



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 22 February 2012

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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 22 February 2012

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

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. I am glad to see that you are all nice and relaxed, and refreshed. The first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader is the Right Rev David Arnott, who is the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The Right Rev David Arnott (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland): One of the privileges of being moderator is that I get to travel quite a bit. In my year in office, not only have I travelled around large swathes of Scotland and the United Kingdom, but I have visited places such as Ukraine, Gaza and, recently, Afghanistan. If those are not holiday destinations that trip off the tongue, they are nonetheless areas of our world that have much to teach us.

We heard how, for example, in Beregszász, in Ukraine, the local church centre of the Hungarian Reformed Church produced 47,000 meals for the poor last year. We listened to the director of the hospital in Gaza tell of her difficulties because of the irregular supply of drugs for cancer patients, and about the regular power outages that force people to light their homes with candles and to cook on kerosene stoves; when we were taken to the burns unit and saw the young children there, we saw the unfortunate impact of that.

Recently, I saw at first hand the courage of our young men and women in Camp Bastion who are fighting to make Afghanistan a safer and better place to live. What links all those people in each of those places is a spirit of humility about what they are doing.

I have long regarded it as being one of the roles of the Church of Scotland to set the tone for the community. In the spirit of service and duty, which are integral to our Christian faith, in the welcoming of the stranger with generous hospitality, and in the desire for social justice coupled with love and forgiveness, the church is a key player in setting the tone for our communities. It is a duty that we exercise with humility. Please do not jump to conclusions—I am not suggesting that we become like Uriah Heep. The biblical definition of humility is the act of reaching down to bring other people up. That is what Jesus did—he reached down to bring other people up. To act with humility is to

want to get the very best for other people. That is what the church exists for.

I do not think that it is a quantum leap to suggest therefore to our Scottish Parliament that humility ought to be one of the hallmarks here. To reach down to bring people up and to seek to get the very best for every citizen of Scotland, irrespective of class, colour or creed, is a worthy and honourable task.

I stand before you as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, very much aware that the stories of our church and our country are inextricably linked. We cannot understand who we are as a nation without understanding the role that the church has played in it. However, times move on and we now live in a different Scotland; certainly, it is different from the one that I was brought up in as a boy, which is to be welcomed. I acknowledge all the different faiths and denominations and the work that they do, especially when they act with humility in working to ensure that people are the best that they can be, so that our communities benefit. As this nation of ours seeks to find its identity, I venture to suggest that part of that identity is to be found in a humble attitude—in reaching down to bring people up, so that they can be the best that they can be. It is my hope that that, as much as anything else, will help to shape the political thinking here

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Question Time

14:34

Zero Waste Policy (Monitoring)

1. Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body how it will monitor the progress of its policy on zero waste. (S4O-00690)

Linda Fabiani (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body): In straight terms, we will monitor progress by measuring the quantity of waste and recycling that is produced. The member will be interested to know that approximately 70 per cent of the building's waste is recycled or composted and that we have agreed to be a pilot organisation in Zero Waste Scotland's zero waste zone initiative.

Annabelle Ewing: I welcome the taking up of the zero waste zone initiative and I am pleased that it is being rolled out across the building, but I am not quite sure whether we are all there yet. Will further initiatives be considered to promote zero waste best practice among members and in the Parliament's procurement policies?

Linda Fabiani: I hope that agreeing to be a pilot organisation in Zero Waste Scotland's initiative means that such issues will come forward, because we all have individual and collective responsibility on zero waste. I hope that I can offer some comfort on that.

A really important point has been raised about procurement policies. I undertake to investigate that further.

Parliament Garden (Apple Trees)

2. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body whether it will review the varieties of apple trees in the Parliament garden to ensure that they cross-pollinate. (S4O-00692)

Linda Fabiani (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body): In the past couple of days, I have learned more about apples than I thought I would ever know in my entire life. Rob Gibson is right to raise the matter, because it seems that the apple trees in the garden are Malus Bramley's seedling, which are not self-pollinating, so there may well be an issue.

We will review the situation in the early autumn. I am told that there was an apple—singular—once, which caused great excitement for a certain Robin Harper, whom we all miss. However, it was a

rogue apple. We should certainly look at the issue further and we will do so in the autumn.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): How very sustainable. I call Dennis Robertson to ask question 3—[*Interruption.*] I beg your pardon; I was getting carried away. I call Rob Gibson.

Rob Gibson: I suspect that a horticulturally challenged landscape gardener planted only the Bramley's seedling variety without the two other necessary varieties to ensure cross-pollination. I seek the corporate body's assurance that there will be appropriate planting of varieties that will help the trees to bear fruit.

Linda Fabiani: We are at the core of the issue now. We have looked at the question, and I understand that there are two compatible varieties—the Scottish James Grieve and the Scotch Bridget apple trees—which will be considered.

Some corporate body members have also suggested having a beehive in the garden to assist in pollination. We might consider that.

Parliamentary Complex (Accessibility)

3. Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body when it last carried out an accessibility audit of the parliamentary complex and what issues this highlighted. (S4O-00728)

David Stewart (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body): The corporate body undertakes regular auditing of the building's accessibility, which helps to determine areas of the building where further action or investigation may be required. That is incorporated into an accessibility action plan, which parliamentary officials monitor regularly.

The latest audit, which was carried out in October 2011, involved a group of blind and visually impaired people who represented the Royal Blind school, Guide Dogs Scotland and the Edinburgh access panel. They audited various parts of the building and made a number of suggestions to improve the building's accessibility, including more visual aids in the public cafe and a tactile surface on the stairs up to the chamber, and increased lighting levels in the stairwell that leads up to the chamber gallery. The outcomes of that audit are being considered as part of the on-going review of the building's accessibility requirements.

Dennis Robertson: The doors in the Parliament are extremely heavy. Are the doors to the MSP block entirely necessary? People with either muscular or arthritic conditions find them extremely difficult to use, because they are so heavy. Further, why do we have pull handles on all the doors when, quite often, they must be pushed?

Would it not be more sensible to have a push plate on one side rather than a pull handle?

David Stewart: The doors to the MSP block are obviously necessary for security reasons. They are used to secure the members area and allow for only authorised access to that part of the building. They are also fire doors, which are central to the fire safety procedures in the building.

However, I appreciate Dennis Robertson's concerns about the doors being extremely heavy, and how that might affect various users of the building. At this stage, we have no plans to do any work on the doors. However, we are exploring what options are available to address the member's particular concerns. In doing so we must, of course, take account of any practical and financial considerations, including budget availability and security requirements, before any firm commitments can be made to alter the doors.

Mr Robertson also raises an important point about replacing the pull handles with push plates. I understand that having door handles on both sides can make it difficult or confusing for someone to establish whether the doors open inwards or outwards. I will, therefore, raise the issue with the corporate body. I am also happy to update the member on the outcome of any further investigations on the matters that he raises.

Parliament Information Technology System

4. John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body whether it considers the Parliament's IT system to be fit for purpose. (S4O-00693)

David Stewart (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body): The Parliament relies heavily on information technology in order to function efficiently and effectively. The corporate body is aware of the crucial role of the parliamentary IT system in supporting the business of the Parliament in Holyrood, in the regional and constituency offices and, of course, through remote working.

Like all organisations, we keep our IT systems under review to ensure that the service that we provide best meets the needs of members, attains value for money, and takes advantage of proven, contemporary technologies.

John Lamont: Many members are increasingly frustrated by the inadequacies of the IT system that is offered by the Scottish Parliament in the Parliament campus, in our constituency offices and when we are working from home—or trying to do so. From my perspective, there are concerns around the capacity of our e-mail system, the ability to file electronically and the ability to manage cases effectively.

Given the increasing volume of e-mail correspondence that members are receiving, will the corporate body examine e-mail systems that are used by other bodies and groups to ascertain whether there is a better system that we could and should be using?

David Stewart: The key point is that the SPCB is here to serve members, not the other way round. I will undertake to ensure that the member's concerns are raised with IT specialists.

I want to flag up a couple of points in which members might be interested. The first is that the new year saw a new contract for voice and data communication suppliers. We are now with Virgin Media—a change that represents a saving of £70,000 a year to the corporate body. The other point, which is, perhaps, of more importance to members, is that that gives us increased capacity—two links, rather than one—improves resilience and gives us a greater ability to have high-speed broadband. That is important for our offices in the constituencies and regions. I know, from talking to members from across the political divide, that that is a key point.

I will certainly ensure that we listen to members more efficiently. It is important that management walks the walk and that it talks to members regularly. On a wider matter, I know that there will be a review of the issue of tablet devices and other projects later this year.

Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD): I cannot overstate the importance of a reliable IT network for MSPs in carrying out their role. There is no doubt that we have faced significant disruption over the past six months, which has caused down time in local offices and Parliament. I hope that the steps that have been taken recently have made the system more robust, although I think that I am not alone in feeling that IT staff have a poor grasp of how local offices work and of the needs of the people who work in them.

What progress has there been on the review of change-management processes to ensure that the inherent risks of change in the IT service are managed appropriately?

David Stewart: I thank the member for contacting me at the end of last year with a list of complaints about the IT system. I am grateful for her courtesy.

I stress that the key point is that the corporate body is here to serve members, and it is important that the officials whom we employ consult and listen to staff. From talking to officials earlier today, I know that consultation is taking place as we speak, and the officials will take on board the points that the member has raised.

I also stress the key point that the new contract gives us new capacity and new resilience. I think that members will notice a big difference in broadband speed and accessibility to remote offices.

James Kelly (Rutherglen) (Lab): I am glad that John Lamont has raised the issue, as it is important to consider concerns about the IT system.

Mr Stewart said that the system is kept under review by the Parliament. Will the Parliament consider a benchmarking exercise against similar systems in industry in order to ensure that its IT system is fit for purpose and that it serves members as well as people in the private and public sectors are served?

David Stewart: The member makes an excellent point, which I undertake to raise at the corporate body's next meeting.

Catering Contract (Renewal)

5. Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body when the contract for the provision of catering services to the Parliament will next be up for renewal. (S4O-00695)

Linda Fabiani (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body): The catering services contract is due for renewal on 1 August 2015, but there are options involving three times one-year extensions, which would be considered at that time, subject to the demonstration of acceptable performance. That could take the contract renewal date up to 1 August 2018.

Siobhan McMahon: Will the SPCB assure me that, when the catering contract comes up—sooner rather than later, I hope—and is being renegotiated, staff numbers will not be reduced and that consideration will be given to paying the lowest-paid staff the living wage rate in order to ensure that they are on a level with other parliamentary staff?

Linda Fabiani: I understand that there is general concern across the chamber about the living wage, and I know that my colleague on the corporate body, Dave Stewart MSP, and my colleague in the Scottish National Party, John Wilson MSP, have often raised the issue.

For information, more than half the catering staff are already paid above the living wage of £7.20 an hour, and the staff who are currently paid below it are within 4 per cent of the £7.20 rate. I will request that, in the future, the SPCB will cost the living-wage option prior to the award of any new catering contract.

As I said, there is a review for the years at the end of the contract, but there is currently a yearly

review of the cost of the wages. There will be a good opportunity to ask for the issue to be raised at the next review, which I undertake to do.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): In addition to the living wage, is it possible that the next catering contract might specify that the company involved should not be using tax havens or other business structures that are designed to facilitate tax avoidance?

Linda Fabiani: Mr Harvie has form on that matter, of course—if members will excuse the expression. He has expressed such concerns over many years, and there is general concern in the chamber about that and about how successive Westminster Governments have allowed such things to happen. I hope that we will continue to make our concerns in that regard known to the Westminster Government.

School Visits (Travel Funding)

6. John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body what plans are in place to provide funding or other travel assistance to schools from deprived areas that cannot afford to visit the Parliament. (S4O-00691)

Mary Scanlon (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body): The SPCB currently has no plans to provide funding or other assistance. The corporate body considered a proposal for a scheme in 2009-10, including an analysis of the other schemes that are available—in the Westminster Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales, for example. It was felt that the current education service is effective and efficient and that, in the financial climate, the budget that is available would be best spent on continuing that provision, which is accessible to all Scottish schools.

John Mason: Does the member accept that Westminster targets schools that do not visit? Will the SPCB at least look at that and study from which areas schools are not coming? Perhaps we could consider future assistance. In my constituency, the reality is that parents in better-off areas raise the money and kids can go to places, but that does not happen in poorer areas.

Mary Scanlon: I thank the member for raising that excellent point, which fortunately was covered in the briefing paper. Officials do monitor uptake by region and constituency and have undertaken initiatives to promote visits in areas that are underrepresented. Regular contact is made with all schools in Scotland to advise them of opportunities to arrange visits or to take part in major events.

The cost of the inreach and outreach programmes is currently £233,000. In 2010-11, the

service reached 12,000 young people through inward visits to the Parliament and a further 10,000 pupils took part in the outreach programmes.

Parliamentary Information (Foreign Languages)

7. Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body what provision there is for foreign visitors to access information on the workings of the Parliament in their own language. (S4O-00694)

Mary Scanlon (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body): The SPCB language policy supports the provision of information in different languages to facilitate the engagement of people with the Parliament. In addition, the SPCB also makes available some relevant information about the workings of the Parliament for visitors from other countries who are not fluent in English. Five languages were selected as the most predominant foreign languages and a further eight languages are used to provide information in the Parliament.

Graeme Dey: In the light of the heightened interest in Scottish politics and the Scottish Parliament because of the forthcoming referendum, what steps is the SPCB taking to enhance translation and interpretation provision for overseas media and other visitors?

Mary Scanlon: I am not aware that we have had more visitors since the referendum consultation was announced, but interpreters can, nonetheless, be booked for private groups of foreign visitors. However, official delegations of visitors usually bring their own interpreters. Should we see a massive increase in visitors from other countries because they have taken an interest in the referendum and the Parliament, I am sure that the SPCB will address that issue and facilitate any need that may arise.

Green Investment Bank

14:52

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-02066, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on the green investment bank. I call on the Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, Fergus Ewing, to speak to and move the motion.

14:52

The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing): It is my great pleasure to open the debate in support of Edinburgh's bid to host the United Kingdom green investment bank. Of course, this is not the first time that Parliament has had an opportunity to discuss the matter; in June 2011, the Parliament welcomed a united campaign to bring the green investment bank to Edinburgh during the members' business debate that was led by my colleague Marco Biagi, from whom we will no doubt hear later.

I was pleased that in December last year I was able to write to Vince Cable to confirm all-party support for Edinburgh's bid. I was heartened that my colleagues Rhoda Grant, Liam McArthur, Mary Scanlon and Patrick Harvie were able to join me in signing that letter on behalf of all the parties in the Parliament. Earlier today, I was pleased to take part in a photo call with members of all the parties that are represented in the Parliament. More unity of purpose one could not imagine.

The support, of course, is not only political; it comes also from the business community, from a joint letter that Scotland's universities have signed and from Glasgow City Council and the City of Edinburgh Council, which is an alliance that does not always necessarily exist—it is pleasing that Glasgow and Edinburgh have united on this important issue.

Today, following the submission of Edinburgh's bid and as we await the UK Government's decision on where the green investment bank will be located, I ask that Parliament again show unanimity in recognising the strength of Edinburgh's bid and the considerable benefits to the UK of the green investment bank's being located in Edinburgh. I acknowledge the work of the Edinburgh green investment bank group in putting together such a compelling argument for the green investment bank to be located in Edinburgh. An impressive range of interests from industry, government and politics working together have produced a substantial bid. I ask that all the interests in Parliament show similar co-operation in endorsing the bid and in working together in the future to ensure that Scottish projects are

successful in securing funding from the GIB, just as we wish projects elsewhere in the UK to be successful. I once again have departed slightly from my written text.

I am sure that we are all convinced of the merits of the bid. Edinburgh has been ranked as the best large European city—that is, a city that has a population of between 500,000 and 1 million—for foreign direct investment in the recently announced FDI Intelligence Ltd's European cities and regions of the future ranking. The *fDi Magazine* is a specialist division of the Financial Times Ltd. Edinburgh came top, ahead of all the cities in Europe, including important and beautiful cities such as Oslo, Gothenburg and Leipzig. Edinburgh is number 1. The list ranked cities and regions according to seven categories: economic potential, human resources, cost effectiveness, quality of life, infrastructure, business friendliness and promotion strategy. It is worth noting that several of those criteria are also key criteria for assessing bids to host the GIB. Therefore, that endorsement by a prestigious and influential division of the Financial Times significantly strengthens Edinburgh's bid.

I am delighted that the UK Government recently recognised Scotland's leading role in the development of the green economy when it decided to locate the headquarters of the United Kingdom offshore renewable energy catapult centre—ORECAT—in Glasgow. The UK Government funding for ORECAT will be between £50 million and £100 million over 5 to 10 years. The decision demonstrates not only Scotland's leading position in the development of offshore renewables, but a commitment to Scotland. The appetite for investment is stronger than ever. I trust that the UK Government will further strengthen its commitment by deciding to locate the GIB in Edinburgh.

The decision on ORECAT also shows that the transition to a low-carbon economy that has been set out by the Government is delivering investment and jobs not only in Edinburgh but throughout Scotland.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): We are, indeed, united on the need for investment in green technologies and on the opportunity that Scotland has for that investment. However, do we not also need to unite on the wider issue? There are already in the UK publicly owned banks that are much bigger than the green investment bank will be and which are doing precisely the opposite and are investing in destructive, environmentally unsound industries and technologies. Should not the minister join all the parties together in putting pressure on the UK Treasury, UK Financial Investments Ltd and the Royal Bank of Scotland to

de-invest from those destructive industries and technologies?

Fergus Ewing: To be candid, I did not come to the chamber to opine on that matter. However, the other side of the coin—if, indeed, we have seen one side of the coin—is that significant investment from banks in green projects is welcome. The Co-operative Bank, Barclays Bank, RBS and many others make significant investments in the green economy. Plainly, we would all like more to be done, but with all respect to Patrick Harvie and recognising his obvious commitment to the matters that are under discussion, I will decline the invitation to stray beyond the territory of the debate.

We now have the opportunity to make Edinburgh and Scotland a pan-European and global hub for renewables investment. Locating the GIB in Edinburgh will help to cement a cluster of expertise that would be comprised of finance, academia and industry that are all centred here.

However, we should not be complacent: Edinburgh is only one of 32 locations that are bidding to host the green investment bank. I will outline why I believe that it should prevail.

Locations were asked to self-assess against the following criteria: the ability to recruit and retain specialist staff, the ability to enable the green investment bank to work closely with other parties in deals, and a location that provides good value for money.

First, Scotland has a long and proud history in banking and it has a growing reputation as an innovative and high-quality hub for financial services, such as investment management and asset servicing. The green investment bank will bring between 50 and 100 full-time equivalent jobs and will be able to recruit from a cluster of top-quality financial services companies—a sector in which 60,000 people are employed across Edinburgh's travel-to-work area.

It is not just financial expertise that makes Edinburgh the correct location for the green investment bank. Edinburgh has an experienced pool of world-class professionals in engineering, green infrastructure, company clusters and university campuses, all of whom play vital roles in the areas in which the green investment bank will be active. The bank would be supported by world-class research and specialist skills in low-carbon technologies, which will come from Edinburgh's strong and internationally connected academic and company base. I have had the fortunate experience of meeting a great many world leaders in research and intellectual activity in those areas in and around Edinburgh.

Edinburgh is unique in being the only location in the United Kingdom that brings together finance

and the clean energy industry in a single place. It has an unrivalled concentration of industries, skills and experience to support effective commercialisation. Given that Edinburgh is part of the UK's leading region in green infrastructure and has a disproportionate share of renewables investment, locating the green investment bank in the city will ensure that the UK has the best possible chance to develop as the European centre of excellence in the sector.

In addition, people wish to come to Edinburgh. It is recognised as having world-class quality of life and a global profile that has been proven to attract and retain the best in professional talent. Moreover, property and transaction costs in Edinburgh are highly competitive in comparison with those in other cities, and Edinburgh is one of the UK's best-connected cities—it has strong domestic and international transport links, as well as world-class information and communications technology links, which are the sine qua non of success these days.

I therefore ask the Parliament to join me in agreeing that, as is set out in the bid,

"Given the quality of Edinburgh's transaction ecosystem, the GIB will have a greater economic impact at a UK level, than if the Bank were sited in other locations. This in turn will help the UK Government to deliver its low carbon objectives."

I turn to the support that the Government can offer to ensure the successful location of the green investment bank in Edinburgh. I believe that the Government must be able to demonstrate its credentials and its commitment to the aims of the bank—namely, that it will provide the necessary financial solutions and accelerate private sector investment in the transition to a green economy, for it is that that will create the certainty that must exist if we are to persuade people to take major investment decisions in Scotland's favour.

The Scottish Government has put a low-carbon economy at the centre of its economic agenda. Growth in the low-carbon energy sector, particularly in renewables, will be a significant contributor to that agenda. The green investment bank has the potential to deliver significant benefit to the green economy in Scotland. We have committed to achieving ambitious low-carbon headline targets by 2020 and 2050. As we move towards 2020, we have interim targets for carbon emissions reductions, particularly in the electricity generation sector, for a major increase of renewables in the energy mix and for improving energy efficiency. We have been crystal clear about our commitments.

In June last year, we published our renewables route map, which outlines the actions that are required if we are to achieve the 100 per cent equivalent gross annual electricity consumption

target. We will soon publish the updated electricity generation statement, which will give the latest position on the role of renewable electricity and fossil-fuel thermal generation from coal, gas and oil in Scotland's future energy mix, and we will publish the second report on proposals and policies in the first half of 2012 or thereabouts, which will report on our progress on emissions reductions. We have been clear about our plans on how to achieve our objectives for a low-carbon economy. We can point to all those strategic facts that demonstrate our commitment to the green economy and which therefore contribute in a vital way to investor confidence.

The Parliament has previously recognised the considerable benefits that the green investment bank would bring to Scotland and to Edinburgh. When I last spoke in Parliament on the matter, I stated that the task that was before us was for Edinburgh to be seen not, as Vince Cable described us, as "a front-runner" for location of the green investment bank, but as the front-runner and, ultimately, to be the chosen location. I commend that approach to Parliament, and I look forward to hearing all my colleagues' contributions to the debate.

I move,

That the Parliament endorses the bid submitted to the UK Government to have the green investment bank (GIB) located in Edinburgh; believes that the Edinburgh bid fully satisfies the criteria set out by the UK Government and that Edinburgh is the ideal location for the new institution through its unique business ecosystem and highly advanced network of financiers, developers, investors, asset managers, researchers, academics, think tanks and government agencies; recognises the breadth of support for the Edinburgh bid across Scottish civic society, the academic sector and commerce, and acknowledges that Scotland's ambitious low-carbon economic agenda will facilitate a GIB based in Edinburgh becoming an enduring financial institution with visibility and a distinct identity with which to mobilise significant investment into green projects across the UK.

15:05

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): I am pleased to open the debate for Labour on the green investment bank. I assure the minister that we will vote for the Government's motion this afternoon.

I suspect that the debate will be broadly consensual. We should take encouragement from the fact that members from all shades of the political spectrum have been able to unite around our common desire for the green investment bank to be located here in Edinburgh. The word "consensus" is often used and—dare I say it?—misused in the chamber, but it is heartening that we are able to unite today on the need to tackle climate change and face up to the importance of our environmental challenges.

The need for a green investment bank rests primarily on two factors. First, the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 from the UK Government and the Scottish Government respectively have not only set ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions but enshrined those targets in legislation. We now need a series of practical measures to meet those goals.

Secondly, there is a recognition that traditional funding and investment streams that are delivered through our high street and investment banks are not delivering the radical transformation to the low-carbon economy that we need. We know, for example, that, although there has been tremendous expansion in the renewables industry in recent years, investment decisions that are taken solely for commercial return are more wont to stick with tried and tested—and, at this stage, cheaper—generating technologies.

I am, of course, pleased that it was Alistair Darling as Chancellor of the Exchequer who first promoted the green investment bank to the political main stream in 2010, but I am also pleased that the current UK Government has continued to give the proposal its backing. It seems that there has been some tension between the more environmentally minded members of the Government and those at the Treasury. That may have had an impact on the nature of the bank, but it is crucial that the bank is still going ahead.

The case for locating the bank here in Edinburgh is very strong. I pay tribute to all those in the public, private and voluntary sectors who have united in presenting such a strong case for Edinburgh. One of the criteria for deciding on its location is the ability for the bank to recruit and retain the specialist staff who are needed. It is clear that Edinburgh has one of the biggest financial sectors in the whole of Europe, let alone the UK. The city therefore has immediate access not only to the necessary financial expertise but to the sizeable and expanding renewable energy industry that is already located in Scotland.

The bid team for Edinburgh has brought together some of the key organisations that will need to work side by side with the new bank. Those include Edinburgh's prestigious universities; the country's banks and some of the leading investment houses; public sector bodies such as Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Financial Enterprise; environmental organisations; and, of course, our power companies.

I have already mentioned the cross-party consensus behind the bid, but it is worth noting—as the minister did in his opening remarks—that Edinburgh has the support of all Scotland's major cities, including Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Stirling. I genuinely doubt that there is anywhere in

the United Kingdom that can beat Edinburgh on access to financial and industrial expertise, on the totally united political backing and on the proximity not only to existing renewables capacity but to the tremendous potential that exists offshore and onshore from the north of England right up to the northern and westernmost islands.

I believe that the bank will be of tremendous potential benefit to Scotland, which is one of the reasons why I am sure that we are all united in wishing to see it here. However, I will flag up a few points, not so much for the Scottish Government but for the UK Government as the body that is establishing the bank. First, I understand from recent statements that the new bank is to lend at commercial rates and to return a profit at all times. I see no reason why it should not return a profit, but I believe that at the very least we need further clarification of that criterion, given that the bank is being established essentially to address market failure. At its heart, the bank must have the intent to deliver on an environmental policy imperative rather than a solely commercial motivation.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): Does Mr Macintosh agree that there is a double bottom line, in that the bank needs to deliver against environmental objectives but it will be able to do so only if it can get a return on its investments that it can reinvest to meet those environmental objectives?

Ken Macintosh: Absolutely. I could not agree more. That was clear at the genesis of the bank. The only reason why there is anxiety is that it is felt that some political momentum might have shifted from the environmental objectives to the commercial ones. The issue is balance, which is why I asked for further clarification, rather than suggesting that the bank is heading in the wrong direction.

Like many in the environmental movement, I am anxious that the bank should invest in infrastructure and manufacturing but should also support small-scale community and co-operative enterprises. The RSPB put that point well in its briefing for the debate, in which it said that the challenge for Scotland and the UK is to ensure that the climate and renewables targets are met sustainably. The RSPB points out that many energy projects claim environmental credentials but can be damaging to landscapes, wildlife and natural habitats. It argues that, although it makes financial sense for the big energy firms to invest in large-scale renewables projects, the ambition for smaller-scale and community projects is limited by a lack of credit and the financial risks to those who are involved. The green investment bank can therefore provide value in making that possible.

I am slightly concerned that the green investment bank will, for the first few years at

least, simply be a green investment fund, in that its borrowing powers are unlikely to be established before 2015 or 2016. Ministers have suggested that even then, those powers will be dependent on the UK Government hitting deficit reduction targets. Most environmental commentators believe that, if we are to make the significant move that is required to a low-carbon economy, the bank needs borrowing powers. To meet our climate change targets, the borrowing powers should come sooner rather than later.

If we are to meet the climate change targets, it is important that the bank supports energy efficiency as well as renewables capacity. The bank will have a remit in promoting non-domestic energy efficiency, but we still need to change attitudes and behaviour across Scotland. We need demand-led energy efficiency reforms that are about consumers reducing demand, rather than generators simply expanding the supply to meet it. The bank might be crucial in helping to achieve that.

I do not know whether many members have had the benefit of a smart meter in their homes. I had that joy recently when Scottish Gas came round and I have to say that I am a total convert to smart meters. A young engineer came round to fit the meter and then showed me the difference that switching a kettle on makes and so on. The meter works on a traffic light system, with red, amber and green lights. Now, as soon as my kids come into the house, they are conscious of whether the green light is on. That is working. That was a little plug for Scottish Gas and its work on that.

I do not want to cause consternation among Scottish National Party members, but I want to pose a question to the Scottish Government minister that I believe he will need to answer if the bid is to be successful. Why should a UK Government want to locate a UK bank in a separate Scotland? I am not trying to break the consensus, but I genuinely believe that that question needs an answer and that the issue is a potential barrier to our bid winning.

To be honest, I have huge doubts about how the Scottish Government's plans for separation sit alongside its renewable energy policy. The renewables industry is based on Scotland being part of the UK economy. Even with a Scotland-based company such as SSE, its funds for investment come in large part from consumers who are based in the south of England. That is not simply a political question or point; it is an anxiety that already exists in the renewables industry and was most recently raised by Citigroup. There is a paradox at the heart of SNP policy in its support for renewables and for separation. I would welcome the minister's comments on that paradox and dilemma in his concluding remarks.

To return to a more consensual note, I am pleased to be part of Scotland-wide unity in calling on the UK Government to site the green investment bank in the best possible location in the UK, which is here in the city of Edinburgh.

15:14

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con): There are occasionally debates in the Parliament in which all members pretty much agree with one another on the substance and it is extremely difficult to disagree with a single word of the Government motion. I intend to be extremely consensual—so much so that I think that my colleague Murdo Fraser, who was sitting next to me earlier, has run away from the chamber so that he does not have to listen to my speech.

One of the best things about the bid for the green investment bank is how it has united politicians across the Parliament and across Scotland, because having the bank in Edinburgh would be good not just for the city but for all parts of Scotland, as many members from the north-east and the Highlands and Islands said during the members' business debate on the matter.

More important than the unity among politicians is that the bid has united institutions, companies and organisations throughout Scotland. The Edinburgh bid was pulled together from several areas of expertise in a highly professional fashion. We should not pick out favourites and give special praise, but mention should be made of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, which I think was first out of the traps in spotting an opportunity—I see Sarah Boyack nodding and I acknowledge her previous comments about the chamber of commerce. The chamber seized the initiative and pushed the issue, to the extent that things probably went further and faster than they would otherwise have done. Indeed, Edinburgh had a professionally produced draft business case ready well in advance of the formal call for business cases.

Edinburgh has many strengths. A look at the assessment criteria that were published in December, to which the minister referred, shows that Edinburgh scores particularly highly across the board. The criteria are

“(i) The ability to recruit and retain staff with the necessary specialist expertise ...

(ii) The quality of the transaction ‘ecosystem’ in the locality;

(iii) Cost effectiveness considerations.”

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills described the criteria as being set out

“in descending order of importance”.

Therefore, although cost effectiveness is important, the ability to recruit and retain staff with the necessary expertise is the number 1 criterion for BIS.

When we delve a little deeper into criterion 1, we find that BIS talks about three important groups of experts,

“Financial services experts ... Green economy experts”

and

“Other professional experts”,

and highlights that the financial services industry is extremely important—perhaps more important than the other two areas.

The minister’s comments about Edinburgh and Scotland’s financial services industry were well made. It is well known that Edinburgh has the fourth largest financial services industry in Europe. We are rich in relation to pensions, life assurance, investment management, banks, insurance and asset servicing. Across the spectrum of financial services, Edinburgh scores extremely well. I have not seen the other 31 bids or the formal bid from Edinburgh, but it will be difficult for any of the 31 to beat Edinburgh on financial services expertise.

On the call for green economy experts, a number of organisations in Edinburgh, including Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, have shown green thought leadership. During the past couple of years, the Scottish low-carbon investment conference, which was attended by ministers and numerous VIPs from around the world, put Edinburgh on the map. The green investment bank would add to that. We have the technical and engineering skills and we have the universities, as the minister said. I am told that there are 11 universities within an hour’s drive of Edinburgh. I have not seen all the detail, but I am led to believe that, across those universities, there are no fewer than 87 low-carbon and environmental research units.

With regard to the second main criterion, which is the ability to work closely with others—or what is described as the “transaction ecosystem”—the assessment criteria paper points out that

“Specialist businesses have a natural tendency to form clusters in particular locations to optimise their performance.”

It is almost as if that had been written with Edinburgh in mind. After all, we are strong in financial services, green energy and the infrastructure that will be required for the green investment bank.

Edinburgh also scores pretty highly on the third criterion, cost effectiveness, particularly in relation to one of the other potential riders and one of our biggest competitors for the prize: London.

Obviously, we score far more competitively than London in that regard.

As I have said, Edinburgh was first out of the traps, producing a very strong business case before it was required. The bid has pulled together all the political parties and organisations across Scotland, and the Scottish Conservatives are very happy to vote with the Government and very much hope that Edinburgh’s bid is successful.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

We come to the open debate. Members can have a generous six minutes and I am in the happy position of being able to give back some time for interventions.

15:21

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): I have a sense of déjà vu as I rise to support the Edinburgh bid for the green investment bank. However, in the spirit of the debate—and perhaps in the spirit of the bank itself—I will begin with a bit of recycling.

Members: Oh!

Marco Biagi: I am sorry—it does not get any better than that.

Back in June, I described Edinburgh as the most natural, the most logical and in all respects the best location for the green investment bank. Like Gavin Brown, when the criteria were published, I thought that the people who had put them together must have had Edinburgh in mind. Looking at them, one cannot help but think that the bank was designed for us.

As other members have pointed out, there are three requirements: the ability to recruit specialist staff; the opportunity for close working with other parties involved in the deals; and a location that is good value for money. As the formal bid points out, Edinburgh scores incredibly highly in each category. In the Edinburgh travel-to-work area, 60,000 people are employed in the financial services industries; 80 per cent of the world’s largest banks are present in the city either directly or through subsidiaries; and Edinburgh accounts for 25 per cent of all UK life and pensions employment. Surely that already answers the question of recruiting specialist staff.

The formal bid also points to the world-class quality of life in Edinburgh. Obviously, as the member for Edinburgh Central I will talk up the city in any way possible. Recently, however, I was reading about the great success of the property market in the new town, which is already attracting very high-status individuals who have been priced out of London. Although they might cause some displacement in the rest of the market, I welcome them and their economic contribution to the city. It

simply shows the quality of life that Edinburgh can offer. In fact, at the moment, we cannot seem to build hotels fast enough.

As for enabling close working, I note that there is both SSE and Iberdrola. On the third criterion, the formal bid shows that the figures for value for money are singularly impressive. For example, the figure of £27 per square foot per year is half that for London and, to any potential inward investors who might be listening, I point out that it is lower than the figure for Glasgow. That might well be in the next Labour leaflet in Glasgow. Finally, I note that, of the 10 locations that the formal bid suggests could be used, nine of them are—crucially—in Edinburgh Central.

In the debate in June, Gavin Brown set out a strength-by-strength list for Edinburgh. As far as financial services are concerned, the list is second to none and includes banking, asset servicing, asset management, insurance, private equity and, above all, committed institutional project sponsors. I hope that that analysis is still supported unequivocally by all parties. Indeed, back then, Sarah Boyack singled out the huge investment in the renewables industry. Tavish Scott reminded us that the prize is not just for Edinburgh but for the whole of Scotland, and he might have given a friendly dig on behalf of Aberdeen when he was doing so.

The coalition of support for the green investment bank is impressive. It includes Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, SSE, McGrigors, Forth Energy, the City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Power, and Scottish Enterprise. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency has been involved, as have PricewaterhouseCoopers, Anderson Strathern and the Scottish Government. We might have disagreements over the detail—that is perfectly natural—but it serves to emphasise the importance of our underlying agreement. There are disagreements about what the green investment bank might invest in, how it would interact with the fossil fuel levy, the importance of borrowing powers and other things, but those disagreements have arisen because of the shared desire for a successful green investment bank. They do not get in the way of our combined support for Edinburgh as its natural and automatic location.

Last night, a group of MSPs were at a reception to mark the opening in my constituency of the first Scottish high street branch of Triodos. Although it is an international company, Triodos is what we might call a boutique bank. It has about 30,000 savers in the UK and it uses their deposits to lend to businesses that meet its criteria for sustainability, such as renewable energy, agricultural and social enterprises. In a way, it is like a small-scale, private sector, green investment

bank. I first heard of Triodos 10 years ago when I was researching ethically motivated investment schemes. Back then, there was an impression that Triodos was an oddity that one could bank with by post and whose chequebooks were printed using soya ink. Now, it is open for business and trading right there on Hanover Street in the heart of Edinburgh. I can see how its time has come as a model and I hope that it grows even further, but such small, specialist houses will never fuel the renewables revolution that Scotland and the rest of the UK so desperately need. I hope that the GIB will follow in Triodos's footsteps.

Indeed, I am happy to echo Patrick Harvie's point that the more we see the big banks looking like Triodos in their investments and support for the green industries, the more we will be able to welcome their contributions, but we should not forget that, in this debate, we have the unusual situation of all parties supporting the GIB coming to Edinburgh and we have the unlikely alliance of the Royal Bank of Scotland and Friends of the Earth Scotland.

The prize is great and therefore worth fighting for. When investors are looking for finance for green projects in the future, they should automatically think of Edinburgh and of making their base here, thereby bringing all their benefits to this city and this country.

15:27

Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab):

Areas of renewable energy, green options, waste processing and recycling have captured much of and promised more to the public's imagination. Until now, the reality has been that, in the absence of substantial Government and public subsidy, making credible business cases for developments to meet those promises has been a challenge. In that context, the UK Government's proposal to create a green investment bank is to be welcomed and the bid for the bank to be located in Edinburgh makes even more sense.

The concept of a financial institution being created to deliver in one area of investment activity is not without precedent. As many members will know, the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation was formed in 1928, largely as a response to those in agricultural communities who found it virtually impossible to obtain financial support for their businesses. The Agricultural Mortgage Corporation, which is now maintained as part of Lloyds TSB Bank plc, was created with the declared aim of developing investment in farms and equestrian, rural and horticultural businesses. As an area of investment deemed to be alien by many bankers and investors, it was in need of experience and knowledge of the particular challenges and benefits that were attached to

agricultural businesses and consequently the corporation worked with professionals in the field. The corporation now deals with almost 40 per cent of all the mid and long-term needs of that industry.

In the realm of green investments, a similar level of specialism is required, based on the experience and knowledge necessary to enable appropriate business decisions to be made in areas of finance deemed as risky by those with insufficient expertise.

The first priorities of the bank will be offshore wind farms, commercial and industrial waste processing and recycling, energy from waste generation, non-domestic energy efficiency, and support for the green deal. As the minister indicated, it is anticipated that up to 100 quality jobs will be created to manage the bank and its business deals. Those are jobs that Scotland sorely needs, given our current situation.

Importantly, the presence of the bank as part of UK financial services will create the culture necessary to identify and pump-prime the new ideas that are necessary to allow Scotland to grow the technologies and processes to place us to the fore of commercial and competitive businesses.

The committed budget of more than £3 billion sounds like big money but pales into insignificance in comparison with the forecast £200 billion required before 2020 to deliver on Britain's requirements. Important, though, is the immediate availability of £100 million next financial year to invest in smaller waste infrastructure projects.

Given the criteria laid out for the green investment bank, there is no doubt that Edinburgh, with its experience as a financial centre, will be able to recruit and train staff. That has already been commented on by many members. Equally, the proximity of Edinburgh to various supreme academic institutions and programmes could see the green investment bank situated close to the leading edge in research and development, as well as the global players in the green industries.

Edinburgh's bid demonstrates value for money that competes with any of the other 31 locations under consideration. In spite of comments from Mr Moore in the lead-up to a decision, my only fear about Edinburgh's competitive advantage in the process is whether the on-going doubts that the SNP Government has created about separation from UK institutions will result in the UK deciding to maintain the green investment bank within the confines of those countries directly and definitely part of a future UK relationship. Ken Macintosh was right to invite the minister to comment on that in his closing speech to quell the worries outside this place.

Whatever the impact of that element of concern, I fully support our efforts to persuade the

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills of Edinburgh's supreme suitability for the bank. I hope that Nathan Goode's observation yesterday in the media that Scotland's nuanced approach of being highly developed and competitive while ensuring collaborative responses wins the day.

15:33

Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): As the deputy convener of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee in the previous session of Parliament and a member of the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee when it considered the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill, I argued early on, at the time of the previous Labour Government at Westminster, that the green investment bank should be in Scotland. In August 2010, I suggested that the new £2 billion green investment bank should be based in Scotland to bring it closer to the industry and the parts of the country that will contribute most to building a low-carbon economy.

That argument is reinforced today. It is important for the whole UK that Scotland has a stable platform for the development of the energy revolution that we are talking about. That is why I take issue with the suggestion that it is not in the UK's interests to site the green investment bank in Edinburgh. The fact is that the UK will require Scotland's green electricity output to help it to meet its climate change target. That will not change no matter the political circumstances—for or against independence though members may be.

There is cross-party commitment to a UK-wide green investment bank that will help to direct investment to the industries, improvements and key areas that can help to build a new green economy. As members have said, Edinburgh is the best place because it is where all those facets meet.

Above all, we need to have a stable renewable energy development policy across the UK and in Scotland. I note that the Energy and Climate Change Committee at Westminster warned last week that the UK Government must not miss the boat on renewables development, as it has previously.

With that stability of policy in mind, one priority should be a focus on having a green investment bank in the best place possible. However, the recent call by 100 Tory MPs to halt land-based wind developments hit a very jarring note. I think that David Cameron wants to be seen as a green leader, so he might bat that call aside. However, the situation is not helped by BBC presenters such as Matt Baker, who was yesterday quoted, as the

presenter of "Countryfile", criticising wind turbines springing up in the countryside as the greatest threat to rural work—that is the BBC view, balanced as ever.

I note that the embryo green investment bank has been set up in London and that it will then have to grow in some other place. I also note that the advisory committee that was set up to help with the development and structure of the bank has, in my view—I may be proved wrong—very little experience of Scottish conditions and attributes. That aspect of how the bank is being set up bothers me considerably, as it may affect its direction towards our part of the country.

The proximity to companies and individuals who are working on the front line of decarbonising our economy is not available anywhere other than Edinburgh. My concerns about the need for a stable policy and about some of the mixed signals that come out of what is said down south are considerable.

I recognise the focus that the green investment bank will have on offshore renewables. The cutting-edge developments in offshore renewables are being made by companies in the north of Scotland. Of course, there have been offshore developments of considerable size down south, but the world-beating materials that are now being developed in the Moray Firth represent the kind of intellectual knowledge that will be sold on to America, Brazil and so on. Those have to be developed and backed.

We talk about the £2 billion public investment. As Graeme Pearson said, we know that a vast amount of money will be required for developments to meet the targets for energy production and emissions reduction in the green investment bank's remit. Scotland is widely recognised as having enormous potential in that area. In my constituency, the Pentland Firth provides potential for, in particular, tidal power. That is a great goal. Many other places in the UK can contribute to the targets but, proportionally, Scotland has far more potential. It is almost like the proportion of peatlands in Scotland compared with the whole of the rest of the UK—about 80 per cent are in Scotland. The emphasis on the things that we can do here will not only help us but will be vital to both the UK and the European targets to reduce climate gases.

The UK Government needs to ensure that we have access to the rest of the fossil fuel levy. It should not keep it for three years, as we need that money to develop now. The green investment bank might be seeded with some of that money, which will help Scotland to access it, but we also need the transmission charging regime to be sorted out. The green investment bank has a lot of hurdles to cross before it can make the major

contribution that we require and which the UK and Europe is looking forward to us achieving.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I say to members that I can be generous with time if they would like to accept interventions.

15:40

Colin Keir (Edinburgh Western) (SNP): I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate, which, as we have heard, unites this chamber, business, financial institutions, agencies, universities and councils across the country.

Scotland must establish itself as the undisputed energy powerhouse of Europe; with our unrivalled wind, wave and tidal resources, we certainly have the potential, and the ambition, to do so. Since 2007, our Government has made world-leading progress, placing Scotland at the forefront of the green energy revolution. The offshore valuation study of 2010 estimated Scotland's total practical offshore wind, wave and tidal resource at 206GW. Harnessing just a third of that clean energy would position Scotland as a major net exporter of renewable energy.

The socioeconomic impact of green investment resonates with the economic growth of rural areas, skills development, construction sector growth and, of course, jobs. The improvement of storage capabilities, the strengthening of grid connections and the delivery of a North Sea grid all demonstrate the degree to which Scotland and this Government are committed to investing in renewables technologies. That commitment alone is one reason why the green investment bank is best placed in Scotland.

The bank's mission is to accelerate private sector capital investment in the UK's transition to a green economy, in response to the rapidly increasing worldwide investment in renewables technologies. As the Grant Thornton report argues, locating the bank in Edinburgh would bring it to the heart of the clean energy sector without losing the benefits of being in a major financial centre. As we have heard this afternoon, there is no other place in the United Kingdom that meets the description.

The UK Government's policy of spreading business opportunities more evenly across these islands is sensible, and I hope that it is acted on. There is a real danger that a London-based green investment bank would be lost among numerous institutions, meaning that its presence would not be felt so strongly. In Edinburgh, it would be a focus, a driving force and a transparent institution.

As Gavin Brown and Marco Biagi said, Edinburgh comfortably meets the location criteria for the green investment bank. Scotland is where

the UK's clean energy sector is concentrated, and it is home to companies—including Scottish and Southern Energy and ScottishPower Renewables—that are responsible for some of the UK's most innovative green infrastructure projects. A real international clean energy network is taking shape, with firms implementing a wide range of projects. Offshore wind is a leading example of a sector in which developers are locating in Edinburgh, increasing Scotland's attractiveness to other supply chain companies. In 2010, Mitsubishi Power Systems chose Edinburgh for the creation of a centre for advanced technology worth around £100 million; and the Doosan Power Systems £170 million investment in Scotland has the potential to create 1,700 jobs. Global clean energy companies from Germany, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and beyond have already created bases here.

Scotland's financial sector employs just over 86,000 people, and just under half of them are based in the capital. Some of the UK's largest private and public sector organisations, and around 15,000 small and medium-sized businesses, are at the very heart of the city's economy. We have the most extensive UK financial services centre outside London, with world-class expertise in banking, insurance, pensions and investment management, as well as strong links to the global markets. The deep pool of talent that exists in Edinburgh would ensure that the bank had the skills required to deliver its key functions. The benefit of having a high concentration of world-leading universities and other research establishments gives Edinburgh a competitive advantage. Close links between the green investment industry and universities already exist, and locating the bank in Edinburgh would continue to foster that relationship.

Another key factor in this debate is connectivity. A green investment bank would need to be well linked to other parts of the UK, Europe and beyond. As the MSP for Edinburgh Western, I take pride in representing an increasingly expanding international airport, while the construction of the new Forth crossing will be absolutely pivotal in connecting the capital with Fife and the north-east of Scotland—where many of the green investment projects are being located. Make no mistake: if there were no Forth crossing, the chances of the green investment bank coming to Scotland would be diminished.

Finally, on cost effectiveness—whether in relation to office, transaction or workforce costs—an Edinburgh-based green investment bank would be considerably more attractive and affordable than one that was based in London.

Regardless of whether Scotland becomes an independent nation, there is one word that will

determine the success of the green investment bank in the UK: location. The virtuous circle of technology, finance and supply tells us that Edinburgh not only ticks all the boxes but is the prime candidate. I am delighted that the Parliament is unanimous in its support, and I hope that the UK Government recognises the huge potential that Edinburgh and Scotland have to offer. I support the motion.

15:45

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): I very much welcome the debate and hope that it is timely. We are getting close to an announcement on the location of the green investment bank, and I hope the fact that we are able to rehearse for a third time the arguments in favour of the green investment bank coming to Edinburgh is helpful to the wider discussions.

I was very enthusiastic when the proposal for the green investment bank was suggested by Alistair Darling in the 2010 budget. It had been discussed for quite a while before that and lots of lobbying had been going on, particularly by the environmental movement, on the need for dedicated green investment in the riskier end of the renewables field. We know that not all that investment will come from traditional banking, so we need something that is prepared to go in there before the market is ready to invest. That is how the green investment bank could be transformative. We should, therefore, lobby not only for its location to be in Edinburgh, but for it to be up and running soon, with the maximum amount of financial resource to enable it to have the maximum impact. That is critical.

It is significant that colleagues across the parties are all in agreement. Even on an issue such as this, agreement cannot be taken for granted. Over the past few months, a huge amount of work has gone into putting together a robust and, I hope, persuasive case for the green investment bank to come to Edinburgh. Colleagues have talked about the expertise that we have in Edinburgh, including expertise in fund management and legal experience. A lot of projects have been managed through the Edinburgh area, but this is also about our capacity to expand and our linkages outwith Edinburgh, across the rest of Scotland and the UK. We are well placed in that respect.

Gavin Brown made an excellent point about the higher education institutions in and around Edinburgh, but this is not just about them. In Edinburgh, Glasgow, up towards Aberdeen and even as far as Orkney, we have a huge amount of readily accessible academic expertise. The challenge is to turn that academic expertise into business development. We have the ideas and there is connectivity. One thing in particular that

we bring to the debate is the integrated approach that we have in Scotland to these topics. Our geography helps. That is part of the reason why we moved faster to establish a new industry in Scotland, but it was also partly political. The first target that we set—that 18 per cent of our electricity should come from renewables by 2010—was ground breaking at the time, and we have moved on hugely over the past 12 years. The challenge, however, is to go a lot further.

Colleagues have talked about renewables in other parts of the UK, and there is huge ambition down the north-east coast and in Cornwall to match what we are doing, and to exceed it. Some of the offshore developments in England are beginning to happen very quickly, so we should not be complacent. We know that bringing the green investment bank to Scotland would be a sensible decision, but we must make a hard case for it.

For me, this is about getting to the next stage in all these industries. We have made a huge amount of progress over the past decade, but we are getting to the difficult stuff. We need to look at the potential for local combined heat and power schemes and community schemes, which we are terrible at setting up in Britain. There are only one or two examples, of which the one in Aberdeen, where we have a network, is probably the best in Scotland. That required local political buy-in, drive by the council and buy-in from local firms. We do not have that in our other cities in Scotland, although other European countries would take that approach much more as standard. RSPB Scotland has commented that we should argue for a range of investment, and it is critical that we solve the problem of unlocking finance at the community or city scale. That would be something the bank could do. The UK is certainly well behind other parts of the world in that regard.

The other big challenge is that investment in new green technologies in Europe is not huge, so having the bank would enable us to get ahead of the game. Again, we should not be complacent. In other parts of the world, including China and Taiwan, there is a lot of green investment, so the bank is critical for the UK. It gives us a one-off opportunity to lift us up from where we are. We have a good track record in Scotland, with lots of linkages that would help the bank to be transformative. A lot of money is involved, and it must be used as well as it possibly can be. We all know that this is a hard time from the point of view of money being spent by the public sector, and that makes the bank all the more important.

If I were sitting in the UK Government, I would want the bank not just to have a big impact in the short term, but to lever in a huge amount of private sector capital. That is the opportunity that the bank

presents, and I think that Edinburgh, with our links across Scotland and the rest of the UK, is the front-runner. That does not, however, guarantee that we will get the bank, which is why the timing of the debate is useful. We need to rehearse the fact that Tesco Bank, Virgin Money, the Co-operative Bank and Triodos Bank are coming to Edinburgh. Even though there has been massive restructuring in the sector and it has been incredibly difficult for the thousands of people whose jobs have been lost and who have been forced to find different employment, there is still talent, capacity and drive. There is a big opportunity to seize here.

We need to argue that in Edinburgh the proximity to our mainstream banking sector would have a transformative impact, because UK banks are based here that still have significant capacity to make decisions, which would have an impact not just at the Edinburgh end of the banks but in London. The banks talk to one another all the time. It is not just about physical location but about connectivity, and people being able to pick up the phone and make the connections that are so important for business. There are opportunities here, and the timing is good for us. The challenge is to ensure that we do the best lobbying that we can.

I am not complacent. Rob Gibson's comments about long-term political stability and renewables are important. There is a case to be made for renewables—the issue cannot be taken for granted. The UK has lots of experience with good ideas, but, for example, the Salter's duck was never taken forward as the Dutch and the Danes got ahead of us in wind power. Since this Parliament was set up, we have been determined not to let that happen again. The challenge is to get into the new forms of not just renewables but other green energy technologies, including battery technology. We have lots of good ideas about a whole host of things on which we are still ahead, but we need the lift-off that will come from the transformative capacity of the green investment bank, and that is why I am glad we are having this debate. This is not just a question of our agreeing with one another. There are bits of political fencing, which it is absolutely right for us to have in the chamber, but I hope that today will help anyone who has any capacity to persuade those who will make the decision that Edinburgh is the right choice.

15:53

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): I declare an interest as a member of Aberdeen City Council.

Colleagues often accuse me of being Aberdeen-centric, and there is probably a suspicion that I will

make a last-minute bid for Aberdeen to be the site for the green investment bank. I can put members' minds at rest: I fully support the Edinburgh bid. I agree with the leaders of the six cities in Scotland, who believe that this is the right place for the bank, and I am pleased that there is that unity of purpose.

Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab): I agree with the member and I do not agree with the member. I agree that all cities should welcome this opportunity, but I urge him not to undersell Aberdeen. Glasgow and Aberdeen are just as fine as Edinburgh, and we should encourage the bank to grow and go to all those cities.

Kevin Stewart: I agree with Mr Malik. Glasgow is a fine city, and Aberdeen is, of course, top of my list.

In the past, there was competition between Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen for the Energy Technologies Institute. Unfortunately, we could not get together on that, and it ended up in Loughborough, when it would probably have been better placed in Glasgow, Edinburgh or Aberdeen, so I am glad that there is unity of purpose with regard to the green investment bank. However, I would never undersell any of Scotland's great cities—particularly not Aberdeen.

Scotland is lucky with regard to the renewables activity that it has attracted to its shores from outwith the country. I am sure that Liam McArthur will tell us about the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney, and I am pleased that Aberdeen will—I hope—be the home of the European offshore wind development centre. Those centres are immensely important. Many parts of Scotland are benefiting from the renewables revolution, and there is more to come. I hope that the siting of the green investment bank in Edinburgh will mean that it will be easier to get investment for some of the brilliant ideas that are out there.

Sarah Boyack talked about district heating systems, and Aberdeen is at the forefront in that regard. Thanks to the Scottish Government, an extra £1 million went to the Aberdeen combined heat and power programme recently, which means that the network now goes into the centre of the city.

We should not have to rely on public grants to move such programmes on. Private companies should be willing to invest, too. I think that the green investment bank will encourage that.

I have talked in the chamber before about hydrogen technology, and Aberdeen's bid to have hydrogen buses and to expand that technology. That is extremely important, not only for Aberdeen and the north-east of Scotland but for the whole of Scotland. I believe that we can also be at the

forefront of that technology, if the investment is right and we are able to push that forward.

I thank the organisations that provided members with briefings today, particularly Scottish Renewables, because its bullet-point briefing gives all the reasons why the green investment bank should be sited in Edinburgh. The announcements about recent jobs and investment in the renewables sector represent a great story to tell. The briefing lists a number of such announcements, and it goes back only to last November. It mentions Mitsubishi in Fife; the establishment in Glasgow of the headquarters of the effort to develop technologies to capture and use power from offshore wind; Moray Offshore Renewables; and SSE investment.

That is all great news, but I think that there can be even more, and the siting of the green investment bank in Edinburgh will ensure that we have even greater things ahead of us.

Far from being parochial about Aberdeen, I fully support Edinburgh's bid. The siting of the green investment bank in Edinburgh will benefit Aberdeen, as well as the rest of Scotland. That is why I am fully behind the motion and the bid.

15:59

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): With due respect to Paisley and Angus, both of which I understand to have expressed an interest in hosting the UK green investment bank, few would dispute that Edinburgh represents Scotland's best hope of landing this prestigious prize.

Ever since the UK coalition Government announced its intention to create such a bank, the campaign in support of Edinburgh's bid to host it has been strong and building steadily. The minister and all other members who have spoken during the debate have been right to highlight the enduring cross-party, cross-sectoral and widespread civic support throughout Scotland for the campaign. Gavin Brown was also right to pinpoint the role that Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has played in the process. I do not think that it would be unduly partisan of me to pay tribute to the role played from the outset by my colleagues, Michael Moore, Mike Crockart and Margaret Smith.

All those who have submitted bids in recent weeks will have been able to point to undoubted strengths. However, I firmly believe, as I have from the start, that Edinburgh's credentials as a location for the green investment bank are compelling. It meets the criteria that have been set. Indeed, as Gavin Brown and Marco Biagi have suggested, the criteria almost seem to have been designed with Edinburgh in mind—but it also has much more to offer. The debate is welcome, because it

allows Parliament once again to express its strong and, I am sure, unanimous support for Edinburgh's case.

We should not lose sight of the bank's purpose and function, which will be of central importance to Scotland's ability to achieve our renewables and climate change ambitions. Ken Macintosh, Sarah Boyack and Rob Gibson drew on the RSPB briefing, which addressed a number of the issues. It is telling that, in its excellent briefing, which Kevin Stewart mentioned, Scottish Renewables began by asking

"What will the green investment bank do?"

Helpfully, it goes on to provide an answer, pointing to the £3 billion of capital that will allow the bank to play a vital role in addressing market failures that affect green infrastructure projects throughout the UK.

In particular, the bank will be critical to stimulating a significant increase in private investment, which will be essential in meeting the costs of the UK's move to a low-carbon economy. For that to happen, it is essential that the Government acts in a way that is seen as credible by private investors and markets.

That is why I am pleased that the decision has been taken not to set up just another fund—Ken Macintosh suggested that that was a risk at one stage—but to ensure that the green investment bank does what it says on the tin. It will be an investment bank and will be at arm's length from ministers, making loans and investments in the expectation of earning a return and reinvesting the proceeds.

The distinction with other investment banks is that there will be a clear political steer in relation to the public policy objectives that must be achieved, as well as the market failures that need to be addressed. The future success of the bank will be measured against meeting those policy objectives, as well as delivering positive financial returns.

I take issue somewhat with Ken Macintosh's observations on the timescale. It is not necessarily surprising that the establishment of the bank will take place in phases. However, I do not dispute the need for it to be established as quickly as possible. That is why, as well as setting aside £3 billion to capitalise the bank up to 2015, it is right that the UK Government takes steps to enable early interventions to be made from this April.

Those interventions will be delivered through the green investments team, which will have £775 million to spend on commercial terms and which will operate under the guidance of an investments committee. That will not only allow time for the necessary state aid clearance and

legislation to establish the bank, but ensure that no time is wasted in developing our green infrastructure.

In due course, around 2015, the bank will be able to borrow. The decision on how that will be done can only be reasonably made nearer the time. Nevertheless, the approach of creating not simply a fund, but an enduring financial institution, with early investment potential ahead of the phased introduction of the bank itself, very much reflects the needs and aspirations of the key stakeholders.

Even so, there will be a challenge, particularly in the early stages, in determining the priority areas for investment. The range of potential areas that need to be tackled if we are to move to a low-carbon economy is extensive. In each case, the levels of investment required, as Graeme Pearson indicated, are eye-watering. The identification of offshore wind, commercial and industrial waste processing and recycling, non-domestic energy efficiency, energy from waste, and the green deal all have a certain logic. However, I welcome the commitment from ministers that the strategic priorities will be reviewed regularly. That is essential if we are to take advantage of technological advances and respond to things that are, or are not, working well.

As well as emphasising the importance of the role that the UK green investment bank can play, Scottish Renewables rightly sets out the benefits of basing the institution in Edinburgh. Indeed, the urgent need that the sector sees for having the bank up and running lends further weight to Edinburgh's case. Given its highly advanced network of financiers, developers, investors, asset managers, researchers, academics, think tanks and public agencies—all helpfully mentioned in the motion—Edinburgh appears to be ideally placed to ensure that the bank hits the ground running.

Earlier today, along with the minister and colleagues from across the parties, I had the pleasure of meeting Owen Kelly and some of his colleagues, who have been involved in marshalling the arguments in support of locating the bank in Edinburgh—we enjoyed some fairly windswept, panoramic views of the Athens of the north. Owen Kelly and the Edinburgh green investment bank group deserve high praise for their work over the final weeks of the process, building on the excellent foundations that I referred to earlier.

The case that Edinburgh has been able to put forward is a powerful one. Edinburgh is the fourth largest financial centre in Europe, and its financial services expertise has both depth and breadth, which enhances the scope for recruiting and retaining staff, including key posts that may require to be filled following an international

recruitment process. We have seen over a number of years how successful Scotland has been in attracting new and expanding businesses in the financial services sector, drawn by the skills on offer, the cluster effect and, no doubt, wider quality-of-life considerations.

The bid team also highlights Edinburgh's experienced pool of world-class engineering professionals, its green infrastructure and its university campuses. Those are all areas in which the green investment bank will be active and where Edinburgh appears to have a distinct advantage over competitors. More generally, Scotland is showing progress and ambition in moving towards a low-carbon economy, particularly in relation to renewables investment. In that context—and so as not to disappoint Kevin Stewart—I am happy to namecheck the European Marine Energy Centre in my constituency. That all chimes well with the role that the bank is to play and underlines the impact that its location in Scotland could have. Add to that Edinburgh's transport network, digital connectivity and cost-competitiveness as a location, and the overall package is remarkably strong.

The creation of a green investment bank will be a critical tool in helping to deliver a low-carbon economy. The bid demonstrates the profound benefits of partnerships across political parties and the public, private and third sectors, and across borders within the UK. The contributions to the debate and the vote this evening can only help to reinforce the powerful case for Edinburgh to be chosen as the location for the bank. I am happy to support the minister's motion.

16:07

John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): I welcome the motion in the name of Fergus Ewing and the debate initiated in the name of the Scottish Government to have the green investment bank located in Edinburgh. I also welcome the mainly consensual nature of the debate in the chamber.

Before I move on to the main part of my speech, I want to refer what Kevin Stewart said about the role that Aberdeen has played. I was reminded that in the 1970s, when oil exploration was first taking place in the North Sea, the UK Government of the day decided to locate its main oil department—Britoil—in Aberdeen. Therefore, there is a history of UK Governments realising the benefits of locating departments near or close to energy resources.

That situation links to the issue of the green investment bank's location. I recognise that the UK Government's criteria for the location of the bank are centred on ensuring that it has international

links, a financial centre and, of course, good research capacity. As Gavin Brown said, there are 11 universities within an hour's journey of Edinburgh, many of which play a vital role in renewable energy and low-carbon developments. The Scottish Government has placed the low-carbon economy at the heart of its economic strategy—I believe that that is how we should look forward as a nation—which should fit well with the policy context of a green investment bank.

The Scottish Government previously set out the need to harness renewables. That was followed up by practical action in the form of the national renewables infrastructure fund, with a commitment of up to £70 million. In highlighting the job opportunities from the development of green investment in Edinburgh, we should be aware that the report prepared for the UK Government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills by Vivid Economics in October 2011 clearly emphasises the importance of unlocking finance and ensuring the implementation of green economic objectives. There is more that all of us—including the energy companies—can do to take us in the direction of an economy that is based on sustainable growth, on which the Government can deliver through the detail of its policies.

Given its respect agenda, the UK Government should recognise that the City of London, although an important international financial centre, is not the only financial capital in the UK. Locating the green investment bank in Edinburgh would ensure that a highly trained workforce with specialist expertise was utilised to the full. Edinburgh has expertise in asset-backed financial services that maintains its pre-eminence in fund management.

The Scottish Government has shown its commitment to meeting targets under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The location of the green investment bank in Scotland would assist creation of a necessary step change in low-carbon delivery. The development of a green economic strategy aims to make Scotland's economy more resilient and capable of resisting the volatility that is associated with ever-increasing energy prices.

Promoting growth that is sustainable in the long term is vital in taking Scotland forward. A sustainable economy is dependent on achieving capital injections. The report produced by Vivid Economics stated that investment by pension funds in renewables is rare and referred to two Danish pension funds taking a 50 per cent stake worth \$1.1 billion in Denmark's largest offshore wind farm as an exception. According to a 2011 KPMG report, only 20 per cent of industry experts expected pension funds to play an active role in renewable energy over the following 18 months.

I hope that the siting of the green investment bank in Edinburgh will lead many fund managers

to realise that they could start investing pension funds and other finances that are available to them in the economic and environmental developments that are required if we are to meet our green targets.

Scotland has a role on the global stage, given that it has a quarter of Europe's offshore and wind energy potential. I note that the aim of the Scottish Government's low-carbon economic agenda is that 60,000 jobs will be created by 2020. The prospects for Scotland's green economy are healthy, particularly given the financial context that the global low-carbon economy is forecast to grow to £4.3 trillion in the next four years.

I hope that the establishment of the green investment bank in Edinburgh will ensure that companies are able to tap into growing market sectors of the economy, such as renewables.

A key component of ensuring that Scotland has a global reach is a real sense of renewal in respect of Scotland's capital infrastructure needs. The Scottish Government is committed to developing the climate challenge fund, and funding of £10.3 million is in place for 2011-12. That will no doubt ensure that Scotland develops an international profile for its development of a greener economy.

The debate is timely. I look forward to the green investment bank being sited in Edinburgh. I hope that we can develop a financial context that delivers an energy future that ensures real benefits for the Scottish people. I also hope that Scotland can not only play a major role in developing low-carbon technologies in Europe but become a powerhouse for capital investment funding for energy production in Europe. That can be achieved if we get the green investment bank in Edinburgh and are able to drive forward the low-carbon economy that Scotland is striving to create. The £3 billion from the green investment bank would ensure that we had the funds to stimulate the involvement of other financial sectors in the development of low-carbon technologies.

16:14

Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to speak in the debate. There is cross-party support for the motion and broad support across the Parliament for the bid that has been submitted to the UK Government for the green investment bank to be located in Edinburgh. That reflects the support that the bid has received across civic Scotland from council leaders, chambers of commerce, the renewables sector and academics alike.

In the short time that I have been a member of the Parliament, the best outcomes have been achieved when the Parliament has been able to

unite behind solving a particular problem or supporting a particular project. I hope that that continues to be the case with the Edinburgh bid for the bank.

The green investment bank is the first of its kind in the world. Its location will become a focus for investment, expertise and leadership in the green economy. Already, 32 bids to host the bank have been submitted from across the UK. The competition is fierce, but I hope, as we all do, that with the support of the Parliament, the Government and wider Scotland, the Edinburgh bid will be successful.

It makes sense to locate the bank in Scotland, given that we have almost half of the UK's total renewable energy capacity. It should follow that a high proportion of the projects that secure investment will be based in Scotland. It also makes sense to locate the bank in Edinburgh, given that it is ranked as the fourth-largest financial centre in Europe, with 60,000 people in the surrounding area being employed in the financial services sector. In addition, Edinburgh is home to four universities and it clearly has the research capability to develop and deliver some of the projects that the green investment bank would be likely to invest in.

Although the investment bank group anticipates that it will create only 70 jobs initially, against the backdrop of 60,000 people being employed in the financial services sector, those 70 jobs will still be warmly welcomed by people who are looking for work. It is expected that, in time, many more jobs will come to the city as it establishes itself as the financial centre for renewable energy. That will be another big boost for anyone who is out of work at the moment, even for people who live as far afield as Kilsyth, as I do, since the city is only a 40-minute train journey away.

Locating the green investment bank in Edinburgh would be a big boost for the city and for Scotland, but the big prize would not be simply the hosting of the bank; it would be the concentration of renewables firms—and expertise—in and around the city, bidding for part of the £3 billion-worth of funding that will be available over the next three years. If the bank is located here and that concentration of businesses materialises, we can expect the local economy to benefit massively, with the result that we can start to overcome the challenges that Scotland faces in achieving the renewable electricity generation targets.

One of the biggest challenges for the renewables sector is how to manage demand at peak times and what to do with the surplus electricity that is generated when demand is low. The excess electricity that is generated could be exported when demand is low, but that would not

address the issue of high demand when the wind is not blowing.

Large-scale electricity storage schemes will be required, such as the proposed £800 million hydroelectric storage scheme at the west end of the Great Glen that is planned by Scottish and Southern Energy. Such projects have massive storage potential, but they would have a significant impact on the landscape, and the availability of suitable sites is limited.

The green investment bank could invest in large-scale electricity storage, which has been described by a respected American academic as

“an energy game-changer, unshackling alternative energy from the constraints of intermittence.”

Technologies such as compressed-air storage, battery technologies and hydrogen fuel cell technology will be vital for storing surplus electricity for use when demand increases at peak time. Investment in research and development is needed to create projects that use those technologies on the sort of scale that is required to store significant quantities of energy.

Such technology is much needed if we are to achieve our ambitious targets for renewable electricity generation, and the funds that the green investment bank could provide, if it was located in Edinburgh, would be crucial. The bank could create jobs for engineering apprentices and graduates like me. Who knows? If things do not work out for me in politics, funds from the green investment bank might mean that there will be a job for me to move into.

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP): We want you to stay.

Mark Griffin: I am grateful for that support.

My career prospects aside, the funds of the investment bank mean that there is massive potential for job and wealth creation.

I am still in touch with a lot of my colleagues from the mechanical engineering department at the University of Strathclyde, and I know that many of them have struggled to find work. Many of those people who are struggling to find meaningful employment are waiting for something to kick-start the renewables revolution in Scotland, and the locating of the green investment bank in Edinburgh could be that catalyst.

I urge all members and the Government to continue to support the bid so that Edinburgh and Scotland can benefit from the obvious advantages and employment opportunities for our young apprentices and graduates that would come about as a result of the green investment bank locating in Edinburgh.

16:19

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP): There is an inescapable logic to locating the green investment bank in the capital of a country that has such laudable ambitions to be the renewables centre of Europe. Although the number of jobs—around 50 to 100—that come with the bank is relatively small, they will come at a time when jobs are scarce and banking jobs even scarcer.

However, it is not just about jobs, but about the correct decision being made for the right reasons. In terms of equity assets, Edinburgh is the fourth-largest financial centre in Europe, and it is home to the headquarters of more FTSE 100 companies than any other UK city except London. The expertise and the skills that will be needed to run the bank and make it a success are readily available locally. In particular, skills related to project finance are represented by major banks that are present in Scotland, and many advisers have a capability in green infrastructure.

Edinburgh has strong capabilities in structured finance. The city has an enviable record in investment management—it is home to around 13 per cent, or approximately £750 billion, of total UK assets under management—coupled with expertise at the high-risk, early-stage end of the green infrastructure sector.

In terms of advisory expertise, Edinburgh boasts a network of specialist advisers, particularly in the green infrastructure sectors. Significantly, Edinburgh operates globally as an international financial services centre—the only location outside London to do so—and 80 per cent of the world's major banking companies have a presence in the city.

All of the above means that the green investment bank will be able to access locally the expertise that is necessary to deliver its analytical and appraisal functions.

I mentioned earlier Scotland's ambitions in relation to renewables. Edinburgh has a proximity to levels of green infrastructure development that are not found elsewhere in the UK. It would be fitting if Scotland's drive towards a new future in energy resources was to be endorsed by the location of the green investment bank in Edinburgh.

That drive has resulted in Scotland becoming a key part of the UK renewables targets. About half of the UK's renewable energy capacity is in Scotland, and Scottish Renewables has highlighted that almost £750 million of renewable projects started last year and that there is a £46 billion pipeline of Scottish projects. Inserting the green investment bank into that environment

can have only a positive and beneficial impact on the bank and on the industry in general.

Around 32 cities and towns throughout the UK are submitting proposals to host the bank, but only one—Edinburgh—is in Scotland. That reflects the reality, which is clearly seen in Scotland, that Edinburgh has the expertise and the ability to host the green investment bank, and that, although other centres in Scotland may have legitimate claims as renewables centres, Edinburgh brings together all the diverse elements that are needed to give it a commanding position in the bid to host the bank.

Locating the green investment bank in Edinburgh will place that bank close to a major clustering of renewable energy businesses and initiatives. That will in turn result in a greater economic impact for the UK as a whole, which will improve the UK's efforts to deliver on its low-carbon objectives.

It is not just Scotland's ambitions in relation to green energy that qualify Edinburgh above all others. Time and again, Edinburgh has been highly rated for quality of life, most recently in 2010 when it was rated as the top city in the UK and the eighth in Europe. I am not sure whether the trams project was taken into account, but the city came out well anyway.

As a location for work and recreation, Edinburgh remains second to none, with easy access to all areas of Scotland. Culture and the arts are well represented and available locally, and the world-famous Edinburgh festival brings life and vitality to a city that is steeped in history. Edinburgh is also a UNESCO—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—world heritage site. Families locating to Edinburgh have a wide range of housing options and internationally renowned schooling on their doorsteps, all located in an enviable environment.

Uniquely among major cities, 20 per cent of commuters walk to work and around 7 per cent cycle. The city is easily walkable due to its compactness, and that encourages networking and informal meetings, which are easily facilitated.

The city is surrounded by academic and research capabilities, with no fewer than 11 universities within an hour's journey from Edinburgh. Such facilities would complement and strengthen the breadth of resources that would be available to the bank and its clientele.

International transport links are first class. Rail, road, and air links are easily accessible. Edinburgh is one of Europe's best-connected cities. ICT and broadband links are excellent. Office space is readily available and rents are highly competitive, with the City of Edinburgh Council offering the first three years of

accommodation rent free. Salary and related costs are less than the UK average. For example, managers' salaries are at 82 per cent of the median and 57 per cent of the London average. Employee salaries are 90 per cent of the UK average and only 53 per cent of the London average.

The bid has mustered support from a wide spectrum of Scottish businesses and from across the political parties. Significantly, despite the global downturn and the increasingly fierce market for foreign investment, Edinburgh has continued to attract top companies. Foreign direct investment in Edinburgh was up 72 per cent in 2010 and has more than doubled since 2008. Edinburgh does not sit on its laurels, but has a proactive, energetic and supportive pro-business attitude that major companies that move into the city appreciate and benefit from. Scotland is the only nation in the UK that has a zero waste strategy, which results in policy-driven solutions nationally and within local authorities.

The risk of not choosing Edinburgh is that the bank would be located in a city that either lacks the breadth of resources to support the work of the green investment bank or does not have the commitment to developing renewable energy sources that has been evidenced in Edinburgh. A failure to be close to renewables businesses would simply not make sense and would dilute the bank's impact on the very sector that it seeks to support. I strongly support Edinburgh's bid and fully support the motion.

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): I call Murdo Fraser. You have eight minutes, Mr Fraser.

16:27

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Thank you, Presiding Officer—that is extremely generous. I signal that I would be delighted to accept interventions, should any member wish to pad out my rather threadbare remarks.

I apologise to Ken Macintosh and Gavin Brown for missing their speeches, but I was called away to a broadcast interview on the different but related topic of fuel poverty.

The debate has been consensual and I am afraid that, on this occasion, I have no wish to break the consensus—not yet, at any rate. We have had excellent speeches from throughout the chamber. It is clear from the debate that the Parliament is united and speaks with one voice in sending a clear message that the green investment bank should come to Scotland. As Gavin Brown pointed out, the Scottish Conservatives are delighted to reaffirm our support for that ambition.

If I may, I will make a partisan comment. The creation of the green investment bank is testament to the Conservative-led UK Government's commitment to drive the UK towards a green and growing economy, although I acknowledge Sarah Boyack's perfectly fair comment that it was a Labour chancellor—Alistair Darling—who shared the ambition for the project to happen.

The focus of the green investment bank will be to put an investment of £3 billion into a range of initiatives, primarily offshore wind, industrial energy efficiency and waste products projects. The bank will provide up to 100 jobs by 2015. It is one of a number of key policies that are designed to help to meet environmental objectives and promote economic growth. Other initiatives include the creation of a national infrastructure plan; the reforms to the electricity market that are being considered; changes to the climate change levy; the introduction of a renewable heat incentive; the review of waste policy; and the reviews of Ofgem, the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets, and Ofwat, the Water Services Regulation Authority.

I hope that the Scottish Government takes note of those reforms and reviews and does not hold back from considering its own reviews. Once again, I mention what I and other members consider to be the urgent need for a national strategic review of renewable energy in Scotland specifically in relation to the siting of onshore wind farms.

I am convener of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, so it would be remiss of me not to mention our upcoming inquiry into the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets. The inquiry is attracting a great deal of interest. Indeed, I read in *The Press and Journal* this morning that no less a person than Mr Donald Trump is keen to give evidence at our humble parliamentary committee. It remains to be seen whether committee members are prepared to accommodate Mr Trump, but I am sure that the occasion would be interesting, were it to come about.

John Wilson: Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: I am happy to give way to the committee's deputy convener.

John Wilson: Does Murdo Fraser agree that Mr Trump's conversion to an interest in wind energy is mainly due to the impact that he claims a wind farm will have on the Menie estate, which he purchased for his world-class—as he claims—golf course, and that Mr Trump has no other interest in issues to do with wind power?

Murdo Fraser: Far be it from me to understand Mr Trump's motives for the positions that he takes. We might explore the issue with him, if he were to come to the committee, or perhaps Mr Wilson

might like to ask Mr Trump's close friend Mr Salmond whether he has intimate knowledge of the matter. I am not in a position to shed light on it, I am afraid.

As we heard, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has set three main criteria on which applications for the green investment bank will be judged. As Gavin Brown, Marco Biagi and other members said, Edinburgh is extremely well placed to meet all three. BIS is looking for, first:

“Ability to recruit and retain the specialist staff needed to run the organisation”.

We all know the strength and depth of Scotland's renewables sector, operationally on the ground and in the context of the intelligence that is available in our higher education institutions. We have expertise in financial services, which is vital. Edinburgh might be unique among the candidate cities in having such a combination of knowledge about finance and renewable energy.

Quality-of-life issues are extremely important in attracting and retaining staff, as the minister said. In Edinburgh we have the advantage of a city that has great institutions. We have great schools and universities, so there are great educational opportunities, and we have a very good quality of life, which will attract people.

Secondly, BIS talks about

“Enabling the GIB to work closely with other parties involved in deals as well as other investment bodies, project developers and green technology providers”.

As we know, Edinburgh is one of the top financial centres in Europe—it is the fourth-largest financial centre in Europe. As we heard from Sarah Boyack, John Wilson and other members, there is also superb expertise in our universities. We also have great connectivity. Edinburgh is one of the UK's best-connected cities, with strong domestic and international transport links and world-class ICT.

Thirdly, BIS is looking for

“A location that provides good value for money, to ensure that the GIB is cost effective.”

Scotland will be extremely competitive compared with London and most other cities. I gently point out that I hope that we have learned from the experience of the Scottish Parliament building and the trams project, which Mr Beattie bravely mentioned, and that if we attract the bank's headquarters to Edinburgh we will look for economic, appropriate and understated accommodation.

I welcome the broad partnership of private and public sector bodies that are promoting the bid. City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Financial Enterprise, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Power, PricewaterhouseCoopers,

Aberdeen Asset Management and Grant Thornton, to name but a few, have come together.

I have no wish to bring in a discordant note. However, I must briefly touch on the constitutional issue, which a number of members mentioned. We are talking about investment of £3 billion in a UK institution, which will be important for whoever benefits from it. In the interests of consensus I do not want to dwell on this, but I think that Rob Gibson said that in the event of independence the rest of the UK would still have to buy Scottish renewable energy.

I am not sure that that is correct. According to experts, it is cheaper to build offshore wind projects—which, of course, are the main focus of the green investment bank—around the coasts of England than around the coasts of Scotland because of the shallower waters. Indeed, it would be cheaper for England to import nuclear power from France. Only last week, David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy signed an agreement to develop the new generation of clean green nuclear power stations in England. Mr Gibson should reflect on that.

Rob Gibson: Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: If I have time, I will do so.

The Presiding Officer: A very brief intervention, Mr Gibson—and a very brief response, Mr Fraser.

Rob Gibson: It is already cheaper to import nuclear power from France to England than it is to import Scottish-generated electricity into England. Nevertheless, the point is that the firms that trade across Europe will not suddenly change their patterns of activity and that many of those that are in Scotland are of supreme importance to England's electricity requirements.

Murdo Fraser: I say gently to Mr Gibson that if he studies the economics of energy he will find that renewable energy is the most expensive form of energy for consumers to purchase. Given the choice between purchasing Scottish renewable energy more expensively than it can be purchased elsewhere and the cheaper option, the rest of the UK might well seek the latter.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): Will the member give way?

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry—Mr Fraser has no time left.

Murdo Fraser: Once again, I reiterate the Scottish Conservatives' support for the green investment bank to be located in Scotland. It would be good for the economy, good for our renewables industry and good for co-ordination of energy policy across the UK but, most important, it would also be good news for Scotland.

16:36

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I am delighted to wind up on behalf of Scottish Labour in support of the Government's motion on the green investment bank. I am pleased by the cross-party support, so eloquently highlighted by Mark Griffin, for a proposal that was first mooted two years ago in the House of Commons by Alistair Darling and by the passion with which members across the chamber have argued for the bank to be based in Edinburgh.

As the minister stated, *fDi Magazine* has endorsed Edinburgh as a number 1 city. That is a significant development. Members have pointed out why Edinburgh is the best place in the UK to host the bank. Those who are behind the bid deserve recognition, because it is not often that a coalition can be formed between environmental campaigners, banks, universities, engineering firms, law firms and the Government. On this endeavour, there has been a united front, which I am sure will pay dividends for Scotland and the UK when the final decision is made. As the minister stressed, Edinburgh is the only city with synergies between finances and green energy.

Gavin Brown and Sarah Boyack highlighted the commitment of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, and Gavin Brown put forward the cluster argument, which is very important. As Marco Biagi said, one would think that the criteria had been designed with Edinburgh in mind and when the bid result is announced we hope that that will be the case. In the words of the business case, no other city in the United Kingdom brings

"finance and the clean energy industry together".

A pool of nearly 156,000 people is employed directly or indirectly in Scotland's financial services sector, including 60,000 within the Edinburgh travel-to-work area. Colin Beattie also highlighted the analytical expertise in Edinburgh's financial sector.

All that is coupled with an unrivalled concentration of skills and expertise in clean energy and skills in the oil and gas sector that can be transferred to offshore renewables. Mark Griffin spoke of his background in engineering and of how some of Scotland's great institutions can ensure a good field of future employees in the sector. Moreover, Sarah Boyack stressed the necessity of moving ideas from the academic to the commercial sector. Mark Griffin also highlighted the need to kick-start the GIB and unlock employment opportunities and the vital chance to research not only the issue of storage to deal with the problem of intermittency, but other new developments.

The GIB must engage with partners in the sector to deliver on its objectives. If located in

Edinburgh, the bank will be in an ideal place to engage with the new European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney as well as with partners in Scotland's other major cities who are backing this bid. As Rob Gibson pointed out, proximity to intellectual knowledge and projects is essential.

The GIB must be cost effective. With high rents, rates and other general costs, the costs of basing the bank in London far outweigh any benefits that that city can offer. Once again, Edinburgh becomes the obvious choice. In fact, beyond purely financial considerations, basing the bank outside London will allow it to be seen as something new and distinctive. It will not be just another bank in the city of London, but a new endeavour reaching out to all parts of the country. Colin Keir highlighted that point and John Wilson also indicated that Edinburgh has strong international links.

I turn briefly to the bank itself. Although I welcome the cross-party consensus that we have seen today, I am disappointed in the way in which the coalition Government proposals for the bank seem to be developing. Sir Adrian Montague, the financier who has been tasked with overseeing the bank's launch, has stated that it will act using commercial lending principles and that it will not offer preferential rates. It will be tasked with delivering a dividend for the Treasury. That is fair enough, but on that basis, would the Treasury not be better forcing other banks to lend to the sector on a commercial basis and more than they are doing at present? However, I have been somewhat reassured by Liam McArthur's remarks. I also highlight the importance of the UK electricity market reform in relation to demand-driven aspects of investment in energy efficiency.

The minister highlighted the Scottish Government's commitment to the low-carbon economy and many members share that vision of long-term sustainable development for Scotland and Britain. If that is to become a reality, the GIB must be given criteria to ensure that it will bridge the gap between venture capital and the green economy, and be able to kick-start the low-carbon infrastructure projects that we need. As Graeme Pearson stressed by using the example of the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation, a sector-specific bank is invaluable. Energy4All has raised with me the issue of co-operatives being able to borrow to cover start-up costs and told me how it is impossible for most banks to loan 100 per cent of start-up money to a co-operative.

Sarah Boyack stressed the importance of unlocking finance at the city and community level. She argued that the bank must be transformative and must influence other banks. Kevin Stewart, from Aberdeen of course, also stressed that the CHP and hydrogen technology programmes will

make a valuable contribution when it comes to deciding on siting the GIB here.

I ask the minister to do all that he can to persuade the UK Government to ensure that the bank becomes not simply another commercial entity, but a real source of financial support to organisations of all sizes that are seeking to develop new green technologies. I reaffirm Scottish Labour's support for bringing the green investment bank to Scotland and our strong support for the Government's motion today.

The Presiding Officer: I now call Fergus Ewing to wind up today's debate. I would be very happy if the minister could go on until 5 o'clock. Minister, this is your big opportunity.

16:42

Fergus Ewing: I will try my best, Presiding Officer.

The debate has been enjoyable and, as tends to happen, some surprising information has been imparted during its course. For example, we had a short seminar from Mr Macintosh—or perhaps it was from his children—on how smart meters work. Mr Griffin regaled us with his thoughts about a potential new career should his current one not work out too well, which was unexpected. It was also surprising to hear from Mr Brown that Murdo Fraser had run away; that really is unprecedented.

The debate has been good humoured and consensual as well as useful. The compelling arguments for Edinburgh to be the home of the green investment bank have been well encapsulated by all speakers and all parties. The debate has also gone on to cover how the green investment bank will and should work, which is a perfectly legitimate area of concern.

It is right that we have such debates. I like to think that we are not party automatons in this Parliament, and that we have the ability of independent thought, as we frequently hear from Mr Fraser. It is always interesting to listen to those with whom one usually disagrees. I have enjoyed the debate; the arguments have been made strongly.

I start by congratulating those who have played a part but who are not here and to whom many members alluded. The large cast is set out in the campaign submission from the Edinburgh green investment bank group. As Gavin Brown and Sarah Boyack pointed out in their opening remarks, special mention should be made of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce.

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has been involved not just in this campaign but, as Sarah Boyack pointed out, in the issue over a long period. For example, it promoted the low-carbon

investment conference, which, as Gavin Brown pointed out, has been a great success. More than 550 delegates came to its conference in 2010, and Al Gore came to the conference last year. It is redolent of the fact that Edinburgh is not only a strong candidate but a capital city.

Surely an institution of such huge significance and potential value, not just to these islands but to the planet and with its aims and aspirations to increase and promote investment in green technologies, should be located in a capital city—not just a provincial city but a capital city. That point has not been made expressly or as they used to say—at least in the courts—ad longum, which tends to be the way in which I make arguments, particularly when I have 18 minutes to fill.

The Presiding Officer: I am sure that the minister would be delighted to take interventions.

Fergus Ewing: I am certainly keen to do so. If I have time, I will try to cover some of the points.

Hanzala Malik: I am pleased to co-operate with the minister on this occasion.

Has any thought been given to expanding the institution across Scotland? I appreciate that we are determined to ensure that we succeed in Edinburgh in the first instance, but is there a structure in place to encourage other cities, such as Glasgow and Aberdeen?

Fergus Ewing: We want first to establish the objective of the campaign, which is to secure the green investment bank in Edinburgh. That is why we are here. However, Mr Malik is correct that that should not necessarily be an end to the aspirations for the institution.

The bank is a fledgling institution—I believe that the term used is that it is in its incubation period. Therefore, we should see it formally established and go through the initial period, in which, as I think was pointed out by Mr Macintosh, it will operate as a fund rather than as a bank. It will then acquire borrowing powers provided that certain criteria are met by 2015.

Although, initially at least, there would not be a branch of the green investment bank in Glasgow or Aberdeen—I am sorry to disappoint Mr Stewart, but that is not part of the modelling—

Kevin Stewart: Will the minister give way?

Fergus Ewing: I will just finish my reply to Mr Malik first.

The real point is that the benefit will be not simply to Edinburgh but to the whole of Scotland. The headquarters of companies such as Scottish Power are in Glasgow. Scottish Renewables and the Wood Group's SgurrEnergy are based in Glasgow. Clyde Blowers is based in East Kilbride

and Doosan Babcock is based in Renfrew. None of those places is far from here, and the transport links are reasonable and improving. The benefits of the green investment bank coming to this city will therefore go far beyond the boundaries of this city.

Liam McArthur: Will the minister take an intervention?

Fergus Ewing: I do not want to seem as if I have no points of my own to make, because I have many—I could probably fill 58 minutes—but I will happily give way to Mr McArthur.

Liam McArthur: I am grateful to the minister and apologise to Kevin Stewart because I appear to have jumped the queue.

The minister will be relieved to hear that I am not about to make the case for a branch of the bank opening up in Orkney. The minister's point about connectivity is a very real one. Although Orkney has the European Marine Energy Centre, a cluster of enterprises in the supply chain of the renewables sector and the academic base, the connections that Orkney enjoys have been hampered, for example by recent changes to the air discount scheme. Maintaining those services and the affordability of those services will be crucial wherever the bank is located in due course.

Fergus Ewing: Mr McArthur is absolutely right. The campaign submission that I have referred to highlights the global connections that Edinburgh enjoys. The number of international destinations served by flights from Edinburgh airport has increased to 109—[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: I remind members that phones should be switched off.

Fergus Ewing: I hope that that was not someone booking a flight.

Edinburgh airport carries more than 9 million passengers, with more than 40 airlines providing links to international hubs such as Heathrow, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Frankfurt and Newark airport in New York. Edinburgh is now three hours or less from major airport connections in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, where there are huge developments in clean energy.

The connections with those countries are very important. A couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of hosting a dinner in Edinburgh castle, where the invitees—the guests—were representatives of companies in Scotland that are German owned. Companies from Germany have a huge presence in Scotland and a large number of them are in the renewables sector. Similarly, other countries are represented in the capital city of Edinburgh.

A point about UK connectivity that has not been made in the debate is that, in the financial sector, there is virtually a corridor between Edinburgh and London City airports, with early morning flights arriving in each city before 9 am. No other town or city in the UK has those connections with London, and that important point is well made in Edinburgh's campaign submission. There are 40 trains between Edinburgh and London each weekday and 260 trains between Edinburgh and Glasgow each weekday. Connectivity will be very important for the operation of the bank, and the Edinburgh submission makes the case well.

Sarah Boyack: One issue that we need to concentrate on is the benefit to the whole of the UK of the green investment bank being in Edinburgh and in Scotland. It will provide massive opportunities here, but there is also a case to be made for why it is good for the whole of the rest of the UK that we get the project here. We could make it work for the rest of the UK, and it might be worth making a couple of comments on the record about that, should anyone look at our debate to see what we have said.

Fergus Ewing: I am happy to do that. Sarah Boyack is absolutely correct that locating the green investment bank in Edinburgh would be good for the whole of the UK. The prominence that its activities would achieve and attain is likely to be far greater in Edinburgh than in London. Colin Keir made the point that there was a danger that in London the GIB would be a minute institution that is lost among giants and megaliths in the City of London. It would have no visibility.

This Monday, Sir Adrian Montague, who is the chair of the independent advisory board, pointed out that the post of chief executive of the green investment bank is not likely to attract a massive salary. He did not go into any figures, and one might speculate on what the figure may be. However, as a member has pointed out: if the salaries are low, what quality of people will the post attract in London? Those in the financial sector who are motivated simply by high salaries will have no particular urge to go to the green investment bank when it has been made clear that, correctly, there will not be massive salaries of the sort that have caused such public concern in recent times in relation to banks.

For that reason alone, there would be benefits, but I do not think that that is what Sarah Boyack had in mind. I think that she had in mind the promotion of the renewable energy sector in particular and of green technologies more widely. The fact that the offshore renewable energy catapult centre has been won by Glasgow, so that investment is there; the fact that about a half of the renewable energy projects in Britain are in Scotland; and the fact that we have such a huge

cluster of academe in Edinburgh—a member referred to the 11 universities and the point is also made in the Edinburgh submission—mean that in Edinburgh the activities of the green investment bank will achieve far greater prominence than they would if they were subsumed into London.

I want to point out something that has not been said in the debate, although Mr Fraser alluded to it. If we want public bodies to operate in a cost-efficient manner—I know that Mr Fraser is very keen on that—it is worth remembering that the mean cost per square foot of office space is £82.50 in London's west end, whereas it is £27.08 in Edinburgh.

The Edinburgh submission has even identified several potential office premises that could be occupied by the green investment bank. I have visited some of those premises. They are excellent and are the cream of what Edinburgh has to offer. They provide access to the city centre, to the quality of life available in Edinburgh and to its attractions, which are second to none. They would do so at perhaps a third or half of the cost of premises in London city centre or its west end.

All that information is in the submission on the case for locating the green investment bank in Edinburgh, which is detailed and cogent. The submission not only talks about the principle, but says, "Come on down—we have already identified the office premises for you." It goes into that amount of detail.

In order to buttress the arguments on the credentials of the institutions of Edinburgh, the submission stresses that Edinburgh is the centre of a whole host of significant institutions. It mentions the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland, Scottish Investment Operations, the Chartered Insurance Institute, Scottish Financial Enterprise, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, the Financial Skills Partnership, the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, the Insurance Society of Edinburgh, the centre for financial market research and the Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment centre of excellence at the University of Edinburgh, and, of course, Scottish Renewables. Who among us here could have given that whole list if I had asked them to do so—as some perverse form of quiz? I suspect very few. Indeed, I did not expect to read the list out myself, but there we are.

We broadly support Vince Cable's outline of how the bank should operate. I listened carefully to what Claudia Beamish and other Labour members said on the issue. We have to remember that the green investment bank is a bank, and Mr Macintosh said that we may need some clarification—he expounded his argument carefully—of how it will operate. If the bank is willing to take risks when technology is not close

to commercial deployment, or not as close as we would like, the bank must do so responsibly, avoiding undue risks as it seeks to achieve positive portfolio returns. It must preserve and build up its loan capital over time.

Mr McArthur spoke about wave and tidal projects in his constituency. From resources that it has recently obtained, the Government—*[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Excuse me, minister. There is far too much noise in the chamber. I ask members to settle down and take their seats.

Fergus Ewing: I was talking about wave and tidal energy. During this debate, many members have spoken about the role of the green investment bank. The proposed approach is reasonable, although—as Mr McArthur suggested—we will review it from time to time.

I was heartened by the conclusion reached in a recent report by a House of Commons committee chaired by Tim Yeo. He gave a thumping endorsement of the Scottish Government's policies on wave and tidal power. He went on to say—although he did not use a form of words that I would necessarily use—that, when it comes to wave power, Britannia should surely rule the waves. His heart is in the right place. We find ourselves gaining support from the most unlikely of quarters.

Sadly, I see that my time is approaching its close. Joking apart, I feel that this has been an excellent debate. It has allowed members in all parties to express their support for the campaign to bring the green investment bank to this city and this country. We have heard eloquent and detailed rehearsals of the arguments—from Sarah Boyack, Marco Biagi and many others. In my fairly substantial experience, the spirit of cross-party co-operation has been almost unprecedented, and it is very welcome. Mark Griffin has been here only for a short time, but he put it well when he said that this Parliament is perhaps at its best when we are able to unite behind a purpose. There is clearly an overwhelming case for a shared Scottish approach. That will serve us, our constituents and our nation well.

It gives me great pleasure to say that I will be sending a copy of the *Official Report* to Vince Cable tomorrow morning. I hope and expect that the strength of the case will lead to Edinburgh being chosen as the location for the green investment bank.

Business Motion

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-02077, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 29 February 2012

2.30 pm	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Ministerial Statement: Post-16 Reform
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Debate: Human Trafficking
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motion
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business

Thursday 1 March 2012

9.15 am	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Debate: Climate Justice
11.40 am	General Question Time
12.00 pm	First Minister's Question Time
2.15 pm	Themed Question Time Infrastructure and Capital Investment; Culture and External Affairs
2.55 pm	Local Government and Regeneration Committee Debate: Living Wage in Scotland
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business

Wednesday 7 March 2012

2.30 pm	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Business
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motion
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business

Thursday 8 March 2012

9.15 am	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Business
11.40 am	General Question Time

12.00 pm First Minister's Question Time
2.15 pm Themed Question Time
Education and Lifelong Learning
2.55 pm Scottish Government Business
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business—[*Bruce Crawford.*]
Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of four Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Bruce Crawford to move en bloc motions S4M-02078 to S4M-02081, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Forestry Commissioners (Climate Change Functions) (Scotland) Order 2012 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Representation of the People (Post-Local Government Elections Supply and Inspection of Documents) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2012 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Scottish Local Government Elections Amendment Order 2012 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 Amendment (No 2) Order 2012 [draft] be approved.—[*Bruce Crawford.*]

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

Decision Time

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are two questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that motion S4M-02066, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on the green investment bank, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament endorses the bid submitted to the UK Government to have the green investment bank (GIB) located in Edinburgh; believes that the Edinburgh bid fully satisfies the criteria set out by the UK Government and that Edinburgh is the ideal location for the new institution through its unique business ecosystem and highly advanced network of financiers, developers, investors, asset managers, researchers, academics, think tanks and government agencies; recognises the breadth of support for the Edinburgh bid across Scottish civic society, the academic sector and commerce, and acknowledges that Scotland's ambitious low-carbon economic agenda will facilitate a GIB based in Edinburgh becoming an enduring financial institution with visibility and a distinct identity with which to mobilise significant investment into green projects across the UK.

The Presiding Officer: I propose to ask a single question on motions S4M-02078 to S4M-02081, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments. If any member objects to a single question being put, please say so now.

The second question is, that motions S4M-02078 to S4M-02081, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on the approval of SSIs, be agreed to.

Motions agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Forestry Commissioners (Climate Change Functions) (Scotland) Order 2012 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Representation of the People (Post-Local Government Elections Supply and Inspection of Documents) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2012 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Scottish Local Government Elections Amendment Order 2012 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 Amendment (No. 2) Order 2012 [draft] be approved.

Eating Disorders

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):

The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S4M-02011, in the name of Dennis Robertson, on raising awareness of eating disorders. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes that from 20 to 26 February 2012 Beat, considered the UK's leading charity supporting people affected by eating disorders, is holding Eating Disorders Awareness Week and acknowledges the work that the Scottish Government has done in the provision of the Eden Unit at Cornhill Hospital in Grampian, which provides inpatient treatment for people with severe eating disorders, improving access to high-quality care for the people in the north of Scotland living with an eating disorder, and the newly opened West Lothian Eating Disorders Unit at St John's Hospital, which will allow for care across south east Scotland regions.

17:03

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West)

(SNP): When I was elected to the Parliament, I felt very proud and privileged. On election evening, I dedicated my speech to my daughter, Caroline. A couple of weeks ago, one of the eating disorder charities contacted me to see whether I would be prepared to help to raise the profile of eating disorders and awareness of them. Of course, I said yes and, subsequently, the subject has been accepted for a members' business debate.

I never expected to be talking about a subject that is so personal to me and my family in my first members' business debate. Although I feel privileged to do so, it is with an element of sadness, too. As members probably recall, my daughter died because of an eating disorder. In fact, the first anniversary of Caroline's death will be this very week, on 25 February, during eating disorders awareness week.

There are three recognised eating disorders: anorexia nervosa, which is probably the least common but which has the most fatal consequences; bulimia nervosa; and binge eating. All of them have significant impacts on the lives of sufferers and on their families and carers. The impact extends even to sufferers' friends and to people whom they know at school, college and university and in the workplace.

The individual suffers with torment and torture, because such a disorder is a psychological illness and is not an eating fad. The person does not have the choice of overcoming it by sitting down and eating a healthy meal.

We must try as best we can to get rid of some of the myths about eating disorders. We must accept that an eating disorder is a psychiatric illness that

requires early intervention. To achieve that, we must be aware of the signs—that is perhaps the crux of the motion, which is about raising awareness.

The early signs are not always clear. Especially with anorexia nervosa, the majority usually become victims—I do not use that word loosely—during the pubescent period. In that period, young girls—but not only girls, as boys are affected, too—have body changes that they sometimes cannot explain and do not like. Often, that is to do with their image.

Beyond that period, recognising differences in individuals' behaviour gives us the early signs of illnesses such as anorexia. Signs include people changing their diet or having smaller portions, significant weight loss or perhaps obsessive exercise patterns. Their whole behaviour, character and personality start to change. Those are the early signs, of which we need to be aware, not just as parents but as guidance teachers at school, as lecturers in colleges and universities and as family members.

From my point of view, the people who need to become more aware are those in the medical profession. Our general practitioners and other medical professionals need to recognise that, when a young person goes to their surgery with their parents or a friend, their condition is not to be dismissed as a teenage fad. They are not going through a phase; they could have a serious, life-threatening and debilitating illness.

I was shocked when I learned some of the statistics about anorexia. I was shocked that one in 250 women—generally young women—can be anorexia sufferers. I had not quite considered the illness to be so prevalent in our society. In a study at a high school in America, 12 per cent of the young girls who were surveyed had eating disorder tendencies.

We have support systems that cannot provide support. Beat, which is a United Kingdom organisation, proposed the debate to me. It provides support for carers and families, raises awareness and provides information. That is wonderful and great, but those who suffer from such illnesses do not want the help. They do not engage at the early stages. They do not want to tell people. In fact, they hide the information. As I mentioned earlier, there is a change in their behaviour. Quite often, they isolate themselves not only from their family but from their friends. One of the most disturbing things for me is that, when they start to engage with the internet by googling anorexia, pro-anorexic sites come up, telling them how to beat the system; how to become even more anorexic, if they can; how to exacerbate the disease to the point that they can cheat their psychiatrist, their psychologist and other medical

professionals; how to string their family along; how to convince their friends that they are coming out the other end and are positive about their outcomes; how to make people think that they are beating the illness.

We need to engage with the issue of the pro-anorexic sites. I hope that we can police them and shut them down. They do not provide the help that family members and parents want or that those with the eating disorders require when they seek help.

Caroline, my daughter, was 13 when she contracted the illness. She fought the illness for five years. At times, she would say, "I don't like being anorexic. I want to be normal. I want to do the things that my twin sister does. I want to go out with boys. I want to have a job. I want to go to university. I want my life back." But that was when it was my daughter, Caroline, speaking to me and to her mum. At other times, however, I had an anorexic child, who did not engage, who would keep her distance, who would isolate herself in her bedroom, who would not sit at the family table and dine with us.

Holidays are something that families look forward to. They are for pleasure. They let people get away from their stresses, strains and anxieties. But our holidays were always fraught with anxiety, with pain and with torture because Caroline would not and could not go out and enjoy a meal with us. If she came, she would have a drink—a drink from a bottle that came with a cap on or a can that had not been opened, because of her absolute fear that someone might have put something in her drink that would tip the balance for her. She would not enjoy food that had been prepared by anyone else because of her fear that someone had put something in her food that would tip the balance.

Towards the end of Caroline's life, she was admitted to hospital because she was no longer able to keep food or liquids in her body, and she was at a critical stage. When my wife, Ann, and I were at the hospital with her, the consultant told us that he was shocked at the state that she was in. I am not casting blame or pointing fingers at any particular person, but I would say that earlier intervention would perhaps have saved Caroline's life—I do not know. She was a chronic anorexic and, if she had survived, she was probably doomed to have anorexic tendencies for the rest of her life.

My wife and I discuss this from time to time. To some extent, we believe that Caroline is now free from anorexia. She no longer hurts. She no longer has the pain or torment that anorexia brings. But that does not mean that we can sit back and let anorexia win. We cannot do that.

By bringing the debate to the chamber, it is my sincere hope that we can engage with the medical profession at the level at which they tell us what they require in order to assist people with those conditions to overcome them. However, I say to the medical profession that a vehicle exists now through the Scottish eating disorder interest group and eating disorders education and training Scotland. GPs and other medical professionals can sign up to that. They become more aware, and they can have a toolkit so that they can recognise the early symptoms and know who to refer to. They can refer on. Sadly, not many people have taken up that opportunity and registered. I hope that members, the ministers and the cabinet secretary will encourage our medical profession to consider engaging with the accreditation programme and become more aware of what needs to happen. Members must do what we can to ensure that other families do not suffer in the way in which my family had to.

Presiding Officer, I thank you for your indulgence, and I thank every single member who has supported the motion. It is important to me and my family to know that people are with us and behind us and that they will be with us to try to overcome and change a dreadful disease for our young people. *[Applause.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I thank you, Mr Robertson, for a dignified and elegant speech in what we all know and understand are difficult circumstances.

17:17

Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP): We have just heard a speech of great courage and strength from Dennis Robertson. I am sure that he knows that every member is with him and his family.

I apologise for being unable to stay for the full debate.

Eating disorders are serious health issues that affect people from all walks of life. They are often misunderstood, are increasingly common, and are found more and more in demographics with which they are not traditionally associated. Their increasing incidence is accompanied by ever-improving understanding of them and rising rates of diagnosis, but there is still more that can and should be done.

To establish some context, I will present some data on the prevalence of eating disorders in Scotland over the past few years. The information was provided to me as a result of parliamentary questions that I lodged last year.

The figures that were given in response to written question S4W-02313, which was lodged

last September, show that the estimated number of patients who consulted a GP or nurse regarding a potential eating disorder or related issue did not change much between 2003-04 and 2009-10. The number moved from 3,210 to 3,270. However, if the figures are broken down by age, we see that the most substantial increase in eating disorder consultations has been among Scotland's young people. In fact, there was a 15 per cent increase in the number of patients aged 14 and under who sought help from a doctor and a 12 per cent increase among those aged between 15 and 25. On the face of it, that apparent rise in the incidence of eating disorders is concerning, but I am heartened by the fact that, more than ever, people are open to seeking and receiving the help that they need. In the past, the condition may have gone undiagnosed and the patient may have gone untreated.

In large part, the long-term risks that are posed by eating disorders stem from the difficulties that sufferers and their families face in recognising and accepting the existence of a problem and seeking the appropriate help. It is worth noting that, in a recent study by the eating disorder charity Beat, more than half of the people who were asked said that they did not tell anyone about their eating disorder because they did not know how to talk about it. I hope that our participation in the debate demonstrates the Scottish Parliament's commitment to helping to break the silence, so that when people with eating disorders find the courage to confide in someone, they feel understood and supported.

Today, we are debating the motion that Dennis Robertson lodged. A couple of days beforehand, however, I lodged a similar motion, following which I got an e-mail from a Labour MSP's researcher congratulating me on lodging the motion and on raising the issue in the Parliament and saying that it was something that should have been done a long time ago. I am happy that we are debating Dennis Robertson's motion.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has seen a noticeable rise recently in the treatment of eating disorders across the healthcare spectrum. Charities such as Beat and the Scottish eating disorder interest group act as a vital link between sufferers, their friends and family, and the treatment that they require. Information from the parliamentary questions that I submitted showed that there was an increase in eating disorder patients being treated at all hospital types in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area between 2003 and 2010.

That said, because of the veil of silence that still remains, eating disorders represent an area of health policy debate that does not receive as much attention as other areas, which is something

that we hope to redress through eating disorder awareness week. To that end, understanding is key, and we can already see a growing awareness of symptoms, conditions and treatments in families, schools and the workplace, as well as an erosion of the stigma that, for too long, has been associated with eating disorders.

I am confident that we will see support from members across the chamber for the various treatment centres and support organisations across Scotland. Indeed, I am sure that colleagues in the chamber would echo the thanks that I express to the national health service, the Scottish Government and the various eating disorder charities and support groups that continue to be perceptive of the needs of individuals and families affected by eating disorders. However, more still needs to be done.

17:21

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): It is difficult for anyone to follow the moving opening speech from Dennis Robertson, but I am sure that we all applaud his courage in advancing an issue that affects both the mental and the physical health of many thousands of individuals in Scotland. It is a subject that is still much misunderstood—including by some of the medical profession, as Dennis Robertson reminded us—and it rarely enters public discourse.

Today offers a great opportunity to have a frank and open discussion in a week of events that are led by Beat and which are aimed at raising public awareness of the severity of conditions such as anorexia, bulimia nervosa and body dysmorphic disorder. It is unfortunate that we need to have the debate at all, but the stigma that hinders further discussion has meant that common misconceptions regarding eating disorders—that they are a fad, a trend or an image problem—have been allowed to prevail and to become a dominant feature of normative attitudes towards what is in actuality an extreme mental health problem.

When we reflect on the fact that it is largely our younger community who suffer the physical and mental scars of their situation, we must acknowledge our role as policy makers, leaders and adults. We must work with agencies such as Beat and the NHS to help to create a climate of trust and understanding in which taboos may be broken and stigma challenged for the future health and mental wellbeing of our young people.

In the context of stigma, the work of the see me campaign should be mentioned. I note that it has a new campaign that is aimed at young people, which I think is being launched at present.

However, in many cases it is older people whom we have to inform about the problem.

As previous speakers have said, it is a mental health problem that not only harms the body, but takes people into a private world of shame and isolation. What we can do to help sufferers back is inform and support those who have contact with them on a regular basis and get them to understand that the situation cannot be helped through vilification, disgust or indifference. Ignoring the issue because you are unsure of how best to approach the subject feeds into the shame and secrecy that dominates a sufferer's life and can quite easily lead to their developing long-term bodily damage.

All those points are outlined in Beat's aims and objectives, which are to change the way everyone thinks and talks about eating disorders, improve the way services and treatment are provided and help anyone believe that their eating disorder can be beaten. To do that we need to challenge the stereotypes and stigma that people with eating disorders face, campaign for better services and treatment, and provide information, support and encouragement to people to seek treatment and recovery.

Support must be available at clinical and therapeutic levels. When an individual is ready to talk about their situation, the facilities must be available to support in-house recovery if necessary, or to allow access to a healthcare professional in their locality who has specific knowledge of the psychology of eating disorders.

NHS Scotland has shown through the development of services such as the Eden unit that treatment of eating disorders must be flexible to suit the needs of patients, with the most severe cases being hospitalised and accessible regional services being made available for those who are less severe.

However, as the facilities for in-patient rehabilitation are so limited, great emphasis must be placed on the need to understand the reasons for disordered eating, however varied they may be. We must also consider how best we may prevent their emergence through engagement with professional bodies such as Beat, which offers invaluable expertise that should inform a more preventive approach.

The need for support cannot be measured simply by the number of hospital admissions in Scotland at a specific time, nor can it be judged on the number of cases who present to GPs and service providers, as there are likely to be many thousands who do not have the confidence to reach out for help. Therefore, we must look to charities that have the first-hand experience that we need to inform our policy, and we must push to

make information accessible and confidential for sufferers, their families and their teachers and lift the stigma that costs lives every year.

Once again, I pay tribute to Dennis Robertson for his speech and his courage in bringing the matter to Parliament.

I must apologise because I am chairing a cross-party group at 5.30, so I shall leave after the next speech if that is acceptable to you, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Of course.

17:26

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): I, too, commend Dennis Robertson on delivering a speech that was tough to listen to and must have been extremely tough to deliver.

I will give an example from my experience in practice as a solicitor. A couple who had a 21-year-old daughter with anorexia turned up at my office. They felt helpless and desperate because their daughter was full of hostility and resentment that they should try to interfere and make her take treatment. They were driven to the point of seeking to section her under mental health legislation so that she could be compulsorily treated. However, on inquiring, I found that it had been deemed that she had capacity—that she knew perfectly well what she was doing—and that, although she was starving herself to death, there was nothing her parents could do.

In researching the matter for the debate, I found that some jurisdictions are considering anorexia bills that would provide for compulsory psychiatric or medical treatment and compulsory feeding of sufferers. I have, however, concerns about that, to which I will return if I have time.

Dennis Robertson rightly talked about tackling the problems early. It could be schools, employers or the medical profession who see that something is wrong. I will go right back and start with the image that we give young people: models who are rake thin and boyish in their shape. Clothes drape beautifully on them, but they are not like real people. That image is set before all our young people—our young women in particular—in the glossy magazines. We now even have children who are not yet at primary school who have concerns about their body shape and whether they are thin enough. It is no wonder that the generations-old anxieties that happen at puberty or in adolescence are exacerbated by those glossy images, which are often airbrushed to perfection. I am not saying that that is why people become anorexic, but it is part of the backcloth of how we see ourselves that thin people are

successful and that fat people are deemed to be failures in some way.

I return to compulsory treatment, which I find to be a difficult issue. We are talking about the point at which we decide whether a person who is starving themselves to death for a variety of psychological reasons has capacity. To say that someone does not have capacity is a very big step to take. Before anyone suggests legislation—I am not saying that anyone has done so yet—we would need to make a deep inquiry into why we would be intervening at that stage instead of tackling the issues early on, even when there is an intervention.

Dennis Robertson: I whole-heartedly agree with Christine Grahame on capacity. My daughter was intelligent and articulate. She would talk about any subject and demonstrate that she had capacity in any other aspect of her life and on any other topic but, when it came to her own health and wellbeing, she did not have capacity. It is at that stage, I believe, that the medical profession should step in because, at that stage, you are looking at a child who is wilfully starving themselves and there can be only one outcome. Capacity is an issue that we need to look at, and we need to have the right legislative framework to ensure that we can make changes.

Christine Grahame: That was an interesting intervention, but Dennis Robertson has explained how difficult it is to determine when a person has slipped from having capacity to not having capacity. In his speech, he indicated that, at times, his daughter was well aware of the difficulties—she had self-awareness and wanted to stop. At other times, she went into a state of denial. It is an extremely sensitive issue.

I would much prefer there to be early access to, and no long waiting lists for, psychological help, therapy and so on. I know that that has to be provided sensitively, as there will be resistance from the sufferer, but I would like more effort to be put into that first, before we embark on what could be quite a rough-edged way of dealing with the condition, which would be to take away a person's ability to make decisions about their life by having them sectioned.

17:31

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I, too, commend Dennis Robertson for securing the debate, and I record my admiration for his courage in rising above a personal tragedy to raise awareness of a condition that has blighted, and which continues to play havoc with, many lives—not only in Scotland but across the United Kingdom and beyond.

Along with my tribute to Dennis Robertson for bringing eating disorders to the attention of Parliament in its fourth session, I would like to mention the quite successful efforts of my former parliamentary colleague David Davidson to convert his family problems into positive action for people who fall victim to eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia. David Davidson secured the Parliament's attention back in 2001 when he put in the public domain his daughter Suzy's battle with anorexia nervosa. At that time in Scotland, support in the NHS for sufferers and their families was simply not available, either in the form of in-patient facilities or post-discharge psychosocial support, for what is a complex medical problem that is often accompanied by serious underlying mental health issues.

If patients were assessed as requiring in-patient treatment, they tended to be admitted to general psychiatric wards. The only residential unit that was dedicated to eating disorders was at the privately run Priory hospital, which was accessible to NHS patients only if their treatment there was funded by their local health board on the recommendation of a consultant. Intensive day-care support is needed after discharge and, at that time, few facilities were available within reach of the patients who required them.

Thankfully, things have moved on—at least to a degree. Following the referral of a petition by Gráinne Smith of North East Eating Disorders Support to the then Health Committee, of which my former colleague was a member, the committee held an inquiry into eating disorders in late 2004 and early 2005. That important inquiry, which took oral evidence in Dennis Robertson's home town of Stonehaven, exposed the problems that patients with eating disorders and their families face. The framework for mental health services in Scotland that was published by the Scottish Executive in 2001 had merely been paid lip service and had not been implemented, mainly because there had been no real drive to implement it—it was left up to health boards to take action if they so decided.

The early diagnosis and referral to specialists that is so important if the condition is not to become chronic, and therefore more difficult to treat, depended on a GP workforce whose undergraduate training did not focus on eating disorders as a distinct issue within psychiatry rotations, so the Health Committee recommended that Government and the Royal College of General Practitioners look to improve that situation. It is clear from Dennis Robertson's extremely moving speech that that has not yet been adequately achieved.

The committee also recommended that the costs of developing regional in-patient services

and of establishing a managed clinical network for eating disorders be investigated, and that the Scottish Executive, as well as looking to ensure more specialist training of doctors, pursue proposals to develop specialist training for psychiatric nurses, teachers and social workers.

Thankfully, following that important inquiry things have improved somewhat. Certainly in my area, there is now a well-developed north of Scotland managed clinical network for eating disorders. Since it opened in 2009, the Eden unit in Aberdeen has provided specialist residential care in dedicated surroundings for people with eating disorders and, recently, has been running at almost full capacity.

Out-patient services have also been busy in Grampian, Tayside and Highland. NHS Tayside's eating disorder service, which is based in Dundee, runs out-patient clinics in Angus, Perth and Kinross, and NHS Highland—following some staffing shortages—is now able to provide a comprehensive support service that is run by staff with accredited specialist training. The north of Scotland is now reasonably well catered for, and the new West Lothian unit will allow for similar care in the south-east of the country. However, as we heard from Dennis Robertson, there is still a long way to go, and it is important to continue to raise awareness of eating disorders so that they can be diagnosed and treated early and effectively.

There are still people losing their lives to the complications of these serious conditions—as Dennis Robertson knows only too well—but there has been significant progress during the lifetime of the Scottish Parliament. That has, in significant measure, been due to the determination and tenacity of colleagues such as David Davidson and Dennis Robertson. I commend their courage and gladly support the motion.

17:35

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I welcome the opportunity to speak on an important issue, in a debate that my colleague Dennis Robertson must have found all too painful to lead with his very moving and humbling speech.

Eating disorders can dictate an individual's attitude to health and wellbeing, depleting self-esteem and control and plunging families into despair. Often promoted—if inadvertently—by media images, this severe mental health condition is often misunderstood, and its harsh realities and consequences may initially remain hidden.

Eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa, affect thousands of Scots, and the majority of sufferers are young females. The symptoms include weight loss, but that can hide significant

mental health problems and recovery can be a lifelong commitment.

Treatment relies on the effectiveness and assertiveness of primary care and strong community-based support, but that is often limited or unavailable. Improving specialist care and raising awareness of the condition is essential to provide sufferers and families with a solid foundation of care and support on which the recovery depends, along with removing the social taboos that are associated with the disorder.

The treatment and care of those with eating disorders is carried out by a multidisciplinary team that often includes a general practitioner, a psychiatrist, a nurse and a dietician. Early diagnosis can be an essential element in a successful recovery, as the condition can be caught before the oppressive nature of the disease takes hold. First contact with the patient and the role of the GP are therefore pivotal.

As an individual who also lost a daughter said on BBC television this morning, it is important to treat the condition as early as possible, not when weight is critically low. Prior to my members' business on the issue four years ago, constituents came to me and said that a deep frustration that they had encountered was that their general practitioner said that their daughter, whose weight had slipped below 6 stones, was simply not light enough to get treatment. Of course, by then the disease had a severe grip on her.

The fundamental contact with primary care can be unsatisfactory, and families do not always receive adequate information or literature concerning the condition. A majority of people with family members who suffer from the condition believe that their doctor was not well informed. The result is a patchy service and inadequate treatment of sufferers.

Improvements in primary care are a necessity, and greater education and training for health professionals so that they can give a quicker diagnosis and appropriate referrals are essential to provide families with the best possible care available. Inadequate care undermines treatment, and the lack of specialised services inhibits accessibility, which creates a barrier to successful and much-needed care.

Specialised services to treat eating disorders remain deficient and are dispersed across the country. The lack of service universality prevents admission to specialised care and therefore to effective treatment in some cases. However, barriers have fallen in recent years—as Nanette Milne pointed out—as a result of the development of new services such as Skye house, which is a Glasgow-based facility that is dedicated to treating young people who are suffering from mental

illnesses, including eating disorders. The facility has 22 beds, including two short-stay beds, and it cares for young people across the west of Scotland. St John's hospital in Livingston has witnessed the development of a new 12-bedroom adult unit, which opened in January this year; the south-east Scotland regional eating disorders unit offers specialised care to patients from NHS Lothian, NHS Borders, NHS Fife and NHS Forth Valley.

Those additional services provide essential care to many patients, but barriers remain. Specialised services and more trained specialists to create universal treatment provision will promote successful recovery. Many forms of treatment and therapy for eating disorders exist, but they can be very complex and must in many cases be unique to individuals. Greater availability of evidence-based treatment is essential. The therapies that are employed vary, and effective treatments include cognitive behavioural therapy, family therapy and nutritional education. For example, Skye house offers each patient a tailored timetable, which allows young people to go to school while attending therapy groups and family and individual sessions. A school-hospital education service allows patients to integrate back into normal life through the training of teachers, who assess and teach about the condition, thereby aiding the removal of the social stigma that is attached to the disorder.

Eating disorders are often hidden away from society. Greater education will provide stronger community support for understanding and dealing with the disorders. The greatest prevalence of eating disorders occurs in young adults, so targeting schools to create greater awareness of the condition will help to remove misconceived ideas and concerns. Promoting body image classes and internet safety courses will improve knowledge of the condition and help to counter some of the insidious pro-ana websites that Dennis Robertson mentioned, which actually encourage anorexia and other eating disorders. Once again, I thank Dennis Robertson for bringing the debate to the chamber.

17:40

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife)
(Lab): I welcome the opportunity to speak in the debate and I congratulate Dennis Robertson on an excellent speech, which, as other members have said, must have been difficult to give. I join Nanette Milne in paying tribute to David Davidson, who, in the first session of Parliament, began to awaken the Parliament's interest in the condition. We should recognise his contribution to creating some of the in-patient units and support systems that we now have.

Eating disorders are associated more with young females than with young men, but we should be clear that any individual, regardless of gender or age, can suffer from an eating disorder. Like Dennis Robertson, I, too, have a relative who suffered from anorexia—although fortunately they are a survivor—so I have personal as well as professional knowledge. It is important that we get away from stereotypes. Each person is an individual, so how they should be treated must be considered on an individual basis, taking into account their wishes.

When I was a general practitioner, because I was psychiatrically trained, the majority of patients in the practice who had eating disorders came to me, rather than to my partners. People went to striking lengths to hide their eating disorders through the clothes that they wore and the demeanour with which they presented. The parents were often in an extremely difficult situation. Many of them were not aware of how serious the situation might be.

I have a practical suggestion for the minister. We have an excellent anti-stigma campaign that has been successful on a number of issues. I suggest that part of its remit should be raising awareness on anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders. That would help to destigmatise the condition, which is absolutely critical.

Several members have mentioned the problems of the celebrity of the ultra-thin model and the promotion of anorexia on websites, both of which are to be deplored. I hope that the fashion industry is beginning to get to grips with the issue to an extent, although there is a considerable way to go in that respect. However, I praise the television programmes such as “Hollyoaks” that have begun to tackle eating disorders and to demonstrate how difficult it can be to live with an eating disorder for the individual and for the family and friends. It is important that such programmes offer information about an advice line at the end, as that can encourage individuals and families to respond.

I welcome organisations such as Beat that highlight the necessity for raising awareness of eating disorders, but there is a great deal further to go. Several members have referred to the fact that this is yet another area in which we need integration. The issues can be picked up in school. Some youngsters will not change to take part in physical education and will not expose themselves. They do not go for meals to the vans outside or to the school dining room. Teachers, school nurses and other pupils have a part to play. That should be part of a programme of education in schools. I hope that the minister will consider having specific programmes.

A number of members mentioned general practitioners. I remind members that almost a third

of GPs have no formal postgraduate psychiatric education. Those GPs do not have even a general education in psychiatry, let alone education in eating disorders. GPs are generalists, so it is sometimes quite difficult for them to pick up issues. I wrote an educational article on the topic almost 30 years ago, for one of the journals. GPs and other primary care staff need further education in the area.

I end, as other members have done, by praising Dennis Robertson for bringing the debate to the Parliament. We have made progress since David Davidson first raised the issue in the Parliament, but there is a long way to go. It is a journey on which we should continue.

17:45

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): I thank Dennis Robertson for securing the debate and for his immensely powerful and courageous speech, which gave us an insight into the impact on his family of the eating disorder that tragically resulted in the loss of his daughter Caroline.

I am grateful to Dennis Robertson for the way in which he and his family have engaged with service providers in Aberdeen, in assisting them in considering how they can continue to improve the services that are provided at the Eden unit.

I am also grateful for his willingness to support eating disorder organisations in raising awareness of the issue. The motion rightly recognises the important work that Beat undertakes throughout the UK to support people and families who are affected by eating disorders. The Government very much welcomes the work that is undertaken to raise awareness. This debate affords us an opportunity to focus on the matter.

As part of eating disorders awareness week, I was pleased to attend the launch yesterday of a national photographic exhibition at the City Art Centre in Edinburgh, just up the road, opposite Waverley station. The event has been organised by the re-capture photography project, which involves young people who have suffered from an eating disorder. It was immensely humbling to see the images that the young people had captured to reflect their experience on their path to recovery. I encourage members to take the opportunity to see the exhibition; if they do not have a chance to do that this week I can tell them that some of the exhibits will come to the Parliament next week. The project has been tremendously empowering for the young people who have been involved, including my constituent Laura Caven, who was instrumental in bringing the project together.

As members know, the majority of the care and support that is provided to sufferers of eating

disorders is delivered in the community setting. We also have specialist in-patient facilities, as members said, at the Royal Cornhill hospital's Eden unit and the new unit at St John's hospital, which I had the pleasure of formally opening recently. When I opened the new unit at St John's, I spoke to a young woman, Nicole Blackie, who had experienced an eating disorder over several years, and I was reminded of the human cost and challenging nature of living with such a condition, for her and for her family.

It is clear that although eating disorders can be severe and can be complex to address, people can and do recover and go on to live satisfying and fulfilling lives. A key part of the Government's approach is to continue to improve mental health and wellbeing. There is a range of ways in which we take forward programmes to improve outcomes in how treatment is delivered for patients, including those who are suffering from an eating disorder.

Members might be aware that we recently consulted on a new mental health strategy. The consultation closed at the end of January with more than 330 responses and we intend to publish in the summer a new strategy, elements of which will have an impact on the delivery of services for people with an eating disorder. Although the plan will focus on 14 high-level outcomes, rather than on specific conditions, many of those outcomes will have a positive impact on improving our response to those who might be suffering from an eating disorder.

Certain outcomes will resonate with members, particularly given some of the comments that have been made. For a start, we want to make further progress on mental health prevention and promotion. We want to prevent mental ill health in the first place—for example, we want to prevent people from developing eating disorders—but we also want to be positive about promoting healthy lifestyles and actions that can improve someone's mental wellbeing.

A number of members mentioned contacting services at an early stage. We certainly want to improve first contact with services, whether that be through a GP or a crisis intervention service, and to ensure that the quality of such contact is as good as it can be and that people are signposted or referred on to the most appropriate service at the earliest possible stage. As Kenny Gibson pointed out, we must provide information to families at the right time to assist their understanding of the condition.

We also want care and treatment that are based on good evidence to ensure that they have a direct impact on the individual concerned. That said, we must recognise that the way in which a person with an eating disorder or, indeed, another mental

illness will present will be individual to them and services must be tailored and flexible enough to ensure that, as Malcolm Chisholm and Richard Simpson suggested, they focus on the whole person and their individual circumstances.

I also want to ensure a better understanding of the extremely important role that families and carers can play in helping someone to overcome a mental illness or health problem, including eating disorders. Indeed, that was made very clear at the photographic exhibition that I attended yesterday.

Although those are some of the areas where I want to make further improvement, I also want to mention certain measures that I believe are having a positive impact and which will continue to improve the delivery of services for people with an eating disorder. First, we have been improving access to evidence-based psychological therapies and are delivering the new health improvement, efficiency, access and treatment—or HEAT—target to take that forward. We have been improving pathways and care standards across the whole range of mental health services and are improving responses to self-harm issues.

Moreover, we have been putting significant investment into improving the overall provision of the child and adolescent mental health services with which young people who present for the first time with an eating disorder might come into contact. Since 2008, there has been a 33 per cent increase in the overall CAMHS workforce.

Christine Grahame: When the previous session's Health and Sport Committee carried out its inquiry into the mental wellbeing of children and young people, it was concerned about the transition from adolescent to adult services and recommended that such a transition be tailored to individuals. I ask that when the minister considers tailoring services to individual need he looks at that particular issue.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Perhaps after responding to that point, minister, you could draw to a close.

Michael Matheson: I am well aware of that particular recommendation, given that I was a member of the committee when the report was published. We certainly want the transition from child and adolescent to adult mental health services to be improved.

Members will also be aware of the see me Scotland campaign, to which Richard Simpson referred. Although we fund the campaign, it is to a certain degree independent, but I am more than happy to see whether anything further can be done to raise awareness of eating disorders.

Earlier, I mentioned that we have been focusing on ensuring that there is a greater understanding

that people can and do recover from mental ill health. We have been working with the Scottish recovery network on how we can identify areas in which better practice will improve recovery day services within mental health services in Scotland overall.

Dennis Robertson referred to NHS Scotland's eating disorder education and training initiative and I am more than happy to look at whether we can take measures to encourage more medical and health care professionals to engage in that initiative and raise their awareness and understanding of eating disorders. Christine Grahame and Dennis Robertson also talked about capacity and, given the legal complexities around that and the limited time that we have in the debate, I am more than happy to write to both members on that matter and set out the Government's position in more detail.

In drawing my remarks to a close, I thank Dennis Robertson for bringing the debate to the chamber. I hope that I have been able to reassure members that we have made progress in this area and that, as a Government, we are committed to continuing to make such progress and improving overall services for people who suffer from an eating disorder.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Many thanks, minister, and my thanks to all members who took part in tonight's important debate.

Meeting closed at 17:56.

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