M-01584.2, to leave out from “to help” to end and insert:

“and, while welcoming the publication of the Scottish Government’s *Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011*, notes with interest that most of the projects have been deferred till after 2016, and further calls on ministers to set out a detailed timetable of projects with allocated budgets, along with their preferred funding option for each.”

15:28

**Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP):** I am pleased to speak in today’s debate, given the importance of investment in infrastructure in Scotland, about which I do not think that anyone is in any doubt. I am proud of what the Scottish Government has managed to achieve in infrastructure investment, despite the unprecedented budget cut of 32 per cent in real terms from the United Kingdom Government.

I am loth to start by stating the obvious, but I believe that the financial and constitutional constraints on the Parliament and the Government are restricting Scotland’s potential. Setting out our Government’s intentions through to 2030 is no mean feat, and I congratulate Alex Neil and his team on engineering a package that is so right for Scotland that we should all welcome it.

As the cabinet secretary has already set out the main points of the plan, I will not repeat them all. Suffice it to say that we hear every day about the struggles that ordinary Scots face against the current economic backdrop. That is why I am pleased that the Government has recognised that, if Scotland is to continue to grow out of the recession and support our economy, we must have effective investment plans.

There has been nearly £17 billion of capital funding over the five years since the SNP came into government—investment that affects every aspect of our daily lives in Scotland from education, health and housing to energy, transport and communities. We have heard the commitment from the cabinet secretary to continue to invest at the heart of what matters, providing maximum value for taxpayers’ money.

I commend the forward thinking in the infrastructure investment plan. We must look to the future if we are to succeed in providing our communities with the tools and resources that they require to flourish. By spending between £3 billion and £4 billion each year on capital investment—between £45 billion and £60 billion over 15 years—we will support 1,400 jobs in the wider

economy. If every £100 million of additional capital invested per year generates the estimated £160 million, our economy will stabilise, allowing people to have confidence in our home markets.

We heard yesterday that private sector employment has increased and now accounts for 77.7 per cent of Scottish employment, the highest share since devolution. In the third quarter of 2011, the number of new jobs created in the private sector once again outweighed the number of jobs lost in the public sector. However, we must not lose sight of the importance of investment in the public sector. If we develop long-term infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and transport networks, we will continue to see positive growth patterns and tangible results that will give our communities confidence in their abilities and those in our workforce the stability that they need to improve their quality of life.

In my region, I have already seen regeneration work to improve the standing of communities such as Stranraer. The £230 million redevelopment of Dumfries and Galloway royal infirmary via the NPD finance model and the new 85-bed acute mental health facility for NHS Dumfries and Galloway—on which £27.2 million is being spent—will help to reinvigorate the south of Scotland in a way that only public sector investment can. Jeff Ace, the new chief executive of NHS Dumfries and Galloway, said at a meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Council today that the new DGRI presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a world-class facility.

Future investment in transport links around the south of Scotland can only be positive for the area. Opening Stena Line’s new Loch Ryan port facility last month, the First Minister outlined the Scottish Government’s continued commitment not only to the Stranraer and Ayr to Glasgow railway line but to continuing to upgrade the vital A77 and A75. As the Deputy First Minister made clear at First Minister’s question time last week, work on the Dunragit bypass and the A77 at Maybole is due to start in spring 2012.

Given the potential to position Stranraer as a major gateway to Scotland and the rest of Europe from Ireland and Northern Ireland, it would be worth exploring the possibility of leveraging in any European Union investment to link the development of our ports infrastructure in the south-west to the development of our roads and rail infrastructure through programmes such as the cross-border trans-European network transport projects and to broadband infrastructure through the EU’s proposed €40 billion connecting Europe facility.

In this digital age, I am sure that we all acknowledge the importance of having the correct connectivity infrastructure to allow enterprises to



grow. In particular, it allows rural businesses to conduct their affairs more effectively and connect with wider markets. Access to superfast broadband is therefore vital to the regional economy in ensuring that our rural businesses can expand, as well as attracting new businesses and connecting communities. I appreciate that the challenging rural geography of Scotland makes that an interesting feat but, with £144.3 million already being committed to the accelerated roll-out of next-generation broadband until 2015-16, we are well on our way to achieving the aim of having it available to all by 2020.

As I represent one of the largest rural regions in the Parliament, South Scotland, I encounter daily the issues surrounding digital connectivity. It is therefore timely for me to pay tribute to the work of the south of Scotland alliance, which has been awarded £5 million by the Scottish Government to start the procurement phase of its next-generation broadband project. Without doubt, access to next-generation broadband will help the south of Scotland to compete on a level playing field with the rest of Scotland and the wider world.

I commend the motion to Parliament. I very much hope that we can build support for the Government's plan throughout the chamber this afternoon, given its importance to creating and supporting sustainable economic growth and jobs throughout Scotland through a positive future of investment.

15:34

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** At first glance, the infrastructure investment plan, which was published last week, is a very worthy document. The principle of setting down long-term plans for investment in key infrastructure projects chimes with my political and economic philosophy. I firmly believe that, in a mixed economy, when the private sector is in decline and the country is experiencing recession, the state should step in and inject cash into the economy to create growth and jobs. There are many projects across the country that desperately need such investment, and we cannot afford to leave things to the failing market.

The role of any Opposition is to hold the Government to account and, by God, we most certainly have to do that with this plan, because the truth is that it is a pretty dodgy document. If we look behind the smoke and mirrors, we find that funding still has to be identified for more than 50 per cent of the projects that are in the pipeline. Some projects are so far into the future that Doctor Who would have difficulty locating them. It is hardly speculative to suggest that many of the projects are extremely unlikely ever to see the light of day.

Let us take high-speed rail, which was much trumpeted in Mr Neil's hard-hat, high-vis-vest press launch last week. According to the plan, although the project's capital value has yet to be identified and finance and delivery remain "To be defined", the timetable is apparently okay. So if someone books a ticket for the 8.45 to Manchester on 1 January 2033, it appears that they will arrive at their destination on time, because that is when the document says that the project will be finished. I think that "Thomas the Tank Engine" is more believable than that fairytale.

In short, the plan is low on detail but high on spin. It claims a headline figure of £60 billion of investment but, in reality, the capital value of the projects concerned is half that figure. In addition, the Government claims credit for maintenance investment that would have happened anyway. At Scottish Water, for example, investment was already being driven by the quality and standards process, 85 per cent of which is paid for by customer charges. Indeed, the Government has halved its loan funding to that organisation.

It is estimated that 156,000 people are on the social housing waiting list, and there is a need for around 10,000 new houses per annum to meet demand. As Lewis Macdonald said, this week six major housing organisations, including Shelter, the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians, and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, pointed out that

"Funding for affordable housing is proposed to be one of the biggest losers in the draft Scottish budget".

Will the cabinet secretary please be straight with us and acknowledge that they are correct in that assessment and that that budget has also been halved? When he winds up, will he commit himself to arguing in the Cabinet for any available new funds and the £57 million of Barnett consequential that are to be released as a result of the English council tax freeze to be invested in social housing? It is one of Scotland's most pressing issues.

What of the college sector? The plan promotes learning, skills and wellbeing and recognises that

"our people are our greatest asset, and that a skilled, educated and creative workforce is essential to creating a more ... resilient economy",

but how on earth can we do that when college budgets are being cut by 20 per cent? I grant that some capital investment is taking place, but new buildings are of little use without a broad range of courses and quality teaching going on inside them.

In my region, there are many local infrastructure projects that desperately need funding, but I cannot find any reference to them in the plan. Will the Avon gorge link between West Lothian and Falkirk be financed through the plan? The cabinet

secretary visited Armadale a few weeks ago to see the new station development, but the absence of a new school is holding back that project. Will that be funded through the plan? What of the motorway junction at Winchburgh? Will it be funded to allow the core development area there to proceed?

**Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** Does Mr Findlay agree that, if the UK Tory Government had not cut our capital budget by 32 per cent, it might be possible to do some of the projects that he rightly says are not being done?

**Neil Findlay:** I thank Mr MacKenzie, but assure him that I need no invitation to have a go at the Tories. All that I ask when any plan for capital spend is presented is that people be told the truth.

The preamble to the infrastructure plan states on page 4:

"As a result of"

the Government's

"actions we can now look back on a recession which was shorter and shallower than the rest of the UK."

That news will come as a surprise to the 204,000 Scots who are on the dole, with 25,000 added to the unemployment statistics since July alone. Scotland now has a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the UK. I ask the Government to stop the spin, stop presenting previous announcements as new projects and stop giving people false hope. That is what the infrastructure plan does.

I wanted to support the plan, but it has left me with a feeling that it is just a cynical ploy, another tactic and more spin on the road to the referendum.

15:40

**Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP):** The "Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011" is the third such plan to be published since 2005 and it identifies the need to accelerate investment to stimulate demand in the economy.

It is interesting to note that the foreword to the first infrastructure plan, which was published by what was then the Scottish Executive, stated:

"The background to this strategy was a perception that over the previous 30 years long-term investment has been neglected."

Shortly after being elected, the SNP Government produced the second investment plan in 2008, which was

"the largest and most ambitious programme of capital improvement proposed by the public sector in Scotland".

This is the third infrastructure plan, and it is published at a time when the Westminster

Government is slashing the capital expenditure budget by 32 per cent in real terms. Unfortunately, the Westminster cut comes exactly at a time when we should be investing in capital projects in order to support our construction industries and protect jobs. As the cabinet secretary states in the plan,

"It is estimated that each £100 million of public sector capital spending supports around £160 million of output and 1,400 full time equivalent jobs in the Scottish economy."

The current economic situation has also brought about some unintended benefits that should further persuade us that now is the right time to invest in our country's infrastructure. Interest rates are at an all-time low, which creates a favourable environment for funding the renewal of Scotland's infrastructure—although the Scottish Government cannot currently borrow, unlike local authorities. There are lower profit margins as companies face empty order books and so are bidding for work at a price that helps them to retain their core workforce. In addition, the Scottish Futures Trust has been recognised by Scotland's public bodies as having the expertise to help them achieve greater value for money in these difficult financial times.

I welcome the infrastructure plan, as it will bring benefits to my constituency of Edinburgh Pentlands through the building of the Wester Hailes healthy living centre, improved drinking water when the Glencorse treatment works is completed, new homes at Sighthill and Harvesters Way as part of the Government commitment to build 30,000 new affordable homes, next-generation broadband, the new Royal hospital for sick children, and improvements to the Edinburgh to Glasgow rail line.

Another major benefit to my constituency will be the jobs that are generated by this £60 billion plan, whether they are with a contractor or a company in the supply chain. Jobs will also be created as a result of the multiplier effect throughout the economy, as one person's spending becomes another's income. The final increase in output and employment will be far greater than the initial injection of capital expenditure, provided that we can prioritise the use of Scottish goods and services. As part of the Government's procurement policy, therefore, we must continue to promote opportunities for local employment, promote the use of the local supply chain where possible, and support the creation of skills and training opportunities.

If we are to achieve the long-term vision in the infrastructure plan and ensure our future economic growth, we must make full use of indigenous companies. Scottish companies will be able to meet growth targets and help fulfil our economic potential only when we have significantly

increased our skilled workforce. Therefore, the capital investment in universities and colleges—£704 million since 2008 and a further £364 million over the next three years in providing a range of educational facilities, including new colleges in Glasgow, Inverness and Kilmarnock—is welcome.

We need to continue to make use of community benefit clauses to support young people and to enable them to take advantage of modern apprenticeships in construction, as part of the 25,000 places provided each year. That will in time help to close the age gap that is developing in some of the construction-related trades and professions.

An issue that concerns my constituents is the lack of one-bedroom homes. By prioritising the building of those properties, we could allow retired people to remain in the communities where they have a support network of family and friends, while releasing a larger family home. In addition, there is demand from single homeless people for accommodation. Again as a result of a shortage of one-bedroom homes, they are often allocated larger properties that would be better utilised for families.

The infrastructure investment plan maps out a series of 50 specific projects and 30 infrastructure programmes across Scotland over the next 20 years, but it is partly dependent on the Westminster Government granting borrowing powers to Holyrood in the Scotland Bill. We can remove that obstacle with independence, and give Scotland the full range of economic powers to promote growth, employment and opportunities for all.

15:46

**Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** I welcome the cabinet secretary's speech and I welcome the debate, which is as necessary as it is timely. Implementing the planning and infrastructure programme over the long term will give everyone concerned time to reflect, to contribute to the discussions on opportunities and to consider the positive consequences. The political landscape is often viewed in the short term, with hasty decisions being made within a four-year term. Rarely, if ever, is a 20 to 30-year plan introduced.

Alex Johnstone said that the A9 had been made a priority ahead of roads linking Scotland and England. Well, folk in the north like to go to England as well; it is not one-way traffic.

I would like to reflect on a time when infrastructure investment re-energised people and reinvigorated the economy in the Highlands. That was when the Highlands and Islands was granted objective 1 status. European funding lifted the

region from the bottom of the league table for low income, low standards of living, little development and a diminishing population. The programme of development was agreed with the district councils, the regional council, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and other relevant agencies.

Unfortunately, Westminster set the appropriate areas for funding and, predictably, some of our priorities were changed as a result. The reasons for that were eventually revealed. They involved the disaster that was the private finance initiative—the Skye bridge will remain as an example of that in the memory of most highlanders for a very long time. It also cost the Scottish Parliament dear.

The objective 1 investment had a dramatic effect on the Highlands and Islands—in other words, it worked. The blue symbol with gold stars quickly became ubiquitous in the region. Over 10 years, single-track roads with grass growing down the middle became two-carriageway, tarmac roads, with bridges where necessary. Those roads created ease of access for school buses, hauliers, locals and tourists, 24 hours a day. Harbours were improved, some telecommunications were introduced, and many community developments became a reality. The area was opened up but, more than that, many parts and most sectors began to thrive. Objective 1 status offered connectivity, accessibility and inclusion. The growth in economic activity was reflected in better jobs and better pay. The aims of objective 1 were being met, and confidence started to grow. All that happened over a very long period of time.

I mention that because the Highlands and Islands councils and development agencies had and have better communications—and the case for investment was easier to make—with Brussels than with the Westminster Government, which was much harder to persuade of the needs of that part of Scotland.

In spite of the current economic situation, the Scottish Government's infrastructure plan, together with the regeneration strategy that was announced last week, can and will stimulate our communities to aspire to better things. I urge the Government to recognise, as part of the plan, the achievements that can be delivered at the hand of local community groups, be they charitable trusts or development trusts. I can recite a litany of remarkable achievements by such groups. They have acquired or created businesses, run ferries and crossings and rebuilt harbours; built community centres, swimming pools, nurseries and market gardens; and recycled furniture, made designer knitwear and designed golf courses. Such groups exist from Shetland to Lochaber and they need to be part of the overall infrastructure plan.

Last night, I had sight of a plan that several common grazings committees in the Western Isles have united around. The Point and Sandwick Development Trust in Lewis has been at work since 2005 and will soon make a £15 million investment in a renewables development that will be wholly owned by the community. The more common development of this kind is the alliance of a landowner and a corporate wind farm developer who will agree with the community the amount of community benefit, which is usually estimated to be £1.1 million over 25 years. However, by doing the development itself, the community in this case has attracted £15 million and expects to achieve £36 million over the period, which is quite a difference from the usual.

I hope that empowering such communities, whether urban or rural and in whichever part of Scotland they are, will be part of the plan. Taking the best examples of community ownership and sharing that capacity will contribute to the confidence that empowerment brings—nothing succeeds like success.

The future can be bright and what we have heard in the debate is about confidence and belief. I am sorry about the cannot-dos on the other benches. It would be good to hear some support for an ambitious programme of investment that is possible—everything is possible. Communities in Lewis show that it is possible and communities in the remotest parts of the most rural areas of Scotland are proving the impossible to be possible. We should get behind the infrastructure plan. Making Scotland better, recognising all its parts and making the investment that is needed for them to achieve their potential form the necessary blueprint for any infrastructure investment plan. I support the motion.

15:52

**Margaret McDougall (West Scotland) (Lab):**

The full infrastructure investment plan makes a very interesting read if members like fairy stories. Never-never land comes to mind, as there is very little that is new, timescales are vague or non-existent and more than half of the projects have no funding mechanism attached to them.

I welcome the commitments to funding for the Scottish Futures Trust to work with North Ayrshire Council and others on the development and delivery of their residual and food waste treatment projects, as well as the commitment for the North Ayrshire community hospital. However, no real timescale is placed on those.

There is talk in the document of a western subsea link between Hunterston and Deeside, but it is not confirmed and is only being considered—part of the dream experience.

I await with much anticipation the Scottish ministers' response to the application for a carbon capture storage plant at Hunterston, because the document reiterates that the Government is

“deeply disappointed with the UK Government's decision not to fund the CCS project at Longannet. This is an enormous lost opportunity for both Scotland and the UK to become World leaders in development and deployment of CCS technology.”

Having made that statement, will the Government respect the decision of North Ayrshire Council and the 20,000 people who petitioned against the project, including the local SNP MSP, and remove the Hunterston coal-fired project from the national planning framework? Clarification on the Government's policy on coal-fired power station plants would be appreciated.

Like my colleagues in North Ayrshire, I am relieved to see that the document acknowledges that urban regeneration companies

“play an important part in delivering the large-scale transformation of the areas in which they operate.”

Irvine Bay URC has played a major part in the regeneration of Ardrossan and Saltcoats and the UK Roses design award-winning regeneration of Kilwinning Main Street and its plans to regenerate Irvine town centre will provide not only an economic and aesthetic boost to the area but training places for local people. I welcome the announcement on 8 December that funding has been guaranteed until the end of 2014. I hope that the Government will fulfil that commitment and look to extend it back to the original 10-year commitment.

On the subject of commitments not being fulfilled, I refer the chamber to the 21 October edition of the *Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald* in which Kenneth Gibson commits the SNP Government to building the Dalry bypass in this session. I have read and reread the Government's plan and have seen no mention of any upgrades to the A737. The issue has been raised time and again, but no progress has been made. Did the local MSP just make it up? Is this road ever going to be upgraded? People in North Ayrshire desperately need an upgraded A737 that will give them a fast and safe route into Glasgow and beyond, opening up employment opportunities and increasing their life chances. I am willing to work with local MSPs, North Ayrshire Council and the Government to establish a definite timescale for the A737. The communities of North Ayrshire deserve to be given at least a date for when the work is programmed to start; after all, the issue has been on-going since the previous session and still there is no resolution in sight. Will it happen in this session, in the next session or not until after 2030?

I also looked in vain to see whether the Edinburgh and Glasgow airport rail links were mentioned. However, there is nothing—not a word—about them. We have lost an opportunity to put in place a vital economic link for those airports.

Although I welcome the developments for North Ayrshire that have been listed, I want to see dedicated funding and timescales. Many of these schemes have appeared in plans time and again, but they still have not materialised. Why should the chamber and the people of Scotland believe that this time will be any different? If this is a complete list of all future infrastructure investment projects, the people of North Ayrshire will be very disappointed to find that, despite Kenneth Gibson's commitment, there are still no plans to upgrade the A737, no timescale for such work and no funding allocated to it. I urge the Government to make some progress and at least set out a properly funded, realistic programme of when we can expect these projects to be implemented.

15:58

**Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** It is difficult to overstate the importance of the recently published "Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011", for which I commend the cabinet secretary. It is a plan that contains a vision of Scotland's future at a time when we have much need of vision; it is a plan that is ambitious when we have much need of ambition; and it is a plan that is aspirational when we have a need to be aspirational. Most of all, it is a plan for long-term economic recovery based on the sound principles of infrastructure investment. It will leave a lasting legacy for future generations as well as creating jobs and prosperity in the shorter term as we work through each and every project on this extended list.

It is a plan for economic success where the UK Government has no plan. It is pitiful to witness the UK Government's return to the dangerously naive grocer-shop economics of the Thatcherite era. The great English economist John Maynard Keynes first recognised the pivotal role of Governments in returning an economy to growth and at no time since the 1930s should those lessons have been heeded more closely than now. The UK Government's response to our economic difficulties seems to be inspired by the fiction of Charles Dickens. It is an amalgamation of Mr Micawber's belief that something will turn up and an austerity programme that is worthy of Scrooge. I can only hope that Messrs Cameron and Clegg are visited by ghosts this Christmas, because they seem not to be open to persuasion by anyone who is alive.

In contrast, the Scottish Government offers a plan and a message of hope. There is hope for our

beleaguered Scottish construction industry, which stands ready to help us to build our way towards economic recovery. There is hope for communities and businesses, which wrestle daily with inadequate infrastructure. There is hope for people without jobs and for people without homes.

As a member for the Highlands and Islands, I am pleased that the plan contains a commitment on improvements to the A82, not least by dealing with the long-standing bottleneck at the infamous Pulpit Rock. The A82 has been one of the principal routes to the north and the west for more than a generation, and the bottleneck has served to illustrate the poverty of our infrastructure and a poverty of aspiration on the part of every previous Government of the country. It has illustrated the poverty of ambition on the part of the previous Labour-led coalition, whose interest rarely extended beyond the central belt. Now, at last, we have a Government for all parts of Scotland.

**Jim Hume:** The member said that nothing happened under the Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition, but his colleague Jean Urquhart gave a long list of projects that were delivered in the Highlands and Islands. Will he address that point?

**Mike MacKenzie:** Jean Urquhart was referring to an era when the Highlands and Islands qualified for objective 1 status. I am sorry that, as a result of a serious miscalculation in the arithmetic by the Government of the day, the region no longer qualifies.

I welcome the Government's commitment to provide next-generation broadband for all parts of Scotland, especially rural areas. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the information highway is as important as tarmac roads. Indeed, more traffic on the internet might result in less traffic on the roads, which I hope is at least one area on which Mr Harvie—if he were here—and I would agree.

Scotland—and particularly the Highlands and Islands—is on the cusp of a revolution in renewable power, which will deliver prosperity after generations of decline. It is therefore correct that the Government prepare the way with investments that are designed to facilitate the revolution by strengthening and extending the grid. We cannot deliver prosperity unless we plan for prosperity.

Our planet is bathed in energy. Anyone who thinks that Scottish ingenuity cannot develop better and more successful ways of harnessing that energy is so laughably pessimistic that even Dickens would have trouble painting their caricature. Scottish innovation and ingenuity, not least in pioneering new mechanisms of investment, will ensure that we deliver on our commitment to build 30,000 new affordable homes during the parliamentary session. I was speaking

to some constituents the other day, who have just taken occupation of a new home under the shared equity scheme. They are delighted to have the opportunity to buy their first new home with the help of the Scottish Government.

We will deliver all the projects in the infrastructure investment programme for Scotland. That will sustain jobs and help to see us through the difficult times. We could deliver more if we had the full and proper powers that every member of the Parliament ought to aspire to have. We will deliver very much more and real prosperity when we free ourselves of our chains and shackles—like those of Marley's ghost—and the drag factor of successive economically illiterate United Kingdom Governments and embrace our future as an independent Scotland.

16:05

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** Last week's publication of the Government's infrastructure investment plan carried on the fine tradition of the previous Lib Dem-Labour coalition in Scotland, which published the first such plan. Back then, the intention was to help the construction industry and training partners to see the opportunities that were on offer and the likely timetable for significant infrastructure projects. I noted with interest the cabinet secretary's assertion in *The Press and Journal* last week that, if the borrowing powers that are being introduced through the Scotland Bill were increased from £2.2 billion to £5.6 billion, the Scottish Government could bring forward construction projects such as those for the A96 or the A9. The cabinet secretary's logic surely means that the increase in borrowing powers under the Scotland Bill will ensure that those projects and others will happen more quickly than currently proposed. I would be grateful if the cabinet secretary, in his summing-up speech, could confirm that he will throw his weight behind the Scotland Bill.

We should note the additional £433 million of capital that the UK Government announced in the autumn budget statement, which will assist the Scottish Government in accelerating some projects. One interesting feature of the infrastructure investment plan is the emphasis that is placed on the national transport strategy's three key strategic outcomes. One of those aims is to

"Improve journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on"

the potential for continued economic growth. That is entirely laudable and we committed to it in our manifesto. However, only a month ago, Transport Scotland published its consultation on the future of the rail franchise in Scotland and was forced to admit that a short-term franchise agreement is

being considered because of the constitutional uncertainty that Scotland faces.

There are two fundamental problems with such an ill-thought-out approach. First, no company in its right mind would bid for a franchise that is so short. Secondly, we can forget about investment in rolling stock, stations and improved communications by the franchise owner, when it might be handing over the baton just a few months later. When the three-year extension to the current franchise was announced in 2008, the then Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change said:

"It provides further incentive for the operator to continue to grow Scotland's railways".

The current situation can in no way be dressed up as being in the best interests of commuters.

**Helen Eadie (Cowdenbeath) (Lab):** Does Jim Hume agree that one of the very good projects on which the Labour and Liberal Democrat coalition embarked was an emphasis on intermodality of transport structures? That was one of the key drivers of the Edinburgh airport rail link scheme, on which the Parliament passed legislation. The only obstacle to the scheme was that the SNP did not put funding in place. The same applies to the Glasgow airport rail link project, which should also have proceeded.

**Jim Hume:** I certainly agree with Helen Eadie when she recognises the good work of the Lib Dem-Labour coalition.

The housing crisis is one of the biggest challenges that Scotland faces and it is only right that the Government should discuss housing in the plan. I welcomed the cabinet secretary's comments on Tuesday about the economic and social benefits of investment in affordable housing but, sadly, the investment plan does not contain anything that we did not already know. There will still be a cut of 30 per cent to the affordable housing budget in the next financial year.

As always, we want to work constructively with the Scottish Government to tackle the housing crisis. A consensus is surely desirable. However, the Government's plans will not make any inroads into waiting lists that contain hundreds of thousands of households. The Government must be honest with the Parliament. In an earlier intervention on the cabinet secretary, I asked a question but received no answer. There were originally to be 30,000 new social rented homes, but that has apparently been amended to 20,000. That is a deliberate muddling of the cabinet secretary's own words.

**Alex Neil:** I do not understand how 30,000 new homes will not make a major contribution to

reducing waiting lists in Scotland. That is an absurdity.

**Jim Hume:** The promise in the manifesto was 30,000 social rented homes.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Jim Hume:** No. I have taken two already.

Surely the cabinet secretary cannot ignore the letter that he received last week from six prominent housing organisations that are calling for greater investment in housing. The sector is crying out for it.

The key difference that distinguishes the Government's infrastructure investment plan from our earlier one is the threat of separation, which has thrown a cloud of uncertainty over not only the publication that we are debating today but Scottish society as a whole. The Government's plan covers capital projects up to 2030, but there is a glaring omission, because it does not discuss how a Scotland that was separate from the rest of the UK would take forward those projects. The Government anticipates independence within five years, so anything that is listed in the plan for beyond then must be taken with a sizeable pinch of salt.

Those questions were not invented by the Government's political opponents. They were also posed by the director of the Confederation of British Industry Scotland, Iain McMillan, just last month. He was not talking Scotland down when he posed the questions; he was merely articulating the concerns of the business community—the same community that the Government will expect to bid for the numerous contracts that will surely follow from the projects that are listed in its plan.

16:11

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate both as convener of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee and as MSP for a constituency in the north-east.

During the committee's deliberations on the budget, there was much debate about the benefit of infrastructure investment and whether it contributes to economic growth. Would economic growth continue if there was no investment in infrastructure? As usual, there were different views from different academics, but even they agreed that there might be a negative effect if there was no infrastructure investment.

That negative effect is a real threat in the north-east. Many oil and oil-related companies have located, relocated and grown up in the north-east, and as the North Sea oil industry grew, so did

they. For some of them, the North Sea is no longer their major area of work as they have gone global. It is no longer enough that the north-east is an excellent place to live. As those companies and others grow, move into renewables and continue to expand, they need infrastructure that is fit for their purposes. The same is true of food and drink companies. Infrastructure is important if those companies are to continue to provide much of the growth and wealth of the whole of Scotland.

That is why the delay to the start of the Aberdeen western peripheral route is not helping economic growth in the north-east. Although the case is now again in the courts, we must believe that early 2012 will bring an end to this sorry saga and ensure that legislation is in place so that this legacy of the previous Labour and Lib Dem Administration can never happen again.

I welcome the cabinet secretary's commitments to dual the A96 and improve the rail links between Aberdeen and Inverness.

**Lewis Macdonald:** I am curious to understand the member's reference to a legacy of the previous Labour and Liberal Democrat Government. Does she accept that the main source of difficulty for the Aberdeen western peripheral route has been the inquiry process that was followed by the SNP Government when Stewart Stevenson was the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change?

**Maureen Watt:** I cannot believe that you just said that, Mr Macdonald. The main reason for the situation that we are in with the AWPR is that, under your watch and that of the Liberal Democrats, you changed the route.

As I said, I welcome the commitment to improve the connectivity between Aberdeen and Inverness as that will stimulate economic growth in the whole of the north-east. It will help to transport vital whisky exports on their journeys to China and elsewhere. We have seen massive growth in those exports and the dualling of the A96 and the A9 will certainly help the whisky companies.

The Government in the previous session delivered on hospitals, schools, new trains, affordable homes and energy efficiency in homes. The infrastructure investment plan, the regeneration strategies and the other plans that have been announced recently will continue that work despite the severest budget cuts for decades.

Mr Macdonald mentioned the evidence-taking session that the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee conducted this week. If he had been listening more closely, he might have heard Brendan Dick welcoming the fact that the Scottish Government has a Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment—the only

post of its kind in any Administration in the UK. He said that it was an excellent post to have created.

It is not only the projects that have been set out, but the means of financing them in times of dwindling public finance. Thank goodness that this Government has ditched the expensive private finance initiative/public-private partnership model, which the other parties in this Parliament wholeheartedly embraced, mortgaging this and future generations in order to pour much more money than was necessary into the pockets of the private sector. Before Labour Party members complain about the lack of money for schools and hospitals, they should ask themselves how much of the revenue budgets are committed to paying back PFI/PPP loans before other choices on spend are made.

**Lewis Macdonald:** Will the member give way?

**Maureen Watt:** I have taken an intervention from the member already, and it was not a very good one.

**Neil Findlay:** Will the member take an intervention from me?

**Maureen Watt:** The NPD model for projects such as the AWPR, which is being bundled with the Balmedie to Tippetty project in order to achieve economies of scale, represents much better value for money for the taxpayer.

**Neil Findlay:** Come on.

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Mr Findlay, I do not think that the member is taking your intervention.

**Maureen Watt:** The SFT has played a significant role in getting more infrastructure for the money that is available, and more and more local authorities, health boards, colleges and universities are using their knowledge of and support for innovative financing methods to facilitate collaborative procurement and asset management across the public sector.

Along with his colleagues in the Liberal Democrats, Alex Johnstone wants to set Scottish Water on the route to inevitable privatisation. Why on earth, when some parts of the country that is our nearest neighbour are experiencing severe droughts and water is becoming an extremely precious resource, would we sell it off to the private sector? The union dividend has seen anyone but our Scottish citizens benefit from our assets.

I am happy that the Government has prioritised the connectivity of our cities, with work to promote connectivity through road and rail and through broadband, which, as Mike MacKenzie said, will help small and rural businesses to grow. We will have more schools and better hospitals and

colleges. Instead of wringing our hands and adopting the woe-is-me attitude of the Opposition parties, the cabinet secretary and his minister are going out to find new sources of funding, such as joint European support for sustainable investment in city areas—JESSICA—funds, European structural funds, loan funds and hubs. No wonder support for the SNP continues to grow. The electorate can see that the SNP Government has ambition for Scotland, even though the bah-humbug Opposition cannot.

16:18

**Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab):** The unemployment statistics that were released yesterday demonstrate the seriousness of the economic situation facing Scotland, particularly for young people out of work. In that context, the case for capital investment to kick-start economic recovery is undeniable. Regrettably, however, the infrastructure investment plan spends a lot of time providing what is essentially a progress report on projects that were announced in 2008, and the rest of its focus is a list of aspirations for the future. Admirable as those ambitions might be, without clear plans for how they will be funded, they will remain aspirations only.

Over the course of the next year and the remainder of the session, the Government will need to provide in-depth details of how future projects will be funded. It is disappointing that much of the detail of the plan focuses on projects that are already in the pipeline, which have been announced before. Little confidence about the finance arrangements for some of those projects is inspired by phrases such as

“Specific additional delivery models will be developed”

And “To be decided”. If the minister would like to decide quickly how he intends to fund those projects, I am sure that members across the chamber would be happy to see him back in the Parliament to supply us with the substantial detail that is missing from the plan.

I hope that those vital measures, which are needed to stimulate the Scottish economy, will not be subject to extensive delay. It would be a damaging mistake if the Scottish Government chose to delay decisions on how to deliver on the commitments that it has made, especially while thousands of Scots are on the dole and eager for the work that infrastructure projects would provide. “To be decided” is not a good enough answer from the Government on how it will fund the plans. It would have been more responsible if the Government had looked to what it could do now to bring forward investment in order to create the jobs that the economy is crying out for. More than half of the projects that are listed have no clear



funding mechanism attached. Of those that do, the RAB and non-profit-distributing mechanisms will require significant private sector investment. Given the economic climate, it is uncertain whether that will be forthcoming.

The Government needs to provide more detail on the level of next-generation broadband service that it intends to guarantee across the country. Indeed, the infrastructure investment plan acknowledges that

“the level of coverage expected in Scotland to 2020 is not yet fully understood”.

The definition of next-generation broadband in use by the Government needs to be clarified. Does the Government guarantee equal speeds of 30, 40 or 50 megabits per second throughout Scotland? Is the provision of a universal level of service guaranteed, or can different parts of the country expect varying speeds? Constituents of mine in large, densely populated areas of Cumbernauld do not have access to current-generation broadband and they are looking for assurances that they will not miss out on next-generation coverage.

Investment of £68.8 million from the UK and £25.5 million from the European Union should go some way to meeting the universal coverage target. It is clear that significant levels of funding will also need to come from the private sector, but there is no estimate of exactly what level of private sector investment will be necessary to achieve the target of access for all in Scotland. The funding for this parliamentary session amounts to £143.5 million. That includes the UK and EU money, which makes up the majority of the funding that is available for delivering next-generation broadband. However, the report identifies the cost of rolling next-generation broadband out across Scotland as being at least several hundred million pounds. The vagueness around how the Government intends to close that funding gap and what role private sector investment will have must be addressed.

Many of the projects that have been unveiled, such as the dualling of the A9, the replacement crossing over the Forth, the reduction of Glasgow to Edinburgh journey times, the Southern general hospital project, more energy-efficient homes and the expansion of digital broadband, are projects from the previous plan simply reannounced. Proposals for a new health centre for Kilsyth, which is in the area that I represent, were also included in the 2008 infrastructure investment plan; they were included again in the 2011 plan as a community project whose delivery is being explored through the Scottish Government's hub initiative. A more concrete commitment to delivering those facilities is required. There are several instances in the 2008 and 2011 plans in

which the Scottish Government has been slow in bringing forward schemes or identifying how they will be funded. Given the cuts to local health services in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth, the Government should make a firm commitment to deliver modern facilities rather than simply including them in a wish list of projects that will be passed over into the next plan.

Scotland needs the Government to kick-start economic recovery, not reannounce the projects that it began to look into nearly four years ago. The Government must be clear about how it will bring about the private sector investment that is needed to make the plan viable. I hope that the minister will return in the new year with the detail on how the Government will fund the projects into the 2020s, which is lacking in the report.

16:23

**Paul Wheelhouse (South Scotland) (SNP):** I will declare interests in respect of some of the subjects that I shall discuss. I have been co-opted on to a newly formed Eyemouth initiative for the regeneration of the town, I am a newly joined member of the Campaign for Borders Rail and, as I have previously declared in my register of interests, I am a member of Rail Action Group East of Scotland.

I thank the cabinet secretary and the Minister for Housing and Transport, Keith Brown, for their continued and robust support for the Borders rail project in the face of a 32 per cent cut in Scotland's capital departmental expenditure limit budget. That project is programmed to be delivered in time for the tourist season in 2015, and it will be hugely beneficial for the central Borders region. If bus connectivity to the stations is enhanced, as is planned, it will also benefit residents in a wider catchment, including the A7 corridor to Hawick. I know that the decision to move the project across to be delivered by Network Rail using the Network Rail regulatory asset base has been warmly welcomed by Campaign for Borders Rail volunteers and local government leaders in the Borders and Midlothian.

That has further increased confidence that the project will be delivered within the budget of £235 million to £295 million, and that it will deliver the desired economic benefits to the region and to Scotland.

Those who carp from the sidelines, and there are some, should recognise that the project is the largest single investment in living memory in the infrastructure of the Scottish Borders, and that if the vision of those of us who want the railway to be reopened to Hawick—and ideally, to Carlisle—is ever to be realised, building the route to Tweedbank is an essential first step. It could

thereafter connect—perhaps at Carlisle—with the high-speed rail link that the Scottish Government proposes in its infrastructure investment plan.

Although I recognise current constraints on funding, I fully intend to do the preliminary work to ensure that such an extension is ready and waiting in the wings if capital should ever become available. That would obviously be optimised if we were free of the UK financial straitjacket. Such a project would be transformative for towns such as Newtown St Boswells and Hawick, to name but two.

Returning to those who carp from the sidelines, I come to John Lamont, who was here earlier to intervene in the cabinet secretary's speech, but who I see has disappeared. On 7 October, in the *Hawick News*, he compared the project to the Edinburgh trams, and claimed that

"Hawick taxpayers must not be left to pick up the tab for a Galashiels railway."

With great respect, that is a clear misrepresentation of the funding model. Mr Lamont, and other members in the chamber, may wish to note that he is rapidly getting a reputation as being guilty of—to quote the CBR; Claudia Beamish also heard this at its annual general meeting—

"riding two horses at the same time".

On the one hand, we are given ill-informed diatribes about the project. John Lamont claimed to pupils from Berwickshire high school on these very premises that the delivery of the project was taking money away from schools in the Borders, the A1, the A68, the A7 and much else. That is, to be frank, misleading nonsense, and he should know that, but sometimes I question whether he does. I assure members in the chamber that the pupils are wiser to that now.

On the other hand, the pity for Mr Lamont is that his own party leader has expressed verbal support for the project to Campaign for Borders Rail office-bearers, as was reported at the AGM. It is clear that the Tory leader does not believe her party whip, and quite rightly so.

I am delighted that the Scottish Government is showing the ambition that is distinctly lacking from the UK Government, which proposes only half-hearted attempts to extend high-speed rail north of the midlands. Meanwhile, the UK Government is prepared to find billions for the two-week-long Olympic games and the London cross-rail projects.

I have read of the criticism from some members—and heard today in the chamber from others—that the infrastructure investment plan does not include small-scale projects at a local level. I, too, regard those as vital, but it is clear

that there been a misunderstanding of the plan's remit. It specifically does not cover projects of less than £20 million in value, as is stated on page 5, and there is a clear intent to refresh the strategic transport projects review in early 2012.

With smaller projects in mind, I thank the transport minister, Keith Brown, who has shown a keen interest in meeting with RAGES members and local MSPs to discuss proposals for the reintroduction of local services on the east coast main line to Berwick, with investment in new stations at Reston in Berwickshire and East Linton in East Lothian. I look forward to welcoming him on his visit to meet the community and council representatives at both sites, and I encourage him to visit the town of Eyemouth to gain a full understanding of the potential of such a modest investment to regenerate the town and the surrounding communities.

Of course, while the cost of a capital project is relatively immovable, the extent to which the project can deliver the desired outcomes is perhaps more variable. Those outcomes include enabling the switch from cars to rail and low-carbon transport. I therefore draw the attention of the cabinet secretary and the minister to the concept of community rail partnerships. In a recent presentation to the Campaign for Borders Rail AGM, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships—which currently does not cover Scotland, although it is keen to do so—highlighted the impact of such partnerships on securing increased patronage for routes. In some cases, they can boost passenger numbers on a route by as much as 25 per cent, through a modest investment of approximately £30,000 per annum, which is the cost of employing a local rail development officer for a route. They typically do what the rail operators fail to do, which is to identify, scope and market to new market segments, and exploit those opportunities. In the case of Borders rail, that could include charter traffic and tourist traffic to Abbotsford.

That would be hugely beneficial to the likely success of rail projects such as those in the Borders and I commend such mechanisms to the ministers to ensure that the economic impact of rail projects is maximised. I support the Government motion and welcome the infrastructure investment plan.

16:30

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** I was perhaps a bit unkind to say in last week's economy debate that the infrastructure investment plan was the longest wish list in history, but I was certainly right to say that it needed to be costed and, most of all, that it needed to be prioritised. I think that I was also

right, last week, to be sceptical about how that list could be funded within the 5 per cent revenue rule. I hope that the cabinet secretary will cover that in his winding-up speech. The plan is oblivious to that rule, yet the Scottish Government tells us:

"We will cap our future revenue commitments related to capital investment to a maximum of 5% of our expected future annual DEL budget. These revenue commitments will include existing PFI commitments we have inherited, future debt repayments once we have borrowing powers, and payments made under both the Non-Profit Distributing model and Network Rail's Regulatory Asset Base."

A study by the Centre for Public Policy for Regions, written by Jo Armstrong and John McLaren and published today, analyses the future revenue consequences of the plan in some detail. It is the most interesting commentary that I have yet read on the plan. Basically the authors say that by 2014 the Scottish Government would be quite near that 5 per cent cap and, therefore, it is not clear where future payments would come from.

**Alex Neil:** I thank the member for giving way. I caution him against using the CPPR figures, because at first glance it looks to us as though they have made a substantial arithmetical mistake.

**Malcolm Chisholm:** Obviously that needs to be looked into, but the principle stands. When I read the plan last week I thought intuitively that there was something wrong, because it seemed to be completely inconsistent with the 5 per cent rule. No doubt people will do more number crunching on that.

Politics is always about choices, more so than ever in hard economic times. I believe that the infrastructure investment plan must be prioritised against the key criteria of economic growth, social justice and climate change objectives. Prioritisation must also be based on evidence and Maureen Watt referred to very interesting evidence that we received in the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee. I cannot deal with all the issues, but I have taken a particular interest in broadband and in transport because we have been covering those issues over the past few weeks.

It seems clear that there is definite evidence—some of it was given to us yesterday—about the benefits of doubling broadband speeds. We were told yesterday that a study of 33 countries by the OECD says that such a doubling would lead to a 0.3 per cent upgrade in gross domestic product and further evidence was given from a study that indicated increased productivity from such additional speeds.

That confirmed, perhaps, what we expected, but more surprising was the evidence from transport professors. Members should read the *Official Report* of the committee's 5 October meeting. I will read a couple of quotations, because they are very

interesting. The first is from Professor Tom Rye of Edinburgh Napier University:

"It is extremely difficult to find empirical evidence that investment in transport infrastructure—especially large-scale transport infrastructure—grows the overall economy. You can find a lot of evidence that investing in specific pieces of transport infrastructure will move economic activity around it, but trying to find evidence that it will grow the economy overall is really difficult."—[*Official Report, Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee*, 5 October 2011; c 166.]

I can see that time will not allow me to read the other quotations, but Professor Iain Docherty said something similar and referred to the work of Professor David Banister of the University of Oxford. I realise that that is controversial, but we need to question whether the infrastructure investment plan should allocate 39 per cent of the supposedly available capital to transport, in particular to road building, given that that is contrary to our climate change imperatives. I am particularly disappointed that there is no detail whatsoever in the plan about low-carbon transport investments such as active travel, which is so important for climate change as well as health improvement and other objectives.

I have said repeatedly in several debates in the past few weeks that I believe that the top priority for capital investment in the immediate future should be housing, including a retrofit programme to improve the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes. The cabinet secretary talked a good game by referring to 4,000 extra social rented houses a year, setting aside the fact that he promised 6,000 earlier in the year. The fact of the matter is that the experts say that he will struggle to achieve that objective, even though he has changed the counting method to counting completions rather than starts. He will struggle to reach 4,000, but of course that number of houses in itself will not enable us to achieve the homelessness commitment that we have to achieve by the end of next year.

If we go for increased housing investment, certainly in the next year or two—there is obviously capital yet to be allocated—it will tick the employment box, the economic growth box, the social justice box, the climate change box and the 2012 homelessness commitment box. Last week we heard that the City of Edinburgh Council cannot meet its 2012 homelessness commitment because of the shortage of affordable rented housing in Edinburgh. That must be the immediate imperative for infrastructure expenditure.

I hope that the cabinet secretary will start speaking the language of priorities. I am sure that in his youth he quoted Nye Bevan:

"the language of priorities is the religion of socialism."

16:36

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I will start by saying something that I hope will please Jean Urquhart: I welcome the Scottish Government's infrastructure investment programme. It is indeed an ambitious programme, as Lewis Macdonald fairly said. It might not amount to £60 billion when we do all the sums, but nevertheless there are a large number of projects in it. If they are all delivered, they will make an important difference to people in Scotland.

Of course, that welcome has to be qualified, because it is very easy to make promises far into the future. In our amendment, we identify that most of the projects that are being proposed will not even start until after 2016, by which time we will have had another election.

I particularly welcome the promise on the dualling of the A9 from Perth to Inverness. As the minister knows, there has been a long-term campaign to have that done, which I have been very happy to support on two grounds: first because of the very serious accident rate on the A9—it has the highest fatality rate of any road in Scotland—and secondly because creating a dual carriageway would increase vastly the economic opportunity for both Perth and Kinross and the Highlands.

I am proud of the record of the previous Conservative Government, which, according to a parliamentary answer obtained from Mr Neil's colleagues, spent £600 million on the A9 in today's prices in its period of office, compared with £60 million spent by the SNP since 2007, so there is a lot of catching up to be done. However, I welcome the fact that the 2007 manifesto pledge from the SNP is now to be fulfilled. We are told that we will see work start in 2017—we look forward to receiving the details of that early in the new year, according to what the minister said to me earlier this afternoon. We look forward to the work being completed by 2025.

We know that another important dualling is to take place: the dualling of the A96 from Aberdeen to Inverness, which, again, is very welcome, and which is to be completed by 2030. According to my calculations, by that time my good friend Mr Neil will be in his 80th year. I have no wish to be negative about the potential longevity of Mr Neil's career, but I fear that by 2030 he might no longer be with us. Indeed, I see it now: he will be happy in his retirement. He and Isabella will be sitting of an afternoon with slippers on, feet up, watching "Countdown", having long since cast off the shackles of ministerial office, which some younger person has taken over. My point is that it is easy to make promises that he will not be around to have to fulfil.

Of course, all this comes from the people who promised us not so long ago that we would have class sizes of no more than 18 by 2011, and that has not happened either. So, whether it is a wish list or a letter to Santa Claus, time will tell. We welcome what is being proposed, but we will welcome it more whole-heartedly when it is delivered.

Before I leave the subject of the A9, I want to agree with a point that Dave Thompson made earlier about two-plus-one lanes. I have always questioned the logic of creating two-plus-one lanes on the A9. If it really is the Government's intention to move quickly with dualling, money would be better spent on creating not those additional lanes but a full dual carriageway.

The other key issue is funding. The cabinet secretary has today set out a menu of options—capital borrowing, non-profit-distribution, regulatory asset base, tax increment financing, national housing trust, JESSICA, loan funds and European structural funds. That is a cornucopia of methods to pay for the infrastructure investment plan. There are two key points in all this. First, virtually all the methods that I mentioned involve borrowing money. Not so long ago, I heard SNP members railing against long-term borrowing and telling us that we were mortgaging our children's future. Of course, we will be doing that in spades under this infrastructure programme.

Secondly, the money that we will be borrowing will be overwhelmingly private funds. We are told that that borrowing will be done through the non-profit-distributing model. As Alex Johnstone pointed out, that is a misnomer. Whether those who are lending the money are the banks or the sovereign funds from Qatar that the First Minister is so fond of, they will not give us money if they get no return. They will expect to make a profit. The model will be not a non-profit model, but a with-profit model. We should stop calling it the NPD model and start calling it the with-profit-distributing model.

When I quizzed Audit Scotland a few months ago at the Public Audit Committee, it accepted that the non-profit-distributing model was a type of private finance. Members such as Maureen Watt, who rail against private finance, should have the honesty to admit that, if the programme is to proceed, that will happen only because it is funded with private finance.

That is an important point, because private finance has to be borrowed and when we borrow money, the interest rate at which we borrow becomes absolutely crucial. We are fortunate at the moment because interest rates are low. The union dividend has delivered low interest rates in this country compared with what is being paid across the euro zone. Even Germany, at times, is

paying higher interest rates than we are. Let us never forget that it is SNP policy to join the euro, see interest rates rise, and see future generations paying even more for the programme than the £60 billion that is being claimed today. Thank goodness that we have David Cameron representing us in Europe and not the First Minister. He is protecting our AAA rating and ensuring that we can borrow money much more cheaply than would be the case if we were independent and part of the euro.

I want to mention one other thing in passing. Jim Hume made a fair point. I liked the unlikely sight of the cabinet secretary being savaged by Jim Hume on the issue of housing for social rent. The Government promised 30,000 social rented homes, and that promise is not being delivered. That is another broken promise.

If the plan is to be not merely a wish list, it needs more detail. We look forward to that. Our modest amendment calls for that and I am sure that if the minister is serious, he will have no difficulty in accepting it.

16:43

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):**

I, too, welcome publication of the infrastructure investment plan. We need a plan for long-term capital spending. However, as many other members have said, I am disappointed that the plan appears to be just a wish list or never-never land, as Margaret McDougall said. Half the projects have no funding mechanism. The costs are sketchy and vary between hundreds of millions of pounds for individual projects, and it is difficult to see how they can be budgeted for. Where funding mechanisms are in place, there is very little detail about how they will work. We do not have borrowing powers at the moment.

The non-profit-distribution model—or for-profit-but-capped-profit-distribution model, which, as Murdo Fraser said, might be more accurate—was proposed for the Borders rail link. It was unsuccessful, so it is untested and we do not know how it will work. Can we be sure that the projects that have been earmarked for such funding and the projects that have not been earmarked for anything and so might come under that model will be delivered?

We also have tax increment financing, which has been piloted. However, my understanding is that we would need legislation to roll that out, so which projects are earmarked for that funding? What will happen to them if the legislation is not rolled out and the pilot throws up problems?

**Alex Neil:** The pilot projects do not require legislation. If we were to roll out a longer-term programme, that would require legislation.

**Rhoda Grant:** Indeed; that is my point. To roll out TIF further than the pilot projects, we need legislation. When is that legislation coming forward and which projects will be affected by it? We need some clarity on that.

EU funding was mentioned. It is unclear what EU funding we will get post-2014. Jean Urquhart mentioned the impact that objective 1 funding had on the Highlands and Islands. I agree with what she said. I was puzzled that Mike MacKenzie implied that EU funding had nothing to do with the Government. Will the cabinet secretary give credit to someone other than the Scottish Government if we secure some for EU funding in the future?

**Mike MacKenzie:** Does the member acknowledge that the Highlands and Islands lost objective 1 status, when it should not have done, because of arithmetical errors in calculating GDP per capita and that that was the responsibility of the Labour Government at the time?

**Rhoda Grant:** That is wholly untrue. We lost objective 1 status because of enlargement of the EU. The Labour Government successfully secured transitional funding, from which we are still benefiting. Let us hope that we are so lucky in the future.

Malcolm Chisholm mentioned the 5 per cent rule. We need some clarity on that, including how it affects all the funding mechanisms and how it will affect investment.

We wonder whether the infrastructure plan will be delivered. Alex Neil said in his opening speech that all the projects in the current infrastructure plan will be delivered but a number of projects that were included in the 2008 infrastructure plan have since been dropped. For example, as Margaret McDougall mentioned, GARL is not happening, and nor are the trams to Leith.

Today's plan includes a number of repeats and delays. The 2008 plan said that the Aberdeen western peripheral route would be completed by 2013 but there is now no completion date. Is that another delay? A great many delayed projects, such as the A9 and the Southern general hospital, are repeated in the plan and rolled out as something new.

The plan talks about broadband, which, as Aileen McLeod said, is extremely important, especially to rural areas. However, I do not have Aileen McLeod's confidence that next-generation broadband will be delivered to everybody by 2020. Other members, including Mark Griffin, asked about the speeds of next-generation broadband. We need some clarity. My understanding is that next-generation broadband provides high speeds. If that is going to be rolled out everywhere, it should be available to people who do not currently

have broadband as well as to those who enjoy reasonable speeds.

To do that, we must map the fibre that is available throughout Scotland and we must do it now. I am aware of fibre being provided by state funding in pathfinder projects, and that fibre will be installed on the Beaulieu to Denny line. We need to have a public map of where the fibre is to ensure that we utilise what is available and do not build fibre on top of fibre, wasting public money. We should make the best use of public money to roll out next-generation broadband to other areas. That is hugely important.

Many members talked about the important issue of housing. Neil Findlay was right to say that it was the biggest budget loser. The promise of 6,000 social rented houses a year has been scrapped and we will get affordable housing instead. It is debatable whether mid-market rent qualifies as affordable housing—to my mind, it does not.

Malcolm Chisholm talked about retrofits. Retrofits are extremely important not only because they create jobs and cut down our emissions, but because they tackle fuel poverty. Retrofitting could lift huge numbers of people out of fuel poverty and make a real difference.

We need to think about rural housing and how that is funded. Housing funding is now competitive, and rural housing associations cannot compete with their urban neighbours. That means that some of them will not build any houses next year. We need to ensure that that does not happen, because we need new houses in rural areas as well as in urban areas.

Many members have mentioned transport. As I said, the A9 is in the plan, albeit that it is a retread, but roads such as the A737, which Margaret McDougall mentioned, the A83 and the A95 are not even on the wish list. Will they be improved in any way between now and 2030? Mike MacKenzie mentioned the A82 and the work at Pulpit Rock, which the plan says will be done post-2017, if funding is available. That is written in the document, and I would like the cabinet secretary to confirm that when he winds up, because I was certain that that funding had already been allocated.

**The Presiding Officer:** The member needs to start winding up.

**Rhoda Grant:** I will conclude. A number of issues have been missing from the debate. For example, there has been no mention of what is to happen with the consequential from the autumn statement. If the letter about revenue to capital transfer was, indeed, sent to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee prior to the debate, why was it not made public and placed at the back

of the chamber so that we could talk about it in the debate?

The SNP Government has no shame about dropping plans. It dropped GARL and it dropped trams to Leith. We are not sure whether it will maintain the infrastructure investment plan. We hope that it will, and we hope that it will fair better this time.

16:51

**Alex Neil:** I say to my Labour colleagues that I have never met such a depressing crew in all my life. If it had been left to them, we would not be talking about the dualling of the A9. They never made any commitment to the dualling of the A9, to the Forth replacement crossing or to the A96, and they did not want the Scottish Futures Trust or an NPD programme. If Labour had still been in office, they would just have accepted the Labour-Tory-Liberal cuts and would have offered nothing to fill the black hole that is being left by those cuts. We, on the other hand, are filling the black hole through the SFT and the NPD programme.

**Helen Eadie:** Mr Neil, I am absolutely certain that you did not mean to say that the Labour Party did not make a commitment to the Forth replacement crossing. We did so clearly. What I need to learn from you is whether you believe in the intermodality of transport, a new Edinburgh airport rail link and the Glasgow airport rail link.

**Alex Neil:** To be fair to Helen Eadie, she has supported the new Forth bridge. I remember that she went even further in the first session of Parliament, when she wanted to completely dismantle and rebuild the Forth rail bridge. That would have been a highly ambitious programme.

Contrary to the reaction of the Labour Party and the other Opposition parties, our programme has been widely—

**Members:** Wildly.

**Alex Neil:** It has been welcomed with wild enthusiasm by the business community. Let us look at some of the quotations. My good friend Iain McMillan from the Confederation of British Industry Scotland is fully supportive of Government policy. He said:

“Many of the capital projects identified in the Infrastructure Investment Plan, particularly those relating to transport such as the dualling of the A9, the A96 and M8 and the Edinburgh-Glasgow rail improvements, are ones CBI Scotland has called for and their inclusion is very positive and will be widely applauded by business.”

However, they will not be widely applauded by the party that claims to represent business.

**Alex Johnstone:** Did the minister point out to Iain McMillan that it would be his members who would be paying for them?

**Alex Neil:** We are talking about an investment programme that will have a high return to CBI members and to everyone who lives in Scotland from the point of view of jobs and economic growth.

The Tories' position seems to be incredible. They are arguing for the dualling of the A9 and, to be fair, they welcomed the dualling of the A96. We have also had John Lamont, who—we were told in his absence—is being accused of riding two horses at once in the Borders. That is a gross underestimate of the number of horses that Mr Lamont tries to ride in the Borders. He wants us to do more on the A1. We also heard calls for more investment in the A95, more houses to be built and more ports—more everything. They say that and then they tell us not to borrow a penny.

The fact of life is that, if the Tories looked at the plan in detail, they would see that the bulk is funded through capital grant and not borrowing. There is an element of borrowing, but if we had control over our own purse strings the amount of borrowing would be substantially less and the amount of investment would be substantially more.

Let me go on to some of the other people who have welcomed the programme.

**Jim Hume:** Will the minister give way?

**Alex Neil:** Of course, Mr Hume.

**Jim Hume:** Thank you, Mr Neil. I shall not savage you any further regarding socially rented houses today, although I shall maybe come back to that tomorrow.

You were going on about welcoming more borrowing powers. As I asked in my speech today, will you now back the Scotland Bill, which would give more borrowing powers to the Parliament?

**The Presiding Officer:** I remind members in the chamber not to refer to "You".

**Alex Neil:** To be fair, Presiding Officer, Jim Hume is a farmer and maybe "Ewe" is a common term that he uses. I just wanted to ram that home. *[Laughter.]*

Let me continue with my quotations until 5 o'clock. Liz Cameron, who is the chief executive of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, said:

"The Scottish Government has set out a clear central purpose to increase Scotland's sustainable economic growth rate and this can only be achieved through attaching a high priority to infrastructure investment.

This review of the infrastructure investment plan was an essential response to the changing economic climate and we welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to a long term plan to improve Scotland's transportation links and built environment."

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** Will the minister give way?

**Alex Neil:** Of course, Miss Beamish. I am delighted to do so.

**Claudia Beamish:** Ms Beamish. Thank you, cabinet secretary.

Will the cabinet secretary answer for us the point that was raised by Malcolm Chisholm about the "total lack of detail"—in the words of Friends of the Earth—on the low-carbon economy in the Government's plans?

**Alex Neil:** That is no problem. The plan is totally consistent with the UK Government's plan that by 2050 we should all be driving about in electric cars. Electric cars are like cars that are powered by the internal combustion engine in that they need roads. The pollution is caused not by the road but by the internal combustion engine, which is not in the road but in the car. If we meet Chris Huhne's ambitious plan for us all to be driving in electric cars, we will be sure to have the road network to deliver on that promise.

We have heard some other interesting points about the cost of the plan. Let me tell members this: if we did not have to pay out nearly £700 million a year in private finance initiative annual payments, we would have a lot more money to invest without borrowing at all.

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

**Lewis Macdonald:** Will the minister give way?

**Alex Neil:** They are queuing up.

Presiding Officer, the voting has finished for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party in Scotland. Therefore, it cannot be influenced anymore, so it is only fair to give Mr Neil Findlay the opportunity.

**The Presiding Officer:** It may be fair to you, cabinet secretary, but you have no time. You are winding up.

**Members:** Aw!

**Alex Neil:** Thank you, Presiding Officer. It could be said that the whole thing has been a bit of a wind-up this afternoon.

I finish by commending to the Parliament my motion and the plan as a way forward for Scotland.

## Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S4M-01581, on committee membership.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that—

Mark McDonald be appointed to replace Derek Mackay as a member of the Finance Committee; and

Colin Keir be appointed to replace Mark McDonald as a member of the Public Audit Committee.—[*Bruce Crawford.*]

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

## Decision Time

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** There are six questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, in relation to the debate on the infrastructure investment plan, if the amendment in the name of Lewis Macdonald is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Alex Johnstone falls.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-01585.1, in the name of Jackie Baillie, which seeks to amend motion S4M-01585, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the integration of health and social care, be agreed to.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-01585, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the integration of health and social care, as amended, be agreed to.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

That the Parliament recognises the improvements achieved in terms of adult health and social care services since it was established; further recognises, particularly with regard to the needs of Scotland's older people, that the integration of services needs to be improved to deliver better health and social care services; notes that the cornerstone of reform should be nationally agreed outcomes and that these reforms will be judged by the delivery of specific goals, such as reducing the number of delayed discharges, which directly impact on the health and care experience of older citizens; notes that services should be characterised by strong and committed clinical and care professional leadership; notes that NHS boards and local authorities will work together to produce integrated budgets that will bring to an end the cost-shunting between the NHS and local authorities that currently occurs; notes that the Scottish Government will continue to work with partners in the NHS, local government, the third and independent sectors and professional bodies to take these reforms forward, and welcomes the Scottish Government's acceptance of the need for legislative underpinning following the conclusions of the Expert Group on Future Options for Social Care established by Scottish Labour.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-01584.3, in the name of Lewis Macdonald, which seeks to amend motion S4M-01584, in the name of Alex Neil, on the infrastructure investment plan, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)



Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

#### Against

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)

Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

#### Abstentions

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 38, Against 64, Abstentions 17.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-01584.2, in the name of Alex Johnstone, which seeks to amend motion S4M-01584, in the name of Alex Neil, on the infrastructure investment plan, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)

Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)  
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

#### Against

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)

Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 53, Against 66, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-01584, in the name of Alex Neil, on the infrastructure investment plan, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)

Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

#### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)

Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

#### Abstentions

Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 64, Against 51, Abstentions 3.

#### *Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament notes the importance of infrastructure investment to delivering sustainable economic growth, managing the transition to a low-carbon economy, supporting delivery of efficient and high quality public services and supporting employment and opportunity across Scotland; notes the significant investment underway in a wide range of projects to deliver new schools, hospitals, houses, roads, water infrastructure, community facilities and improved availability of high-speed broadband across Scotland; supports the long-term commitment to continue and build on these investments; supports the Scottish Government's use of a broad range of funding methods for investment to help offset the 32% real-terms cut to Scotland's capital budget inflicted by the UK Government, and welcomes the publication of the Scottish Government's *Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011*, setting out the Scottish Government's intentions through to 2030.

**Paul Wheelhouse (South Scotland) (SNP):**  
 On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My console

has still not cleared and my votes are not being recorded.

**The Presiding Officer:** We could suspend for a couple of minutes to check whether your vote has been recorded, but it would not make any difference to the outcome of the vote. We will therefore continue.

The next question is, that motion S4M-01581, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on committee membership, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that—

Mark McDonald be appointed to replace Derek Mackay as a member of the Finance Committee; and

Colin Keir be appointed to replace Mark McDonald as a member of the Public Audit Committee.

## University of Glasgow

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-01223, in the name of Sandra White, on the University of Glasgow being ranked first in the United Kingdom. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament warmly congratulates the University of Glasgow on ranking first in the United Kingdom for international student satisfaction in a recent survey of international students in which it considers there are a number of stand-out points for the university, which, once again, has performed very well against other UK institutions; notes that this survey is the largest of its kind, with over 65 international universities, 44 UK institutions and six Scottish institutions, canvassing international students' views on the teaching, services and overall experience of their chosen university; welcomes the fact that Glasgow has ranked first in the whole survey for social activities, as well as having both the best online library and the best sports facilities in the UK; notes that international students also report an impressive 94% satisfaction with the university's expert lecturers and 91% of final year students are satisfied with their learning experience, and considers that international students have a vital and beneficial role in Scottish educational institutions and society.

17:06

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** I have just noticed that the number of the motion is 1223. I think that I have a record in the Parliament because in each of the past two to three weeks I have secured a members' business debate. I am grateful to the business team for giving me the opportunity. I think that this is the third motion that I have had debated in the same number of weeks.

To be ranked number 1 in any shape or form is always of great satisfaction, but to be ranked number 1 in the UK by students from around the world is a truly great result. Indeed, when it comes to numbers, the University of Glasgow, in my Kelvin constituency, is hard to beat. It is the fourth-oldest university, having been established in 1451, and is currently ranked among the top 100 in the world.

The University of Glasgow is also a member of Universitas 21, which is an international network of universities that was established as an international reference point and resource for strategic thinking on issues of global significance. The vision of Universitas 21 is indeed an ambitious one as it seeks to be the leading international network of research-intensive universities, working together to foster global citizenship and institutional innovation through research-inspired teaching and learning, student mobility, connecting students and staff and advocating internationalisation.

It is only fitting that the University of Glasgow should be a member of such a forward-looking and influential group, because the university was at the forefront of social change in the past as a major centre of the Scottish enlightenment in the 18th century and a pioneer in the 19th century in extending education to those outwith the upper classes. Not only should we be proud of that tradition, we should not lose sight of it and should ensure that it is at the core of not just the University of Glasgow's values but those of other universities as they strive to grow in the 21st century.

Being part of the Universitas 21 group gives the university worldwide reach and appeal, as evidenced by the results of the international student barometer. Indeed, 96 per cent of international students agree that Glasgow is a good place to be, which is something that I, as someone who comes from Glasgow, could not agree with more. The university was also voted as having the number 1 online library in the UK and the number 1 sports facility. The University of Glasgow is also a member of the Russell group, which is a collaboration of 20 UK universities, of which 18 are in the top 20 in terms of research funding. In addition, in the international student barometer the university was voted as having the best learning experience in the group and was ranked first in terms of quality of lectures.

Taking all those figures together, we see that the University of Glasgow is number 1 in the United Kingdom and third across the globe. That is something of which we should be proud—and something which, of course, brings clear economic benefit not only to the city of Glasgow but to the whole of Scotland and the UK.

Such success not only brings economic benefit but adds to Glasgow's diversity and cultural richness. The west end of the city has always been viewed as a diverse area, playing host to events such as the west end festival—which, with 600 events, is Glasgow's largest—and the largest mardi gras outside London. Byres Road was shortlisted as a finalist in the greatest street in Britain awards—and I am sure that we will win that award next year. That success is partly due to the role that students and, indeed, international students play in making the area so vibrant, so rich and so cosmopolitan and we must do everything we can to ensure that it remains so.

I now wish to raise a few issues to which I hope the minister will respond in summing up. Although I believe that the future of Glasgow's—and indeed Scotland's—universities remains bright, I am concerned about the actions of the UK Border Agency and the effect of its changes to tier 4 visas on international students and, in turn, Scottish universities' hard-won reputation as centres of

excellence. It has been estimated that the placing of restrictions on foreign students could be costing universities £1 billion in fee income alone. To make matters worse, the UKBA, which advises the Home Office on how to impose the restrictions and cap such immigration, is itself deeply critical of the figures on which it relies, estimating that net immigration is probably more like half the figure stated in the international passenger survey. We need to look at that issue because those ill-thought-out and ultimately erroneous plans are harming Scottish universities' ability to attract and retain international students and Scotland's economy, and I ask the minister to address that issue in summing up.

Higher education in Scotland is worth £1.9 billion, employs 35,000 people and exports more than £400 million-worth of services. It is, therefore, one of Scotland's biggest service sector exporters. People do not realise that fact; we talk about universities as places of excellence and learning, which they are, but we should also be proud of the fact that they are one of our biggest service sector exporters—and exporters of knowledge, at that.

Given their rich history and contribution to Scottish society throughout the centuries, Scottish universities must be protected and enhanced to ensure that they continue to deliver for Scotland and help to shape future learning throughout the world. That is what Scotland—and the University of Glasgow in particular—is renowned for and I am very pleased to have secured this debate in Parliament.

17:13

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** I am grateful to be called in the debate and congratulate not only Sandra White on securing it but the Presiding Officer on having the wisdom to choose Ms White again. First of all, Presiding Officer, I must apologise to you, Sandra White, other members and particularly the minister because, depending on the length of the debate, I might not be able to stay to the end due to a prior engagement in my region.

Sandra White will be aware that I, too, lodged a motion to mark the University of Glasgow's achievement in being ranked first in the UK in a survey of international student satisfaction. As a former postgraduate student at the university, I know well that it offers excellent teaching, research facilities and student support and I congratulate the principal, Professor Muscatelli, and all those at the university for the hard work that no doubt preceded this recognition.

I must also recognise the achievements of Glasgow Caledonian University, which has achieved the overall ranking three times in the

past and might have expected to keep the crown. In fact, this year it was ranked first by postgraduate students for managing research, learning support and accommodation services. In this debate secured by Sandra White, we pay tribute not only to Glasgow's universities but to all Scotland's universities for their work in ensuring that Scotland maintains and improves its position as a first-class destination for higher education.

Of course, international students are an important source of revenue for our universities, particularly in postgraduate courses and especially at a time when institutions are seeking to balance their budgets in straitened financial circumstances. However, in acknowledging that economic factor, we should also be clear in our aspiration to make the student experience, student learning and student support the best they can be for international students as well as our own and rest-of-UK students.

Sandra White's motion highlights that 94 per cent of international students who studied at Glasgow said that they were satisfied with their expert lecturers and 91 per cent of final-year students expressed satisfaction with their learning experience. The motion that I lodged notes that 96 per cent of students agreed that Glasgow is a good place to be, as Sandra White said—I am sure that she and I are in complete agreement with that sentiment, particularly on a Thursday evening, when we are both keen to return to the best city in Scotland.

The University of Glasgow currently has about 4,500 international students. It is estimated that, on average, each one contributes some £10,000 to the city's economy. Glasgow gives a warm welcome to all who choose to visit or stay in the city, and I want to express the value that we place on international students as part of Glasgow's unique cosmopolitan mix. Many international students choose to stay in Glasgow or the UK, but we thank even those whose stay with us is short for everything that they add to our diversity as a city and for the role that they play in our community and our politics.

I pay particular tribute to the academic and other staff at the university for achieving the accolade that we are celebrating at a time that I am sure the university management would acknowledge has been difficult for the whole of the university community. I welcome the senior management's recent acknowledgement that their reform plans went too far, too quickly, as *The Herald* reported recently. The staff have maintained the quality of education and student experience in what has often been a turbulent time.

17:16

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** I am a graduate of the University of Glasgow, so it is tempting to use the debate for a bit of self-indulgent comment about the best days of my life, when I rubbed shoulders with such luminaries as Wendy Alexander and Fiona Hyslop, who were my contemporaries. However, that is all ancient history; I want to talk about the university today.

I endorse everything that has been said about the university's activities in the west end of Glasgow, where I still live, and about its magnificent Gothic sandstone buildings, but I want to talk about some equally magnificent sandstone buildings elsewhere in Scotland, which also belong to the university. The Crichton campus, in Dumfries, is set in 85 acres of parkland, with views over the Solway Firth. Its beautiful setting belies a somewhat turbulent academic history in recent years. In 2007, it was threatened with closure but was saved by a £1.5 million grant from the Scottish National Party Government, through the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council.

Earlier this year, the campus appeared to be under threat again, when the university authorities decided to end the liberal arts programme at the campus when the current crop of students have completed their degrees. There was fear among members of all parties in the Parliament that the decision threatened the long-term future of the Crichton campus. I am pleased that the reassurance that the university authorities gave us has been borne out and that their intention to reorganise courses in Dumfries to secure the campus's future appears to be bearing fruit. In particular, the university has been extremely successful in attracting international students.

I will talk a little about what international students can expect when they come to study at the Crichton campus in Dumfries. Two thirds of the postgraduate taught degrees have international students, who come from Malawi, India, Azerbaijan, Taiwan, Kazakhstan and China, as well as the European Union. Dumfries campus has a long tradition of welcoming students on the Erasmus exchange programme, particularly from Spain and Germany.

Why do those students come to that corner of Scotland? There is the great outdoors and the easy access to the Galloway hills, the southern uplands and the English Lake District. The scenery is important, but it is the outdoor activities that are particularly attractive to young people. We have the Seven Stanes, which is a series of world-class mountain biking centres, which are operated by Forestry Commission Scotland. There are 400km of trails for cyclists of all abilities. The long

coastline offers great opportunities for water sports, such as kayaking, sailing and canoeing.

Of course, it is the quality of the education that is on offer at the Crichton campus, as much as it is the environment, that draws students from across the world. There is an emphasis on environmental studies. The Crichton carbon centre conducts research into carbon management and offers the UK's first MSc in the subject, which is a 12-month full-time and 24-month part-time course. It is an ideal part of the world to study that subject. Extensive fieldwork is undertaken along with environmental charities that work in the area. Graduates of the course come out with the tools to tackle greenhouse gas emissions, which can be applied in work throughout the world. That underlines Scotland's reputation in the area.

As well as environmental studies, the interdisciplinary school at the Crichton campus offers health and social studies. There is an excellent primary teaching course over four years that attracts students from throughout Europe and a heritage and tourism course, which is particularly appropriate in that part of the world, which is the home of Burns and Robert the Bruce. Students can mix all those courses together in an interdisciplinary degree, which is in line with the thinking on cross-curriculum education.

I congratulate the University of Glasgow and the Government on ensuring the future of the Crichton campus. The campus contributes £311 million to the Dumfries and Galloway economy, so that is money well spent. I look forward to the future for the Crichton campus in Dumfries.

17:21

**Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con):** I, too, congratulate Sandra White on securing the debate. I start with the terrible admission that I am not a graduate of the University of Glasgow. Unfortunately, I did my degree 40 miles away in Edinburgh although, as a redeeming feature, I did half of a masters at Glasgow before politics got in the way. I did development studies with a focus on international development of the poorest countries in the world, so a high proportion of my classmates were international students. Joan McAlpine might be interested to hear that several of our lectures were conducted on two sites and by videolink between the Crichton campus and the west end campus in Glasgow. I therefore recognise that the university's reach goes beyond Glasgow's city boundaries. However, I will talk about the contribution that the university makes to Glasgow.

As a resident of the west end, I know that the 4,500 foreign students from 130 countries who come to the city are a huge bonus to the life of not

only Byres Road but the greater west end. Although those students might not be Scottish when they arrive, they are most certainly Glaswegian by the time they leave, because Glasgow is a city with which it is easy to fall in love. Those students bring a lot to the life of the city. Glasgow used to revel in the title of the second city of the empire. In the post-colonial age, although we might not use such outdated and outmoded terms, we can say that Glasgow truly is a global gathering of people. Institutions such as the University of Glasgow, the University of Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian University are some of the great draws that bring people from throughout the world to Glasgow.

It is worth talking about the contribution that the University of Glasgow has made to the life of Scotland down the ages. Alumni of the university, including Adam Smith, James Watt, Lord Kelvin and John Logie Baird, used their ideas, discoveries and inventions to change not just Scotland, but the world. In the political context, people such as John Smith, Donald Dewar and Charles Kennedy came out of that famous institution. I would have liked to have seen a few more Conservatives, but I believe that the university holds the distinction of having the largest number of graduates in the Scottish Parliament. The university has a Conservative association that I must big up at this point. It is one of the oldest such associations in the country and is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year. It was founded in 1836 and continues to go from strength to strength.

The 4,500 people who come to Glasgow would not come if they did not get a good educational experience. Sandra White and Drew Smith took us through the figures on the success that the university has had in many areas. That success comes from not just teaching quality, although that is imperative, but the quality of social life, extracurricular activities and research. Those figures do Anton Muscatelli and his team great credit.

Drew Smith has drawn our attention to Glasgow Caledonian University's proud record in the survey, and we have noted the University of Glasgow's success this year. I hope that that will foster greater competition among all Scotland's universities, including my alma mater in Edinburgh, and encourage them to step up to the plate and offer students from every country in the world the best possible experience when they come to Scotland.

17:25

**Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP):** I, too, congratulate my colleague Sandra White on securing tonight's debate. Too often, we hear

doom-and-gloom stories about further and higher education, so it is pleasing to have a good-news story to tell, and the survey is certainly one of those.

When I was at the University of Glasgow—yes, they let the locals into the student bar—one of the things that I particularly enjoyed was the great mix of people and the vibrant atmosphere, which is brought to the whole community, as Ruth Davidson said. As someone who lives in Glasgow, close to the uni, I can say that it is great to see so many different people coming together, and it helps to make Glasgow a great place to be. That is why I am not too surprised that the international student barometer found that 96 per cent of international students found Scotland is a good place to be. That is a testament to the friendly, outgoing nature of people in Glasgow and the warm welcome that they give people who visit the city, and it is something that we should be proud of. It is also a testament to the fantastic work that is done by the staff of the University of Glasgow—and indeed all our universities—to encourage and attract international students to Glasgow and to Scotland.

We must also give credit to the Scottish Government for the support that it gives universities to bring foreign students here. Its strategic investment fund is an excellent example of what a joined-up approach can deliver for Scotland. Through enhancing Scotland's profile in key international markets, increasing college and university engagement in international education, supporting postgraduate employment of international students and improving the experience of such students while they are here, the fund aims to build on the excellent international reputation that our further and higher education sectors have built up, in order to make them even more successful.

The projects that the fund supports include a campaign to promote higher education in India and China, and the students without borders initiative of the National Union of Students, which aims to integrate international students and encourage outward mobility of Scottish students. To my mind, the students without borders initiative has been a great success. Much of the information that has been gathered on the issues that international students face has been included in the core work of the NUS, and staff and student officers have received training and advice on those issues.

Another key piece of work of the students without borders initiative was its response to the UK Border Agency's immigration proposals. It gathered a large amount of evidence and case studies on the points-based immigration system in Scotland and the implications of the changes for

international students and Scottish institutions. Unfortunately, as Sandra White pointed out, much of that hard work is under threat from the changes to student visas that are being implemented under the short-sighted and xenophobic approach of the Westminster Government, which is once again applying a knee-jerk reaction to pacify its baying back benchers.

As always with the UK Government, it is managing to act in an incompetent and ill-thought-out way. I hope that our minister will tell us the direction that the Scottish Government is taking in order to alleviate some of the problems. I, for one, do not want to be a part of that situation. I want international students to come to this country and bring the great range of benefits that they have shown they can bring; in return, Scotland has a great deal to offer them.

I would go so far as to say that, if Scotland is to continue to be regarded as one of the best places in the world in which to study, and if it is to have the freedom to promote itself internationally and grow successfully, it needs powers over immigration to ensure that we have access to fresh talent. That can only benefit the whole of Scotland.

17:29

**The Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages (Dr Alasdair Allan):** As an alumnus of the University of Glasgow, I am delighted to add my congratulations to the university today. I also congratulate Sandra White on securing the debate, which has given us a chance to celebrate the achievements of one of the world's oldest seats of learning—and, it would now seem, one of the world's most popular, too.

Biased as I am in these matters, as a Glasgow graduate, I am happy to wax lyrical about the University of Glasgow and what an appealing place it is for any prospective student, and it seems that I am far from alone in that. To be number 1 in the UK for international student satisfaction is an accolade to be proud of. Indeed, it is but one more thing to add to the university's many achievements since its foundation in 1451, which range from fostering the talents of seven Nobel laureates and being the home of Scotland's first women graduates to ensuring the recovery of the stone of destiny in 1950.

Ms White mentioned the egalitarian and international traditions of the university. The ability to react to the needs of international students is, as others have mentioned, a key component of a successful university. It is encouraging to note that an impressive 96 per cent of the university's international students agree that Glasgow is a good place to be.



In the interests of fairness—and speaking as someone who also enjoyed going to the University of Aberdeen—I am pleased also to agree with Mr Smith that it is not only Glasgow that has excelled in the recent i-graduate survey. All the institutions that took part in Scotland performed exceptionally well against institutions in the rest of the UK and other international comparators. Scotland scored above the UK and international averages on features such as campus environment, social and sports facilities, employability, visa advice, living costs and earning money.

As Joan McAlpine pointed out, Glasgow's campus is not restricted to the city of Glasgow but includes places such as the Crichton campus as well. However, as Ruth Davidson reminded us, the impact of the university is primarily felt in the city. As Bill Kidd mentioned, that impact is an entirely positive one and there is no easily visible divide between town and gown.

Part of the university's evident appeal to students is its world-class academic reputation, with a research base that includes pioneering work in the fields of medicine, engineering, ethics, physics and astronomy, as well as emerging disciplines such as bioelectronics, cell signalling and nanotechnology.

As the minister with responsibility for science, I am pleased to say that the Scottish Government will continue to maintain Scotland's world-leading position in scientific as well as other fields of research and will take steps to maximise the contribution that that makes to economic growth.

The Scottish Government is investing record levels of funding in our universities. The spending review settlement increases our investment by £327 million over the next three years, which represents real-terms increases of more than 5 per cent in each year.

It is worth highlighting that Glasgow has recently announced a number of international strategic partnerships with some of the top universities in the world. For example, the school of culture and creative arts at the University of Glasgow has entered an agreement with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC and George Mason University in Virginia, and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning was present at the recent signing of an agreement between Glasgow and the University of Calcutta.

Those international links underline the fact that there are more than 40,000 international students from more than 180 countries studying in Scotland. It is no surprise that international students have been identified as key contributors to the Scottish economy and to the academic, cultural and social experience at our universities and colleges.

With regard to the points that Ms White and Mr Kidd raised about the UK Border Agency, the Scottish Government has raised those issues regularly with the UK Government on behalf of universities and colleges that have been in touch with us to express their frustration with aspects of current immigration policy.

I concur with the view that international students are an enormous benefit to Scotland. It is more than unfortunate that UK policy in this area has been at odds, in many cases, with the ambitions of universities. The impact of the attitude of the UK Government—both real and perceived—and the new rules around immigration in this area were raised with Mr Russell when he visited India recently. The Scottish Government is providing funding of up to £100,000 to enhance the welcome facilities for international students. That indicates our very positive attitude towards them.

As members know, we are in the process of reforming our post-16 programme to create a more sustainable approach to funding post-16 education. We believe that that will create better life chances for all our young people. However, although we have to consider what happens in Scotland, we also have to consider Scotland's place in the world and the impact that that has on our education system. We all have to engage internationally, and we must continue to review our aspirations and targets to ensure that they are relevant and reflect what is best for Scotland. I believe that education is at the heart of what we do and is the key to future economic success for Scotland.

The University of Glasgow clearly understands all that and continues to be one of Scotland's greatest cultural assets. Like other members, I wish it every success for the future. If the opinions of its students are anything to judge by, being a student there is, above all, as much fun as it ever was. I celebrate that.

*Gaudeamus igitur, iuvenes dum sumus!*

*Meeting closed at 17:36.*



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