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Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Tuesday 18 December 2012

Session 4

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Scottish Parliament

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[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 14:00*]

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader is the Rev Neil Gardner, who is the minister of our local church, the Canongate kirk in Edinburgh.

The Rev Neil Gardner (Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh): Good afternoon. It is good to be with you at what everybody insists on calling my “busy time of year”. At the risk of endorsing the implication of idleness between one December and another, it is a busy time of year for the Scottish Parliament’s parish church, too. Amid the plethora of extra services and concerts that always take place at Canongate kirk in the run-up to Christmas, we had a rather unusual event last week, when we hosted a dramatic reading of Charles Dickens’s appropriately seasonal story “A Christmas Carol”. There is a special connection between “A Christmas Carol” and Canongate kirk, for it is said that during the famous writer’s visit to Edinburgh in 1841, he took a walk that brought him from his hotel on Princes Street across the old North Bridge, down the Royal Mile and into our kirkyard. There he spotted a gravestone erected to the memory of one Ebenezer Scroggie, a relative of Adam Smith, who lies buried in the south-west corner. Scroggie was identified on the gravestone as a “meal man”—a merchant of corn, you might say—but Dickens misread it as a “mean man”, and thought it rather a wretched description of an unfulfilled life.

At the same time, in his mind, he turned Ebenezer Scroggie into Ebenezer Scrooge, and the story of “A Christmas Carol” began at that moment to take shape—the now famous story of a man who started out mean and miserly, but who, through a series of visions of the past, present and future, is transformed into a generous and genial gentleman, who says “Bah, humbug” no longer, but “Merry Christmas”, and means it for the very first time in his life.

The Christmas story is an account not of meanness, but of generosity—the overflowing generosity of God, who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

“Sacred Infant, all Divine,
What a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this!”

May I wish you and everyone associated with this corner of the parish not a mean and miserly Christmas, but a merry and meaningful one. In the final words of “A Christmas Carol”,

“God bless us, every one!”

The Presiding Officer: Before we continue, I would like to say a few words on behalf of the whole Parliament about the truly terrible recent events in Newtown, Connecticut. The tragedy that happened at Sandy Hook school on Friday, which saw the death of 20 wee bairns and six courageous teachers, is almost too much to contemplate. I know that the families will find some comfort in their friends and the community at this most desperate time. As a country, we have suffered a tragedy of a similar nature. I have therefore today written to the speaker of the Connecticut General Assembly offering our Parliament’s support and the sincere sympathies of all members of the Scottish Parliament.

Topical Question Time

14:04

Severe Weather (Sea Defences)

1. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to reinforce sea defences following the recent severe weather. (S4T-00181)

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): With your forbearance, Presiding Officer, I want to express my sympathies to those who were affected by the weather at the weekend—in particular, the family of the man on the Voss Sailor who was killed as a consequence of the weather.

On land, the severe weather has impacted on property and infrastructure and has caused disruption to lives and businesses. The storms, which affected the whole east coast, have been reported by many as being the worst in a lifetime. I commend the harbours, local authorities and front-line responders, as well as many people in local communities, for the speed of their responses and for their work to pick up the pieces afterwards.

During the weekend, I chaired two Scottish Government resilience room meetings, which brought together key agencies and the emergency services to monitor developments on the ground and to co-ordinate our response. In the immediate aftermath of the weekend's severe weather, the Scottish Government is collating an assessment of the damage. As part of that, Richard Lochhead and Keith Brown have visited the most affected ports and harbours. Following those assessments, and with the further information that has been received from other harbours, the Scottish Government will continue to work in close partnership with councils and agencies. We stand ready to provide assistance in any way we can.

Rob Gibson: I am sure that people from Shetland to East Lothian will welcome the Scottish Government's actions. I hope that the minister can apply the principle of preventative spend in strengthening coastal defences and adjacent drainage after assessing the damage. The repair costs for breached and weakened sea walls are part of that, but I hope that the minister will urgently make funding streams available from national and local assets to increase the resilience to severe-weather events of many ports, harbours and sea fronts.

Paul Wheelhouse: I acknowledge Rob Gibson's points. I am pleased to announce that John Swinney, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth, confirmed yesterday that the Scottish Government is

activating the Bellwin scheme, which is a discretionary scheme to give financial assistance to councils that face undue financial burdens as a result of large-scale emergencies. Aberdeenshire Council and Moray Council have already made representations to the Scottish Government as a result of the severe storms of the weekend. Mr Swinney has said that he looks forward to working with councils that apply to the Bellwin scheme to ensure that resources are made available as appropriate.

On Mr Gibson's point about preventative spend, the Government recognises such spend's importance in managing flood risk, which is why we have tasked the Scottish Environment Protection Agency with carrying out a national flood-risk assessment for Scotland. The understanding that the assessment will give us of where flooding is likely to occur and of its impact when it occurs will allow us to target our efforts in managing the risks. An agreement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities separately identified that local authorities can now bid for funding for new schemes in excess of £2 million; a total of £73 million is available on top of the £53 million of funding that was allocated to existing projects, which was included in local authorities' general capital grant allocations.

Rob Gibson: I thank the minister for that list of potential funds. I hope that he can take into account the economic impact on vulnerable coastal settlements and jobs. The more extreme sea and weather conditions that we are now experiencing on our coasts are not being coped with by antiquated infrastructure that needs adaptation and mitigation for climate change, which was not recognised when that infrastructure was built. There is therefore a special need for us to assess what the costs of that will be.

Paul Wheelhouse: As Rob Gibson is well aware, businesses in onshore fish processing and the oil and gas sector have been badly affected by the most recent incident. My sympathies go to them. The Scottish Government expects local authorities to take into account the likely effects of changing climate. That is an important point in designing or upgrading their flood and coastal protection, including designing schemes to allow adaptation to deal with climate change at some point in the future. Interventions and approaches that are not sustainable in the long term should be avoided. It is worth mentioning that on Friday we announced that the Government is funding a programme to assess risk in coastal-flood planning. We are considering how we can accelerate that to assist local authorities in understanding the scale of the risk to their areas.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): The minister mentioned that his colleague the Minister for

Transport and Veterans made a welcome visit to North Berwick yesterday to see the damage to the harbour there. If Mr Wheelhouse speaks to his colleague, I think that Mr Brown will explain, having seen the emergency repairs that have been made to the damaged south-west sea wall, that the long-term solutions to the problems at North Berwick are to replace the sea defence boulders on the south-east with a proper—higher—sea wall. To do so would impose significant strain on East Lothian Council's capital budget, so I would be grateful if the minister could confirm that the Scottish Government would look favourably on an approach by East Lothian Council for Bellwin or other funding to support the project in order to provide long-term sea defences at North Berwick.

Paul Wheelhouse: I acknowledge the scale of the weather's impact in North Berwick. I have not seen it first hand, but I have seen footage of the damage to the harbour and I know that it was severe.

As I understand the Bellwin scheme, it would not necessarily cover the scale of a project such as Iain Gray mentioned, although I will be happy to meet him to discuss what would be possible. I think that Bellwin is designed almost to make replacements on a like-for-like basis where there has been damage to harbour walls. The fund is principally meant for things such as gaps in insurance excesses that councils cannot meet and to fund revenue costs, but it is not ideally suited to sustaining large capital projects. Such projects are more in the territory that I referred to in my answer to Rob Gibson.

I will be happy to engage with Mr Gray and my colleague Derek Mackay to look at what is possible under existing capital funding through local authorities.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): The minister will be aware that the storm damage has extended well beyond ports and sea walls. I am not sure whether he is aware that, as result of the recent storms, around two miles of sheep dyke on the northern isle North Ronaldsay, in my constituency, have been severely damaged. Some support has been provided through a variety of mechanisms, including the local council. Can the minister advise whether the Bellwin scheme or the other schemes that he identified may be productive ports of call for the people of North Ronaldsay in seeking help to repair the damage to that antiquated, but still very necessary, structure?

Paul Wheelhouse: I am grateful to Liam McArthur for mentioning the damage in North Ronaldsay, of which I was not aware. I have not had any discussions to date about application of the Bellwin scheme to such a project, but I will be happy to take that forward and to write to Liam

McArthur about what might be possible in Orkney, if that would be of assistance.

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Other members have referred to effects on vulnerable communities. In Peterhead in my constituency we have the world's biggest offshore oil support base, which has been severely affected by the storms. That could have major economic impacts locally and more widely. What practical assistance can the Government provide that would be relevant to the situation in Peterhead?

Paul Wheelhouse: That issue was of some concern to the First Minister when we discussed the incident at the ministerial resilience room meeting on Sunday. Through agencies including Scottish Enterprise we are able to work with local businesses to assist where possible when they have difficulty in implementing their disaster recovery plans and other measures.

Clearly, in an instance such as that in Peterhead, assistance in terms of providing alternative accommodation is absolutely crucial at this time, to ensure that business can continue to function. I will undertake to have dialogue with Stewart Stevenson about what we can do in that regard.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): In Lossiemouth, 15m of the sea wall was destroyed at the weekend. Can the minister assure me that its repair will be funded under the Bellwin scheme?

In Kingston, which is also in Moray, the sea defence has reduced, with properties and beach roads seeing a vastly reduced shingle bank that many people believe will not protect them from another storm. Will the Scottish Government provide financial assistance to Moray Council as a matter of urgency to replace the lost shingle, and will it enter discussions about longer-term options?

Paul Wheelhouse: I identify myself with the issue that Mary Scanlon raises—I mentioned Kingston at the meeting on Sunday. I am aware of the recent history of the need to invest in the shingle bank there in order to protect the town. That will be taken into account as part of the representations that Moray Council is making to John Swinney and the Government on an application for Bellwin money.

As I said to Iain Gray, Bellwin funding will not necessarily be available for large-scale capital projects, but it may be available to meet the exceptional costs that Moray Council has to deal with in the recovery from the incident. In that respect, I am sure that we will be in a position to help Moray Council. I hope to keep a dialogue going with Ms Scanlon to keep her informed about

what action is being taken regarding Moray Council and its progress.

Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP):

The minister will be aware that there was significant damage in Stonehaven, but he may not be aware that there is a unique local charity there—the Maritime Rescue Institute—that not only provides the local coast guard but trains lots of folk. It lost both its boats over the weekend—although I gather that it has got one back—and suffered a lot of damage to its buildings. As a local charity, it is in the same position as others will be in that it must pay excess money on its insurances. The charity will be asked to find many thousands of pounds. Is that something with which the Government may be able to assist?

Paul Wheelhouse: Indeed. I am having an on-going dialogue with the Association of British Insurers, and we hope to meet it in February to discuss a number of issues relating to flood protection for communities throughout Scotland. I will clearly be concerned if such voluntary sector organisations face punitive insurance premiums or excesses in order to secure flood insurance. I will be happy to meet Nigel Don to discuss specifics in relation to the organisation that he mentioned, and to raise the issues that come out of the meeting with the ABI in February.

Musical Instrument Tuition

2. Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

To ask the Scottish Government what provisions it is making with local authorities for the allocation of the additional £1 million for musical instrument tuition in schools. (S4T-00172)

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell): The Scottish Government is providing £1 million to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for the purchase of musical instruments. The conservatoire will consult local authorities to ensure that instruments are allocated to areas of greatest need. That will enable many more aspiring young musicians in schools to learn to play musical instruments.

The Government is also setting up an instrumental music group to look at issues to do with delivering instrumental music tuition in schools, including the question of charges for pupils who are sitting Scottish Qualifications Authority music exams. The Government believes that the shared ambitions and good will that now exist on those issues will result in a solution.

Liz Smith: I welcome the Scottish Government's announcement. It is clear that one of the most important commitments that the Scottish Government has made with that announcement is on the removal of fees for pupils who are studying for SQA exams in music. Will the

cabinet secretary clarify whether that removal will be brought into force straight away?

Michael Russell: I pay tribute to the *Scotland on Sunday* newspaper and its let the children play campaign, which has been instrumental in drawing attention to a wide range of issues in that regard. The group that I mentioned will have a remit to look at a range of issues. The remit is being discussed with its chair who—I can announce—is David Green, who is a former leader of the Highland Council.

One of the issues is charges for pupils who are sitting SQA music exams. I have made it clear in questioning at the Education and Culture Committee, for example, that that development, which exists in five local authorities, is undesirable but not illegal. I therefore have no power to impose any new situation on those authorities. I hope that the group, with the discussions that are taking place—including this type of discussion—the presence of the fund and the Royal Conservatoire's work with local authorities, will move those local authorities to adopt the position that the other local authorities take so that they do not charge for such things. The sooner they make that decision, the happier we all will be.

Liz Smith: It is good to hear that discussions are under way. Has the cabinet secretary considered the opportunity to set up music trusts on a similar basis to leisure trusts? I know that his colleague the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs has shown interest in that. Is that a possibility for at least paying some of the fees that are due?

Michael Russell: Music trusts are a separate issue, but I know that the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs is working with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on such issues. I would be happy to ensure that the two developments communicate and feed off each other. The core aim is to ensure that young people get the chance to learn to play music, and to enjoy and be involved in it. We all want that to happen. If there are barriers to that, I hope that the group, working with others, will overcome them.

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): I very much welcome the Government's announcement of £1 million for music tuition, but how will it safeguard those who are affected by that? Many local authorities currently make very good provision for students, and we would not—of course—wish those students or, indeed, those local authorities to be penalised in any way because others have not been so helpful in the past.

Michael Russell: I do not intend that the positive announcement should penalise anybody, and I encourage Patricia Ferguson to be positive

about the development—it is good news. I hope that there will be no diminution of provision in any local authority that currently does things well and that authorities that have a different approach will look at that provision and discuss it with us, as some are already doing, and with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities—the people who run the fund and the instrumental music group. I hope that common sense will prevail. The announcement is not intended to diminish anybody's opportunity, but to increase opportunity.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I, too, am very pleased to welcome the new funding for instruments. Music tuition is a life-affirming experience and should be open to all young people who want it. However, constituents of mine have raised with me concerns that special schools may not have access to the new instruments. Can the cabinet secretary confirm that the arrangements that are made with local authorities will include access for special schools?

Michael Russell: I can see absolutely no reason why that should not be the case, and I am happy to say that the intention is to be as broad as possible. Music is life affirming for every child, and every child should have the opportunity to learn it.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I, too, welcome the announcement. Like Patricia Ferguson, I am in the fortunate position of representing a constituency in which there are no charges for musical instrument tuition.

What reassurances can the cabinet secretary give that there will be support for councils such as Orkney Islands Council, which has not taken uncomfortable decisions, in the sense that it has avoided making difficult choices about where spending is allocated, in order to ensure that good-quality provision and free provision are maintained over the medium to longer terms?

Michael Russell: Virtue is its own reward. Authorities that are doing tuition well and properly will be able to continue to do so and there is nothing in the announcement that will threaten that. The situation is quite the reverse; we are encouraging other councils to come to the table and to be as positive as Orkney Islands Council.

Remploy

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): We will now have a ministerial statement by Fergus Ewing on Remploy. The minister will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

14:21

The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing): On 29 November, I advised Parliament that I would come back before the Christmas recess to provide details of the support that I intended to put in place to complement the existing package of support for redundant Remploy workers who seek to move into new jobs. I am pleased to be able to set out the proposed scheme and to answer members' questions.

As members are aware, the United Kingdom Government is to remove all direct funding from Remploy by March 2014. In response to that, and with the agreement of the UK Government, Remploy has put all factory sites up for sale or closure in two stages. Stage 1 has seen three sites in Scotland—those at Netherton, Edinburgh and Aberdeen—close in recent months, with the Springburn site in Glasgow due to close in January next year.

Members across the chamber share my view that the stage 1 process was poorly handled from the outset—both the commercial exercise and implementation of the support package for the people who faced redundancy. The Scottish Government made strenuous efforts to persuade Remploy and the Department for Work and Pensions to share information on the commercial process to enable us to work with bidders, but that was refused.

Stakeholders and members of this Parliament have contacted the Scottish and UK Governments about the problems that have arisen throughout stage 1. The apparent lack of preparation for the process resulted in poor communications with staff and potential bidders, and missed opportunities in the commercial process. The end result, which will see all four sites closing, is nothing short of a travesty for the workers concerned.

Problems occurred at all the sites, but the commercial process at the Springburn site has been the subject of strong allegations of mishandling. It is likely that we will never get to the bottom of what happened there. Now, despite our efforts to secure a delay of any further action until a full, independent review of stage 1 has taken place, stage 2 has been announced and the futures of all the people who work in what is left of Remploy are under threat.

As I noted in last month's debate on Remploy, we have taken action and we will continue to do so. Through Scottish Enterprise and Just Enterprise, we have offered business support to potential bidders. Through the partnership action for continuing employment team, we have delivered support for redundant Remploy staff. Thirdly, we have sought to build public and private markets for the remaining Remploy sites and other supported businesses in Scotland.

I turn to the next steps. Stage 1 showed us that we have to do more—we have to be proactive, and we will be. In the coming months, Scottish Enterprise will provide a dedicated resource to work with the DWP and Remploy on supporting potential bids. I am pleased to report that, in a meeting yesterday, Remploy and the DWP agreed in principle to a greater level of joint working to support potential bidders for the businesses. Scottish Government officials, with their UK counterparts, will now work quickly to develop the terms of such an approach.

We continue to push for agreement for PACE support for those who are under threat to be made available much earlier than was the case in stage 1, in which, in some instances, factories closed before Remploy transitional support staff had completed even the initial skills assessments. For those who are already redundant, and any others who lose their jobs in this next stage, it is clear that we need to do more.

To date, 10 redundant workers in Scotland have found new jobs. Esther McVey hopes that all redundant Remploy workers will get jobs. So do we, but the latest figures make it evident that more support is necessary. That is why I have decided to offer a recruitment incentive of up to a total of £5,000 to employers who recruit disabled ex-Remploy workers in Scotland into permanent jobs. The funding will be offered to employers to help to meet any additional costs of recruiting and training Remploy workers. It must not duplicate any of the existing support packages that are in place from DWP.

The employer recruitment initiative will be available to employers in the private, public and third sectors; it will also be available to any Remploy workers setting up their own social enterprise or co-operative, or who enter self-employment. It will be paid in stages over 18 months to ensure employer commitment and to enable the employee time to settle into their new role. It will be available to all disabled redundant Remploy workers for as long as they are receiving PACE support. Employers who have already recruited Remploy workers when the scheme becomes operative will be able to claim the payment retrospectively.

The programme will be managed by Skills Development Scotland, who will procure the delivery from a third-sector body with a proven track record of supporting disabled people. When appointed, the delivery body will work closely with the DWP personal case workers and the other organisations that are supporting Remploy workers following their redundancy, including the Shaw Trust and Remploy employment services. The programme is not about offering paid work experience or temporary jobs with no secure future. Employer commitment to the individuals will be crucial. Posts offered under the scheme must either be new jobs or real vacancies; they cannot displace existing staff members.

By offering this additional incentive today, I hope that we will encourage more employers to recruit Remploy workers. I know from personal experience of visiting many Remploy sites that the employees are committed, hard-working individuals who find themselves unemployed through no fault of their own. We have a responsibility to do what we can to support them. I will be happy to report to Parliament in the coming months on the progress of the initiative.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I am grateful to the minister for early sight of his statement. There is much in it with which we on the Labour benches can certainly agree. I also pay tribute to the workers and their trade unions for the vigorous campaign mounted in defence of Remploy.

I will not rehearse the flaws in the UK coalition Government's approach to the closure of Remploy factories across Scotland; suffice it to say that we supported the Government's call to delay phase 2 until we could evaluate and learn lessons from the closure or takeover of factories at phase 1. I share the minister's disappointment that the UK coalition pressed on regardless and announced the closure of another four factories, in Dundee, Cowdenbeath, Leven and, of course, Clydebank—an area that neighbours my constituency—over and above the earlier announcements about Springburn, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Netherton.

It is helpful that the minister has accepted Labour's proposal for an employer support grant. Although I acknowledge warmly his announcement of £5,000 to employers for each employee as a recruitment incentive, I am sure that he would agree that it falls well short of the position adopted by my Labour colleagues in the Welsh Assembly. They provide an employer support grant over four years—not 18 months—with grants of up to 100 per cent for jobs in the public sector and up to 75 per cent for jobs in the private sector, with a total budget of £2.4 million a year. What is the total budget for the employer recruitment incentive in Scotland for each year of operation?

I am equally grateful that the minister has accepted Labour's proposal for a permanent supported workplaces task force. Who will be invited to join the task force? Will it involve representation from the First Minister's Council of Economic Advisers? When will the task force meet?

Fergus Ewing: I appreciate working with all members and broadly welcome the support that we have had from the Labour Party, in particular. We have worked co-operatively and I hope and expect that that will continue.

On the task force, we have had stakeholder meetings from the very beginning, as Jackie Baillie knows—I think that we have had five or six meetings, all of which I have chaired. Stakeholder meetings will continue. I have indicated informally to Patricia Ferguson an offer of a meeting with all Labour members, because many Labour members have an interest in the matter—as do many members of the Scottish National Party and all parties. Indeed, there are too many interested members for them all to be on a task force—it would be the most populous task force in the history of task forces. We do not want committee meetings and commitments to attend and so on to get in the way of progress. However, we will continue to work closely with people and especially with the trade unions.

Like Jackie Baillie, I support the sterling work of trade union representatives, who passionately believe in what they are doing. That is manifest to everyone who knows Lyn Turner and Phil Brannan, in particular, who have taken a principled lead on the matter.

Jackie Baillie's main question was about the Welsh example. What we are offering is a fallback position. Our job is difficult because, against Jackie Baillie's wishes and my wishes, the UK Government has determined to forge ahead with the tendering process instead of pausing for thought, reflection and assessment and seeking voluntary proposals. However, our primary objective is to ensure that Remploy workers continue to do the work that they do and are not made redundant but transferred to new employers under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

That must be objective 1, and I am grateful to Jackie Baillie for giving me the opportunity to set that out. Of course, if the objective cannot be achieved in every case, we strongly believe that the incentive that I announced today of up to £5,000 per person offers sufficient encouragement to employers, whether they are in the private sector, the third sector or the supported employment sector, to recruit redundant disabled Remploy workers.

The incentive is not on the financial scale of the support that is offered in Wales. However, such schemes need to strike a balance between providing a real incentive and providing sustainable support. It is not right in principle that a new employer should be totally relieved of his financial responsibilities for employees for an indefinite period or even for several years. Employers must financially recognise the value that they get from the effort and work of their employees. Having visited five of the Remploy sites, I know that employers get excellent value, excellent work and total commitment from their employees.

I am confident that the measures that I announced are proportionate and significant. If they are needed—and I hope that they will not be—I hope that they will also be effective.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): We welcome the statement and further measures of support from Scottish Enterprise and the PACE team. We also welcome the minister's approach to seeking employer commitment, which is critical.

We regret that little has been done since 2007 to support Remploy, although Peter Hain, the former Labour minister, had warned that factories would close unless further action was taken.

What progress has been made on the business opportunities for Remploy workwear contracts? What progress has been made on the use of reserved contracts for supported factories and businesses? Will a financial package that is similar to the one that the minister announced be offered in relation to staff in the many social enterprises and supported businesses throughout Scotland that employ disabled people and face an uncertain future?

Fergus Ewing: I assure Mary Scanlon that every possible effort is being made to ensure that there are business opportunities in relation to the continued procurement of all the goods that are produced in the phase 2 Remploy factories, and that attention has been given to other units, such as closed-circuit television units, in which members have taken an interest.

I have visited the factories that produce workwear and seen the quality of what they produce, which is top class. The factories make excellent products. We are, of course, mobilising the procurement power of the public sector to ensure that there can be a sustainable future for the businesses that provide workwear. However, our difficulty in that regard is that with the future of all the Remploy sites now in question because of the tender processes firing ahead, how can any public sector body give a contract beyond March or a few months afterwards? They do not know whether anybody will be in place—whether there

will be a business, a body, a supported body or a third-sector body—to fulfil the contracts.

We have a catch-22 situation. We can and we will use—and I am using—the public sector purchasing power and our influence in the private sector to do everything that we can to secure the sustainable future of the phase 2 factories. However, because of the uncertainty surrounding the continuance of those factories, how can we reasonably expect any unconditional offers to purchase to be procured?

Secondly, Mary Scanlon asked about contracts in the reserved area. I personally intervened in relation to the Stirling factory at the behest of Mr Crawford because the factory produces, among other things, suits that are designed to enable members of the armed forces to withstand chemical, biological and nuclear exposure. Again, that factory makes high-quality products. I intervened specifically to ask the UK minister to extend a Ministry of Defence contract. As of today, I have received no answer from the minister to that request.

The Presiding Officer: There are 14 members who wish to ask the minister a question. I will do my very best to call everybody who wishes to ask a question, but I urge short questions and short answers.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): I wish to make the minister aware that in addition to activity undertaken by the Government, I have written to both Stirling Council and Scottish Enterprise asking them to help to identify potential new operators of the Stirling site.

How can the Government best ensure that co-ordinating activity between the local councils that are involved and Scottish Enterprise happens? What assistance can be provided to produce a positive prospectus that describes, for instance, the capability and capacity of each site, the specialist skills that are in place and the high-quality products that are available? I know that the workers at the Stirling site will be pleased by the minister's announcement about his recruitment initiative, which shows his commitment to Remploy workers.

Fergus Ewing: Co-ordination will be important. That is why I hope and expect to bring together all relevant local authorities to discuss how we can work together, in concert and collaboration, to ensure that all opportunities are pursued. I am also meeting Tim Matthews of Remploy next month and the stakeholders group is meeting next month.

In addition, a dedicated resource from Scottish Enterprise will be available throughout the country in the places where it is required in order to ensure that potential bidders are identified. A lot of work

will be involved. It would be simpler if we did not have the gun of the tendering procedure at our heads because that work must be done in accordance with the newly announced procedure, where best and final offers are to be expected shortly after March, so we have very little time indeed. A lot of work needs to be done and I welcome the support of all members across the chamber in carrying out that work in all parts of Scotland.

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): I welcome the minister's comment that the ideal solution would be to have Remploy workers remain in their positions. Has the minister had the opportunity to discuss with his health colleagues the possibility of the Springburn Remploy factory continuing to make wheelchairs for the national health service so that workers there can remain in employment after the end of January 2013?

Fergus Ewing: I confirm that I have discussed that with my colleague Alex Neil. He has made it clear that he is 100 per cent behind my efforts to bring together the health procurement officials in order to see what we can do. I can also confirm that my officials have been in contact with Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board on the matter and that useful discussions have been had. I very much hope that progress can be made.

As Patricia Ferguson will be aware, procurement by public sector authorities is independent of the Scottish Government. It is not for us to tell them that they must do things. However, in this circumstance, especially now that the supported employment procurement framework that has been in place since 12 September is being acted on by various public sector bodies, there is good will around this issue. Working with Patricia Ferguson and others, I am determined that every opportunity to provide continued work—in this case, through the procurement of wheelchairs—will be taken, and I am happy to work with Patricia Ferguson thereon.

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): I echo Patricia Ferguson's concerns and sentiments. I am particularly concerned about who now holds the NHS wheelchair contract for Scotland. Does the minister believe that there might be a need to reprocure that contract?

More generally, does the minister agree that, when public bodies procure, they should make sure that clear information is given to potential bidders to assist and encourage them to use the £5,000 recruitment incentive that he has announced and to ensure that they can access other incentives, such as modern apprenticeships?

Fergus Ewing: I am aware of the work that Bob Doris has done in relation to the events in Springburn, which are some of the saddest events that we have seen in Scotland recently. The story of those events has been told by many, not least by the *Daily Record*, which has truly put a human face to the issue and whose campaigning support on it we very much appreciate.

We will do everything that we possibly can to ensure that employees in Springburn who are being made redundant receive every possible support. I can confirm that, on 10 December, the DWP and PACE made a substantial effort to help those workers to receive support. It is extremely disappointing that they were led up the garden path. They were led to expect that there might be the possibility of future employment, but their hopes were cruelly dashed, in short order, after the phase 1 process was concluded.

Helen Eadie (Cowdenbeath) (Lab): I, too, welcome the news from the minister today. I am particularly pleased about the expansion of the task force's membership. I accept the minister's point about the need to ensure that its size is manageable.

Is the minister aware that, in Wales, in addition to the Welsh Assembly money of £2.4 million over four years, there is a programme that is backed by £12.8 million from the convergence European social fund and that work is also being supported by the NHS? What European funding is being used by the Scottish Government? What discussions has the minister had with Co-operative Development Scotland, which is headed by Sarah Deas?

Fergus Ewing: First, I should say that the maximum cost of the ERI proposal that we have announced is set at £1.638 million. I apologise for not giving that figure to Jackie Baillie earlier.

We are happy to explore any opportunity to access finance in other ways. I will write to Helen Eadie about the specifics of the matter that she has raised. We do not want to duplicate things that the DWP is doing; that would simply be foolish.

I know that Helen Eadie has, rightly, taken a close interest in this matter in relation to Cowdenbeath and Leven. The main objective, which we all share, is to ensure that the excellent work that Remploy employees do, and have been doing for decades—one gentleman to whom I spoke said that he had been in his post for 38 years—can go on for another set of decades, and that people do not have to face the possibility of redundancy. That is the objective that we have set and it is the job that our stakeholder group and others are devoted to.

David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP): The information that was received by the constituency

MSP in a letter a few days ago from the DWP was that the Remploy factory in Leven has been added to stage 2 of the process and is under threat of closure, with its employees facing redundancy unless expressions of interest are received from individuals or organisations that are willing to continue the business as a viable commercial enterprise. Will the minister join me and Tricia Marwick in writing to the DWP to oppose the latest threat and to ask for more time to be allowed for Scottish Enterprise to find a suitable buyer?

Fergus Ewing: We have already argued—unsuccessfully, I am afraid—with Esther McVey and her predecessor at the DWP, Maria Miller, that the bid process should be halted. We argued that not for political reasons but for practical reasons—so that the work that I have described can be conducted in an orderly and concerted fashion, and not rushed, with an arbitrary deadline. However, we will of course continue to work closely with the DWP. That is why, just yesterday, my officials met DWP officials and Tim Matthews, the head of Remploy.

We understand that Remploy has acknowledged that the process that it instituted and conducted in relation to phase 1 was less than perfect, shall we say, and that progress is required. Concessions were given yesterday that it will do better in phase 2. We want to see proof that phase 2 will be different from phase 1. All members want that. They and, in particular, the trade unions are rightly sceptical about this, but on the face of it, we received at yesterday's meeting assurances that progress will be made.

I will meet Tim Matthews towards the end of next month, by which time I hope that we will have made progress, especially on enabling Scottish Enterprise and the social enterprise body Just Enterprise to obtain details of potential bidders and to help them to do the necessary work to see what help we are able to provide, as a country, to enable as many of the Remploy factories as possible to have a secure future.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I do not think that the minister got round to answering the third question from my colleague Mary Scanlon, so perhaps I could give him another opportunity to address the point. Will a similar package to that which is being offered today to Remploy employees be offered to disabled staff from many other social enterprises or supported businesses, who also face an uncertain future?

Fergus Ewing: The package that we have announced has been brought forward because of the scale and the impact of the redundancies that Remploy workers face. To put that in perspective, there are more than 300 of them in Scotland. The measure has been brought forward to reflect that.

These are difficult times for the supported employment sector. Following the interchange that my officials had just this morning with a leading social enterprise, I am told that times are even more difficult than they were a year ago. I make it absolutely clear that, if redundancies are faced in other social enterprises between now and the end of the session, I would hope, and would do my damndest, to respond in the same way for them as I have done for Remploy.

Our efforts are really designed to avoid such situations arising, difficult though I admit and accept that they are. However, if circumstances affect other supported employers and disabled workers face redundancy in the future, such situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The principle that we have adopted today is a sound one and it should be followed.

Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD): The recruitment incentive is welcome. It is a practical and helpful intervention for which I thank the minister. However, I agree that the main focus of effort should be on retaining the workplaces. Previously, the minister spoke about the work that he is doing to build links between the Remploy workforce and growth industries, such as the marine sector and the offshore energy sector. What further progress has been made on that?

Fergus Ewing: Since we debated the subject on 29 November, I have had various discussions with the Offshore Contractors Association, various oil and gas companies and the offshore wind industry group, which I co-chair. In each of those discussions, my purpose has been to suggest to a number of the most successful companies in the country that, if they have cause to require, for example, the marine safety jackets that are produced by two of the Remploy factories, those could be the subject of procurement.

I must say that I have received a marvellous response and an immediate one. As there was in the case of Glencraft with the philanthropy of the Wood Group and the personal commitment of two of its leading executives, there is a clear will among the leading industrialists in Scotland to do what they can. Our difficulty is that they do not know whether there will be businesses around to fulfil orders, so any orders that are placed will have to be, by definition, conditional. Businesses do not really like placing conditional orders; they want to make orders and get the goods—that is the way that it goes.

Notwithstanding that, Alison McInnes has asked a perfectly fair question. As I said in my statement, I will report to Parliament as we make further progress on all such matters.

The Presiding Officer: Given the importance of and interest in the statement, I intend to let

questions run on until 3 o'clock. I still have a large number of members who wish to ask a question, so I ask for brief questions and brief answers. I hope that we will get through everyone, but I hae ma doots.

Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): What a bad taste in the mouth the Tory-Liberal Government in London leaves through its treatment of disabled people. What further concrete steps can be taken to secure a future for the dedicated and excellent workforce at the Cowdenbeath site, which the Westminster Government has let down badly?

Fergus Ewing: All members are determined to do what we can for the workforce at the Cowdenbeath and Leven factories, both of which I have visited. Those visits were moving experiences because of the workforce's commitment and diligence and the value of the work that it does, which is second to none. It is up to us to make every effort to do what we can to ensure that the workforce continues to have employment. I will work closely with Jamie Lawson of Remploy and with the private sector interests that I have described to ensure that every opportunity is explored.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): I hope that the measures that the minister has announced will assist employees in Clydebank. I note that Skills Development Scotland will manage the recruitment incentive programme. What dialogue will the minister have with affected local authorities, such as West Dunbartonshire Council? Will he consider providing recruitment incentive funds to affected local authorities in the future, so that solutions that are based on local circumstances can be found?

Fergus Ewing: We will engage with local authorities. With Mr Paterson, I visited the Clydebank premises, which are in a slightly different situation, because that factory makes the insides of car seats and is linked with two Remploy factories down south. We need to address that particular situation. As I said, I hope to bring together all local authorities fairly early in the new year to ensure that we are working in co-operation.

The incentive measure that I have announced is by a long way the most generous employment recruitment initiative that we have delivered in Scotland. If we can do other things in the future to help local authorities, we will of course look at that. However, I will take one measure at a time.

Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP): The announcement in the run-up to Christmas that the Dundee factory is to close was a massive kick in the gut to the factory's dedicated workforce. Nevertheless, the workforce is keen to try to keep

the factory open and to explore all the available options. What support can the Scottish Government offer to ensure that workers can explore possibilities such as a social enterprise model or other options that could help them in their efforts to keep the factory open and ensure that their dedicated work does not end when the factory's support is withdrawn?

Fergus Ewing: As I said, Just Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise services will be made available to any individuals who wish to explore such options. It is also essential for PACE to have early access to the workforce in all the factories. It was denied that before, which was wrong. Following yesterday's meeting, I hope that that wrong will be put right in phase 2.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): I welcome the minister's clear preference for Remploy workers to be TUPE-ed across, so that they retain their terms and conditions. Given the concerns about Redrock's bid for the Wigan and Edinburgh factories, will the minister add his support to calls for a co-operative and social enterprise solution for the Edinburgh Remploy factory?

Fergus Ewing: I believe that there is activity in relation to Redrock and the Edinburgh factory, which Sarah Boyack will know about. It would not help if I commented prematurely on that.

The ideal solution is a social enterprise model. Broadly, that view is shared across the chamber. However, we must play the cards as they fall. If any private sector employer wants to make a genuine commitment to retaining the workforce, we must consider that carefully. I look forward to continuing to work closely with Sarah Boyack on the precise circumstances in Edinburgh.

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): I thank the minister for his statement. I welcome the news that the DWP and Remploy have indicated that they are now more open to partnership work with the Scottish Government and its agencies. Can the minister outline how he expects that engagement to progress and what benefits he feels that it will have for the workers, including those in Clydebank in my constituency?

Fergus Ewing: I hope that the shroud of almost Sicilian secrecy over the whole process that existed during phase 1 will be lifted, and that we will see openness, transparency and a willingness to work with Remploy. We can then identify social enterprises in particular that want to continue to give the Remploy workers a secure future and the respect and dignity of work.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): Fergus Ewing says that Esther McVey will not respond to the request to extend the Ministry of Defence workwear contracts, but I have asked him to do exactly the same thing with police and fire

uniforms. Will he commit to use article 19 to give the factories in Stirling and Dundee, under a new business structure—perhaps a social enterprise—first option to make Scotland's police and fire uniforms?

The Presiding Officer: I call the First Minister—*[Interruption.]* The minister is promoted.

Fergus Ewing: As Jenny Marra knows, we are pursuing the position on procurement extremely actively. Obviously, the police and fire services have made their own arrangements for procuring appropriate uniforms and other materials. That is what they do, and those contracts are in place. We are working extremely closely with the public sector in order to ensure that it uses its purchasing power, which is precisely why the article 19 framework has been in place since September.

That is also why, as I outlined on 29 November, we have made substantial progress with a large number of public authorities on using the powers that were set out in the framework that my colleague Alex Neil introduced when in his former role.

Rather than carping about what might be appropriate at some point in the future, we should all work together to ensure that the public sector exercises its independent authority in the spirit of Scotland to do the right thing for the Remploy workers. I am confident that that will happen, provided that there is an opportunity for it to do so effectively.

Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP): I too warmly welcome the minister's statement, which indicates our strong support for Remploy employees. As 82 per cent of the Remploy employees who were made redundant in the previous round of cuts remain without work, it is essential, as just one measure, that the businesses that were targeted in phases 1 and 2—either those that have already closed or those that Remploy is planning to close—are resurrected as quickly as possible as new businesses. Will the Scottish Government consider establishing a specialist entrepreneurial task force, with sales and marketing experience in particular, to work alongside Scottish Enterprise, Just Enterprise and the co-operative movement to do just that?

Fergus Ewing: I am confident that we have in the enterprise network people with sufficient expertise, drive and determination to do what is necessary, provided that they are enabled to do so, over the coming months. I will happily report back to Mr Brodie and all other members on the progress that we make on that hugely important task in the weeks and months to come.

The Presiding Officer: That ends the minister's statement on Remploy. I thank members for their

co-operation; we have managed to get everyone in.

Commonwealth Games 2014

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-05225, in the name of Shona Robison, on the Commonwealth games 2014.

14:59

The Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport (Shona Robison): I am delighted to address members in the chamber this afternoon, and to reflect on the success of the Olympics and the positive progress that we have made in our preparations for the 2014 Commonwealth games. Humza Yousaf will focus on the legacy achievements so far in his closing speech.

This summer's Olympic and Paralympic games were enormously successful for Scotland. Scottish athletes won more medals than in any previous Olympic games, and it gives me great pleasure, as the Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport, to say that there are far too many medallists to mention individually. It proved to be a wonderful springboard for the 2014 Commonwealth games, with a fantastic performance from team Scotland and team GB.

Who could fail to be won over by the wonderful Olympic volunteers—the games makers. Make the games they did, which is why I am particularly proud that we recently launched our volunteering programme to find 15,000 of Scotland's finest and friendliest people. Applications will open in January, but I was delighted by the announcement earlier today that more than 40,000 people have already expressed interest in volunteering for the games. That just shows how many people want to play their part and I hope that people will continue to register and keep up the momentum of the volunteering campaign.

We have learned much from our Olympic experience and I am determined that we will draw on that to enhance the quality of our games, which are now a mere 582 days away. Our ambition is to deliver a world-class games.

In October, we had our latest report card, which made good reading. After its third visit, the co-ordination commission whole-heartedly endorsed the good work and progress that have been made so far. The chairman of the commission said that our games preparations were the best that he had seen in 20 years, which is high praise indeed from those who know. The co-ordination commission has a vast amount of experience of major sporting events, so it is good to see Glasgow meeting the commission's and our high expectations.

What were our report card grades? The commission commended the excellent progress of

the games partners, and it is a true partnership that is delivering the games. Some of the many successes since the commission's previous visit included the completion of superb venues such as the Emirates arena and the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome; the unveiling of Clyde, our 2014 mascot, whom many members have met; more sponsorship deals, most recently from AG Barr and Emirates Airline; and the appointment of our host broadcaster and Jack Morton Worldwide to produce our ceremonies. We are proud that those achievements have been recognised, but we cannot take our eye off the ball. With less than 600 days to go, we are increasing the momentum as we enter the next planning phase.

The commission commended the sound relationships that have been developed between the Government, Glasgow City Council, Commonwealth Games Scotland and the organising committee. It emphasised the need for that good work to continue. It also applauded the strong cross-party support from the Parliament for the games and urged us to continue in that vein.

I am therefore pleased to say that we are in an excellent position in our planning. Part and parcel of delivering a successful and enjoyable games will be the delivery of a safe and secure event. Planning for safety and security for major events is a complex process that involves many agencies that are expert in assessing and managing risks and co-ordinating and delivering safety and security operations on the ground. Planning for the games has been going on for a number of years but, in May, the co-ordination commission identified a need for greater clarity around the safety and security arrangements and how they will be funded. Audit Scotland had also highlighted the risks that are associated with planning a complex multisport event on such a scale and I will spend some time describing how we have addressed that.

The organising committee and Strathclyde Police have been reviewing the security arrangements for the games since early in 2012. In response to Audit Scotland's report, the games partners wrote to the Public Audit Committee to highlight the opportunities that the Olympic and Paralympic games would provide to learn lessons from London's security strategy. The organising committee and the police attended London as observers to learn lessons and inform how we can improve the governance and organisation of the 2014 games. We were determined to learn lessons and to review our security arrangements in the light of that invaluable experience.

I will detail the key lessons that we have learned from the Olympics that have directly influenced our thinking on security arrangements. There is the comparison with the Olympics security budget.

London 2012 had a total security budget of £1.1 billion. In 2010, £600 million was budgeted for policing and £311 million for venue security. However, in November 2011, which was very late on, the venue security budget rose by £271 million. We do not want to be in the same position only eight months before our games.

The Olympics demonstrated that volunteers are vital for stewarding inside venues and for directing spectators with a smile and a wave. However, when it comes to screening and searching those who are entering venues, trained security personnel supported by the police are vital. That was highlighted when G4S defaulted on its contract, and London looked to the military rather than its volunteering contingent to fill the gap. Original planning for Glasgow had assumed that 50 per cent of safety and security roles could be undertaken by volunteers. Given the Olympic experience, our use of volunteers for that purpose will be heavily reduced, with a resulting effect on the venue security budget.

In contracting, London's G4S experiences taught us the risk of having a single company provide private security. Consequently, the organising committee, in collaboration with the police, will split the private security tender for 2014 into multiple contracts to spread the risk. The procurement process is under way, but the expectation is that bidders will not be able to offer the same economies of scale as they would for one all-encompassing contract. That, of course, will have cost implications, which have been factored into the revised budget.

As is the case with all major events, as the planning process has matured our knowledge of safety and security requirements has crystallised. For example, we now know that the athletes village will need to be secured from January 2014, not June 2014 as originally planned. Events scheduling has been developed, so we now better understand the shift pattern requirements for stewards and other security staff and the knock-on impact on staffing costs.

The London 2012 experience was similar in that demand for security personnel could not be finalised until late in the operational planning process. Indeed, that was a key reason for the massive escalation of the venue security budget for the Olympics at a late stage.

Olympic lessons on risk assessment have helped us to detail more clearly the physical security requirements of the venues. We now know that we need more closed-circuit television, perimeter fencing and security-checking equipment. Those requirements have substantial cost implications, but they are critical to ensuring that everyone is protected properly from the

moment they approach the venue right through to when they leave at the end of the day's events.

As games planning has progressed, we have also developed a clearer picture of the non-competition venues that are needed. They all have security requirements that could not properly be scoped earlier. Hotels, training venues and the cultural events that are planned throughout Scotland will all need a level of protection—some of them around the clock—all of which has cost implications.

Alongside the review of security requirements, we have been considering how to strengthen our governance to give us confidence that there is a firm grip on the delivery of a safe and secure games and on the associated budget.

In light of that, we have taken two specific actions. The Glasgow 2014 strategic group has asked Stephen House, the chief constable of the police service of Scotland, to assume primary responsibility for the delivery of the overall security for the games. He has accepted that new role delegated to him by ministers and will direct not only the policing around the games but the wider security arrangements at games venues. He will attend meetings of the strategic group, which is chaired by the First Minister, to report on all aspects of security planning to the games partners.

We are also strengthening the governance arrangements underneath the strategic group, and I have lodged a paper in the Scottish Parliament information centre that explains those new governance arrangements in more detail.

In light of the lessons learned from London and the work that the police and the OC have subsequently carried out, the chief constable has advised that an enhanced budget is required to meet the costs of delivering a safe and secure games. I therefore announce that the Scottish Government is taking responsibility for the new games security budget of £90 million. As the minister responsible for the Commonwealth games, I have to listen when Scotland's top police officer tells me that that is what is required to deliver a safe and secure games. Mr House has written to me in those terms, and I have placed a copy of his letter in SPICe.

The Scottish Government will hold that new budget outwith the games budget to ensure better co-ordination and more rigorous oversight. The existing £27.2 million security budget and £25.1 million of contingency funding will be transferred across to the Scottish Government.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): Will the minister give way?

Shona Robison: Not just now.

However, it would not be prudent to draw entirely from contingency funding to meet the security budget shortfall in case unforeseen pressures emerge in the next 18 months. Therefore, I am committing £37.7 million of new funding from the Scottish Government in 2014-15 to fund in full the budget that has been agreed with the chief constable. We will continue to exert cost control and have agreed that any of the significant contingency remaining that is not used by the end of the games will be used to offset the additional outlay on security undertaken by the Scottish Government.

The additional funds represent an increase of £37.7 million in the public sector contribution to the games. The public sector contribution sits alongside £100 million of commercial revenue that will be raised by the OC through sponsorship, broadcasting income, tickets and merchandise sales. I am certain that this is the right step to take at this stage if we are to continue to have confidence in our ability to deliver a safe and secure games for everyone to enjoy.

Jenny Marra: Has any proportion of that budget been allocated to putting in place plans to provide anti-human-trafficking measures around the Commonwealth games?

Shona Robison: I will certainly write to the member on that matter, in which I know she has an interest, as both Kenny MacAskill and I have been involved in that.

Scotland has an excellent track record of hosting and policing major events safely and securely. That is one of the reasons why we won our bid to host the 2014 games. I am confident that these new governance and assurance arrangements—and the new budget to support them—will ensure that we continue with that excellent track record.

Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind): Further to Jenny Marra's question, is that difference in the accounting arrangements because there is specific intelligence about trafficking into Scotland during the Commonwealth games, or is it because of a more general warning?

Shona Robison: In response to Margo MacDonald, I would say that the lessons learned from the real-time experience of how the Olympic games were run have been applied to our security budget. I have laid out some of those lessons in my speech, but I am happy to provide additional detailed information if members require it.

The Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council, along with our partners, agree that we must not and will not take any chances with the safety of all those who wish to attend the games. If we are to deliver the best and most memorable Commonwealth games, the many thousands who

attend must feel secure. For that reason, we have accepted the advice from Chief Constable Stephen House that a safe and secure games can be delivered for £90 million.

In concluding, I welcome Patricia Ferguson's amendment, and I am pleased to commend the amended motion to Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the continued good progress being made in the preparations for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games; acknowledges the endorsement of the Commonwealth Games Federation for what has been achieved so far and the strength of legacy planning for the future; welcomes the announcement of the volunteer recruitment programme; expects the relevant lessons from the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games to be incorporated into Commonwealth Games planning; endorses the ambition of the Games partners to deliver a safe, secure and spectacularly successful event; recognises that a solid foundation is now in place to maximise the legacy impacts for all of Scotland, and commends the benefits that have already been secured.

15:12

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): It is almost exactly one year since we last had a major debate on the Commonwealth games, and we could not have predicted then that 2012 would be such a sporting success. This year will go down in history as the most successful on record so far for elite sport in the United Kingdom, and of course Scottish athletes played an important role in that success. Europe's win in the Ryder cup saw players from these islands, such as Paul Lawrie, play important roles in the victory. In tennis, Andy Murray contributed to our overall Olympic medal haul and had his most successful year yet on the international circuit.

The Olympic games are often described as the biggest sporting event in the world. Much was expected of the London Olympics and Paralympics, but few could have predicted that the outcome would be the outstanding events that we witnessed with millions of others throughout the world. From the opening ceremony to the final event, we were treated to performances and achievements that were truly world class. Watching Katherine Grainger win her well-deserved gold medal was a moving experience. Sir Chris Hoy rising to the occasion again and beating the record gold medal haul of Sir Steve Redgrave was a moment to remember, as was his sportsmanship and humility. Glasgow's Michael Jamieson giving everything that he had to win his medal was inspiring. Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis were a joy to watch. Bradley Wiggins, adding to his Tour de France victory, demonstrated the breadth and depth of British sport.

On Sunday evening, we saw some of our sporting heroes recognised for their hard work and effort at the BBC's sports personality of the year awards. Any one of the 12 finalists—and many more who were not shortlisted—would have been worthy winners in any year, but the summer of 2012 was special.

Our national sports bodies and the Commonwealth games organising committee have taken every opportunity to learn from the success of the Olympics and from the small number of things that went wrong.

The minister made some significant announcements. Although I would like to spend all my time talking about sport and legacy, it is appropriate to consider what the minister said about security. I thank her for her frankness, which was helpful. It is worth pointing out that it has always been recognised that the budget for security would probably have to increase to reflect the best security advice as close as possible to the time. Now that London 2012 has happened, the organisers have had the opportunity to consider and assess the requirements in the light of that experience. I understand that the UK Government recommended to Glasgow 2014 that there should be

"stronger mechanisms for overseeing security contract delivery".

The minister referred to the comments in that regard from Audit Scotland and the co-ordination commission.

No one wants to spend any more money on security than is absolutely necessary, but we must be prepared. The safety and security of the athletes, visitors, volunteers and spectators must be paramount. I am therefore pleased that the Scottish Government and its partners are facing up to that responsibility and are working to what might be considered to be a precautionary principle.

The approach of dividing up the security contracts will, I hope, allow us to avoid a repeat of the near disaster that was G4S, which must be welcome. I fully accept that it is no longer appropriate to ask volunteers to oversee the security searches that must take place and that that must be done by those who have the appropriate experience. I do not for one minute underestimate the additional responsibility that that places on the police and security staff. I accept entirely that we must secure not only the games venues but other venues such as hotels. The minister described the involvement of the chief constable, which seems sensible. I look forward to reading more about that in the letter that has been placed in SPICe.

I am sure that the minister shares my perhaps optimistic hope that the budget for security will not all have to be drawn down. In that regard, I have two questions. First, has the Commonwealth Games Federation commented on the new arrangements that have been put in place with the involvement of the Scottish Government and the chief constable? Secondly, given the scale of the moneys that are involved, will there be enhanced parliamentary scrutiny of the budget and, if so, how will that be organised? I hope that Mr Yousaf, in summing up, will respond to those questions. Although we understand the reasons for the increased budget, as parliamentarians, we have a duty to scrutinise the budget and to continue to do so right up to and beyond 2014.

Thousands of Glaswegians have already visited the Emirates arena and the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome. Anyone I have spoken to about the facilities has been impressed. The fact that the facilities are already up and running and being used successfully gives me confidence that they will be a strong element of the legacy that we want from the Glasgow games.

Talking of facilities, I note that Alison Johnstone lodged an amendment welcoming the commitment to a car-free games. Although that amendment was not accepted for debate, we in the Labour Party certainly agree with the Green Party on that. We look forward to seeing the transport plans that will make that policy aspiration a reality.

I am delighted that the co-ordination commission has considered the games preparations and rated them highly. However, one area that the commission does not consider is the preparedness of the athletes. I accept that we are still 582 days away from the opening ceremony—I am grateful to the Glasgow 2014 website for telling me that—but it would be good to hear from the ministers about the preparation that is taking place to ensure that our athletes are as successful as possible on home soil.

In the past few weeks, we have had the announcement of £4 million of funding for community-based events that will contribute to the games cultural programme. That, too, is welcome. I am pleased that the information sessions for those who may be interested in applying to the programme are being held around the country, helping to demonstrate that the games are for the whole country to enjoy and participate in. The cultural component is important to the Commonwealth games, as is the Queen's baton relay, which I hope will find its way into as many communities around Scotland as possible.

There are of course many areas of the country where training camps for incoming teams could be based. I wonder whether the minister might say something about that in closing the debate. Teams

do not necessarily all have the same requirements and often split off into their individual sports, so as many areas as possible should have an opportunity to take advantage of that and to act as hosts in the run-up to the games.

In January, anyone with an interest will be able to register to be considered as a volunteer worker at the games. Some of us in the chamber have already expressed an interest in volunteering, along with some 40,000 others. We will of course be subject to the same rigorous appraisal process as any other applicant. However, in my view, the opportunity is not one to be missed. Members might not know it but, just in case the Commonwealth games recruitment team are listening, I am usually very friendly and welcoming, although that might not always be obvious in the chamber.

It would be remiss of me not to mention in closing that Glasgow's aspiration does not end with the Commonwealth games in 2014. Hosting major events and sporting events in particular is something that Glasgow does well, and it is fast becoming an important part of our economy and culture. I am therefore pleased that we are now seeking to host the 2018 youth Olympic games. I wish everyone involved in the event the best of luck in their endeavour. I should perhaps declare an interest in that my constituency will be the location of the proposed athletes village for 2018, so it is a prospect that interests me very much. However, the needs and aspirations of the host community in Sighthill must also be considered as plans are drawn up.

This year has been a marvellous year for sport and, as it draws to a close, we have a lot to look forward to.

I move amendment S4M-05225.3, to leave out from "endorses" to end and insert:

" , particularly in relation to planning and budgeting for security; notes the progress being made with the cultural programme to accompany the Games; endorses the ambition of the Games partners to deliver a safe, secure and spectacularly successful event; recognises that a solid foundation is now in place to maximise the legacy impacts for all of Scotland and commends the benefits that have already been secured, and recognises that 2012 has been a remarkable year for sport and that this can be used as a springboard for Glasgow 2014."

15:22

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): It hardly seems possible that a whole year has gone by since the previous Government-led debate on the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games and that we are now just 19 months away from the opening ceremony.

A great deal has been achieved in the past year, and it was good to hear the chairman of the

Commonwealth Games Federation's co-ordination commission say:

"The fact that a number of venues are either completed, or are nearing completion, provides the CGF with significant confidence in the ability of Glasgow to deliver a successful Games."

It is also encouraging that the latest review of progress by the CGF has led the commission to suggest that the planning model for Glasgow 2014 is a "blueprint for future Games". However, as the chairman of Glasgow 2014 said in response to the CGF report, we can be confident but not complacent at this stage, as there is still a great deal of work to be done.

No venture as big as the Commonwealth games or the Olympic games can be accomplished without some difficulties or mistakes along the way, so I am pleased that the motion notes that relevant lessons from this year's Olympic and Paralympic games will be incorporated into the planning for Glasgow 2014. The minister's statement this afternoon about the need for enhanced security arrangements and the Government's response show that lessons have indeed been learned from the experience gained at London 2012.

I am grateful to the minister for giving notice to Opposition spokesmen that she would make a significant statement regarding plans for security arrangements for the games. I am reassured that they are being put in place early, because we certainly would not want to be faced with the last-minute worries regarding security that the organisers of the Olympic games in London had to deal with.

I know that there have been concerns about the adequacy of the proposed budget for security, but I think that the minister's statement on that and the revised governance arrangements, with oversight of security being in the hands of the chief constable for the police service of Scotland, will give significant comfort to those who were previously concerned. However, I agree with Patricia Ferguson that parliamentary scrutiny, too, will be increasingly important in the months ahead as we approach the games, particularly given the increased costs announced this afternoon.

As we near the end of this spectacularly successful year for British sport and as we remember the outstanding achievements of the many Scots who won medals in the Olympic games, Andy Murray's first grand slam victory for the UK in 76 years and Paul Lawrie's highest winning margin in the Ryder cup at Medinah, we now have to look to and beyond 2014 as the opportunity to achieve a sustainable sporting legacy for Scotland that will transform the culture of sport in this country.

As members will know, the Health and Sport Committee has recently completed an inquiry into support for community sport, the report of which will be published early next year. A key part of that inquiry focused on how to involve more people in physical and sporting activity, starting with the young and continuing throughout life, in an effort to improve the health and physical and mental wellbeing of a nation that has a great deal to overcome with regard to obesity, long-term health conditions and significant health inequalities across the country.

As part of our inquiry, the committee visited a number of exciting new sports venues in different parts of Scotland. Just before they opened to the public, we saw the fantastic Emirates sports arena, including the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome, in the absolutely transformed east end of Glasgow, and we visited the games village, which we heard will be adapted into a mix of affordable and social housing, with some more expensive private residential areas, together with a care home in the midst of the community.

At Commonwealth house we heard about the Tollcross international swimming centre and the Glasgow Green national hockey centre, which are both on target to be opened next year, and the plans for Commonwealth house itself to become state-of-the-art offices, right in the heart of the city.

Some members of our committee visited facilities at Cumbernauld, and I was one who went to the Aberdeen Sports Village. We saw how well used that magnificent facility is by people of all ages, and we heard about the progress of the new Olympic-sized swimming pool, which is on schedule to be opened early in 2014 and which, it is hoped, Commonwealth athletes will use for training.

Those facilities are of enormous importance to Scotland and in reality they are long overdue. However, as local people in Aberdeen pointed out to us, although those venues are fantastic for those who can access them, for the majority who cannot—for whatever reason—there is still a serious lack of good locally accessible facilities to encourage people into physical activity and sport. As Liz McColgan said in evidence to the committee, the facilities she trained on when she was an aspiring Olympic athlete without proper running shoes are still the same now, all these years later.

That is why plans to open up the school estate to local communities and to utilise other public and community owned facilities as community sports hubs are so important. One witness said that he would like to see a community sports hub in every secondary school. That is why we should listen to the Scottish Sports Association, whose vision is

for better use to be made of existing sports facilities, including our natural environment.

I do not propose to deal with the cultural programme that is being organised alongside the games, except to say that it will be of enormous importance in presenting our magnificent cultural assets and heritage to the many British and foreign people who will be visiting Scotland and Glasgow for the first, and hopefully not the last, time.

Another key focus of the Health and Sport Committee's inquiry was on volunteering, which has been described as the lifeblood of sport in this country, and the need to attract more volunteers into sport, particularly from the more deprived communities, and to give them better training so that they can gain confidence in their role.

I would like to say more about volunteering in sport as a legacy of Glasgow 2014, but I will leave that to my closing speech. In the meantime, I will finish by saying that we will support the motion and the Labour amendment at decision time this evening.

15:28

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):

Much of the Commonwealth games activity will be in Glasgow, and much of that will be in the east end of Glasgow, which I welcome. However, we want to emphasise at the outset that these are Scotland's games, not just Glasgow's games. I am sure that we will hear about venues in Angus, Lanarkshire and Edinburgh, but there is a lot more to the games than its venues. For example, the idea for the mascot came to us from Cumbernauld, and men and women will come from all over the country to take part in the games as members of the Scottish team, as well as to be spectators.

The minister mentioned security in her speech, and we should welcome her statement and the money that will be available—Patricia Ferguson got that right. We want the games to be friendly, but we have to have a balance; we live in the modern world and we have to accept that significant security is required. I hope that Glasgow Community and Safety Services will be part of the security arrangements. It is the arm of Glasgow City Council that looks after CCTV and security. I hope that its existing infrastructure can be used, and perhaps some of the infrastructure that will be put in place can be used after the games.

It has been mentioned that some of the venues are coming along very well. Perhaps the most impressive, as Nanette Milne said, is the Emirates arena in the east end of Glasgow, which includes the velodrome and the indoor sports arena.

The venue's size is impressive, and it creates many opportunities. For example, when I visited the other week, the Scottish international badminton championships were taking place. There was room for the championships in one venue and room in the centre of the velodrome for youngsters to learn and practise badminton. They could then go through to watch some of the top players from around the world playing badminton. There is nowhere else in Scotland where all of those things could have happened under one roof. Smaller venues cannot provide such opportunities. That is an example of the legacy already happening. Many of us think that a legacy comes after an event, but we are already benefiting from a legacy before the event.

There is already community use of the venues. I believe that membership of Glasgow club, which is the membership system for those who use Glasgow's gyms, has already increased by around 1,000. There have also been international competitions, such as the UCI track cycling world cup in the velodrome, and the Glasgow Rocks basketball team are now using the arena.

Other venues are still being developed, including those for swimming at Tollcross and for hockey at Glasgow Green. I understand that there have been some slight delays in deciding whether Scottish Hockey will operate the venue after the games. I know that there are legal issues that have to be sorted out. Scottish Hockey is quite a small organisation and Glasgow City Council is a very big organisation, and I hope that the minister will be able to help to smooth out the process.

I want to mention the games village. Those who knew the site before will know that it was in a very run-down industrial area. There will be 700 homes and a care home, which was mentioned. There will be a housing mix, with bought houses and 300 social rented houses. I visited the village last Monday, and I thank Mactaggart and Mickel for showing me around. I was very impressed, and I was particularly struck by three things in visiting the houses.

First, in one room, the beds were already set up, which has happened in plenty of time. Secondly, the interesting thing about those beds is that they came from the London Olympics and are being reused, which is extremely good. They also have extensions for long people. In one room in which there were beds, it was interesting to see that there were sockets halfway up the wall, one of which was marked "Cooker" and one of which was marked "Washing Machine". The kitchens are not required during the Commonwealth games, because all the food will be prepared elsewhere, so the athletes can use the rooms that will become kitchens as sleeping accommodation.

Thirdly, we went into a quite large room in which the central heating radiator on the wall was very small compared with what I would have expected. The explanation for that is that the standard of insulation is so good in the houses that not so much heating is needed, which will mean a big saving financially and for the environment.

It is clear that the games village is leading the way in that respect. The hot water will be provided by a district heating system, so there will be no individual boilers; the water will be heated centrally and piped round the area. Again, that will save money and will be good for the environment.

Volunteers have already been mentioned, and it is great that so many volunteers will come. The website says that it is all about Scotland's "friendliest, most obliging people". I am not sure that all MSPs fit into that description, but I am sure that at least some do. If people who live further afield want to be a volunteer, perhaps I could put up one or two people on the floor of my flat, if they would like that.

We want to encourage young people to get excited about the games. One thing that impresses me in my constituency is the uniformed youth organisations—the guides, scouts and so on. I was a little surprised and disappointed to hear that the games organisers are looking only at individuals to be volunteers and are not willing to consider those organisations. I wonder whether there is some way to take that issue forward.

In conclusion, I am tremendously enthusiastic about the games—in fact, I asked whether I could get two speaking slots today, but was told that I could have only one. We are already seeing many tangible benefits. As well as the venues and the village, we are seeing the M74 completion, the east end regeneration route and the vastly improved Dalmarnock station, which, I hope, will bring more people to the games by public transport. I encourage all members to go back to their communities and enthuse about the games.

15:34

Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab): I am delighted to be able to speak about the Commonwealth games in 2014 and the progress that is being made in preparation for them.

The first issue that I want to raise is about the lessons on equality and inclusiveness that can be learned from the London Olympic and Paralympic games. The Glasgow 2014 website says:

"We want to use the power of the Games to change attitudes by celebrating diversity in everything we do and by delivering a truly inclusive sports programme",

but it gives no indication of how that will be done.

An initiative that I believe should be studied closely is the London 2012 equality and diversity forum, which brought together the main 2012 partners to monitor and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of the 2012 games. The forum looked at a number of issues, including accessible transport, the food strategy, volunteering and the ticketing strategy. We need to look at the forum's work in detail to see what can be learned from the successes and mistakes of the London games, including the mistake that gave rise to anger about empty seats at sold-out events.

On the food strategy for the Commonwealth games, I welcome the appointment of a food project manager—or a food tsar, as the newspapers call her—whose remit will include helping Scottish food and drink suppliers to tender for contracts at the events. I urge the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council to ensure that the provision of specialist products such as halal food is given careful consideration as part of the strategy.

The London 2012 equality and diversity forum supported the launch of a website—www.inclusivelondon.com—that highlighted a range of accessible services, hotels and modes of transport. I feel that such a resource would be useful for people who want to come to the Glasgow games, and I would like to know whether anything along those lines is planned.

I have some questions about the inclusiveness of the Glasgow 2014 volunteering strategy. The volunteering publicity says that people can volunteer only if they are eligible to work in the UK. That means that people from the A2 countries—Romania and Bulgaria—who are not eligible to work in the UK at the moment but who will be eligible to do so from 1 January 2014, will not be able to register to participate as volunteers in 2014. That issue needs to be looked at.

I turn to the question of who owns the games. I listened carefully to John Mason, who, like me, is a former member of Glasgow City Council, and I am surprised that he wants to take away the credit for the games from Glasgow. They are Glasgow's games. It was Glasgow City Council that bid for the games and which worked hard to win them. That does not take away from the fact that a number of other people made a contribution, including the First Minister, who went to Sri Lanka and fought hard for Scotland to win the games.

John Mason: Will the member give way?

Hanzala Malik: In a minute.

The games are primarily Glasgow's games; they should not be hijacked. We should not try to hide the fact that Glasgow City Council successfully managed the bid to stage the games, and

Glasgow should take the credit for winning them. That said, I accept that other cities in Scotland will participate fully in the games and that Scotland as a whole will benefit from them.

John Mason: Would the member accept that one of the challenges for Glaswegians—and maybe one of the hopes for today's debate—is to encourage MSPs and people from around Scotland to feel that the games belong to them and not that they are being held somewhere else?

Hanzala Malik: I totally agree. Indeed, I would go a step further and say that the games belong to the whole Commonwealth family; I encourage everyone in the Commonwealth to feel that the games are their games. However, I think that Glasgow has taken the lead and should get the credit for winning them. I would not want anyone to try to steal that from Glasgow.

Margo MacDonald: Will the member take an intervention?

Hanzala Malik: Yes, Margo.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): I remind members to use full names.

Margo MacDonald: No one can steal the credit from Glasgow for getting the games: it was Glasgow that went out and got them, backed by the rest of Scotland. That is how Glasgow should graciously accept the fact that it is leading the games—not only it is involved.

Hanzala Malik: I totally accept that. I agree that Glasgow deserves the credit and that the rest of Scotland is part and parcel. I would not want to take that away from anybody in Scotland, but the point that I am trying to make and emphasise is that we should not run away with the idea of who got the games. Margo MacDonald quite rightly pointed me in the right direction and reminded all of us where the idea came from, and I am grateful to her for that.

15:40

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): The Commonwealth games in 2014 will be a fantastic showcase for Glasgow—and for Scotland. We will have 17 sports, with 6,500 athletes from 71 countries coming to Glasgow to take part in what have become known throughout the world as the friendly games.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Coffey, will you move your microphone closer to you, please?

Willie Coffey: I beg your pardon; I will do my very best.

Who can forget the wild scenes of jubilation at the ceremony in Sri Lanka in 2007 when Glasgow was announced as the winner, and the even wilder

scenes back in Scotland as young people gathered in a number of venues across Glasgow city to celebrate the news? Scotland and Hampden are rightly famous for the Hampden roar, but on the day when Glasgow was announced as the 2014 venue the screams could be heard even as far away as Edinburgh.

I can just remember the incredible 5,000m final at Scotland's first Commonwealth games in Edinburgh in 1970, when Ian Stewart pipped Ian McCafferty to win gold for Scotland in a pulsating race that saw the legendary Kenyan athlete Kip Keino coming third. With Lachie Stewart having already won the 10,000m, it was a fantastic achievement for Scottish athletics to have three world-class runners competing at the highest level and winning medals for Scotland on an international stage in front of their home crowd.

It is pleasing to see such a high number of contracts for the games being awarded to Scotland-based companies. Over the next six months, the Glasgow organising committee expects £50 million-worth of business opportunities to be generated.

The four strategic partners—the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow 2014, and Commonwealth Games Scotland—are reporting that everything is on track and that the substantial investment by the partners and sponsors to deliver a successful games will also see many benefits for Glasgow and Scotland for years to come.

It is welcome that an additional £1 million has been added to the elite athletes programme budget, making a total of £9 million to support the various performance development initiatives. I hope that that will mean more success for our athletes—no pressure there, then.

In a regular update to the Public Audit Committee earlier this month, we heard news of progress on the Hampden running track part of the project and we heard about important revisions to security procurement arrangements in line with the London experiences this summer, as detailed by the minister earlier. Planning for the games seems to be well in hand, and our best wishes go to all the partners that their hard work will pay off as we approach the summer of 2014.

I will say a little about the plans for the long-term benefit from the games. The sports facilities and infrastructure will be a clear and obvious benefit to Glasgow and Scotland; they are already allowing us to pitch for and secure more high-profile events, which is particularly welcome.

Possibly of greater importance is the impact that the games will have on young people right across our country and the thousands of volunteers directly coming to help at the games. The £10

million legacy facilities fund that the First Minister announced in March will provide some great opportunities for people to engage with sports in their local communities.

The volunteers who come to the games have a crucial role to play since they will be the first point of contact for many visitors. The experience that they gain will be extremely valuable to them in developing their own skills, and many of them will have the opportunity to gain direct employment opportunities in sport through the £5 million legacy young person's fund.

I am also looking forward to hearing more details about the youth legacy ambassador programme, which will give young people a chance to work in their communities, to find out how best we can capitalise on the games.

Only 30 minutes down the road from Glasgow, in Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire Council recently opened an international-standard running track and sports facility. The facilities are being well used, with more than 17,000 users so far. There are a variety of athletics programmes, and Scottish Athletics and Scottish Disability Sport have asked to use the facility as a national camp for their disability squad of about 30 athletes. We very much hope that the first-class facilities will attract some of the games teams to our area as they prepare for the games.

Margo MacDonald: Is the member able to say what the local authority has done to try to make it known throughout the Commonwealth that it has a facility that could be used for training camps?

Willie Coffey: We have the voice of the Scottish Parliament and its members, and of course we have the loud, clear and capable voice of Margo MacDonald.

One of our best-known local athletes is weightlifter Peter Kirkbride, from Chick Hamilton's club in Shortlees in Kilmarnock. Peter was a silver medallist in Delhi in 2010 and we hope that one more big lift from him will bring a gold medal back to Kilmarnock, so that we can spray our post boxes with some of that nice gold paint that has been left over from London.

Patricia Ferguson: Will the member give way?

Willie Coffey: I am just coming to the end of my speech.

I am convinced that the games will be a stunning success and that our visitors will never forget the warmth of the people of Glasgow. Let us look forward to an incredible Hampden roar at all the venues, for all the athletes and visitors, and to an even bigger roar when our athletes step onto the podium to claim their gold medals for Scotland. After all, they will be doing that again in Brazil in 2016.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There is a little time in hand for members to take interventions. I remind members who intervene that if they still want to speak in the debate they should press their request-to-speak buttons again.

15:46

Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab): I am delighted to contribute to the debate on the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games and I join other members in congratulating the organisers and supporters on the fantastic progress that has been made.

I am a proud Glaswegian, so I look forward to welcoming athletes and supporters from all over the Commonwealth to the city. I firmly believe that the event provides a unique and special opportunity to showcase not just Glasgow but all Scotland to the rest of the world.

I spoke recently in the Parliament about preparations for the 2014 Commonwealth games and the hard work that is being undertaken by staff and volunteers to ensure that the event is an international success. At that time, organisers had begun advertising for thousands of volunteers to assist during the games, in a variety of roles. More than 40,000 people from all over the United Kingdom registered an interest in taking part in that way. Throughout Glasgow and further afield there is huge enthusiasm for becoming a 2014 volunteer and part of the legacy of Glasgow's Commonwealth games.

If we further promote the opportunities that the games bring to Scotland, we can ensure not just that we have more volunteers to staff our venues and arenas but that there is a far greater impact on families throughout the country, because so many people will have a son, daughter, friend or cousin who took part in the summer of 2014. Such awareness brings clear benefits to Scotland. Shared experience in and enthusiasm for the Commonwealth games can bring communities together.

I support the work that is going on to ensure that there is a strong legacy after the games have concluded, and I commend the excellent work of Glasgow City Council and partner organisations in making that a reality. Creative Scotland and Glasgow Life recently launched a £4 million fund, which is open to community-based organisations and individuals in the months leading up to the international sporting event. The money is intended to support the build-up to the games and will be awarded to projects that involve the whole community in cultural and artistic opportunities.

Awards will range from £20,000 to £300,000 and will support groups that are best placed to generate enthusiasm and excitement for one of

the most important events ever to come to Scotland. I believe that communities in Glasgow and across Scotland will benefit hugely from the Commonwealth games. The impact of the games could last for generations and it falls to us to secure the benefits for our children and our grandchildren to enjoy.

The work that is already under way will have made a significant impact on the success of Glasgow 2014 and I look forward with anticipation to the outcome of the years of hard work from organisers, volunteers and athletes alike.

15:50

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): With the construction of the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome and the Emirates arena, the Tollcross swimming complex nearing completion and the refurbishment of the Royal Commonwealth pool here in Edinburgh there are obvious indicators both in Glasgow and in the capital city that the games are very much on the way.

Barry Buddon in Angus, where the shooting will be staged, as yet has no such tangible evidence of what is coming to the area in 582 days. However, a good deal of preparation is going on along a range of fronts. I intend to focus my contribution to this welcome debate on developments that are specific to the area that I represent.

Glasgow 2014 organisers have carried out ecological and environmental surveys at the Ministry of Defence-owned location, which boasts three sites of special scientific interest, to provide a baseline for addressing any negative impact on Barry Buddon from hosting the shooting. Next up—within the next few weeks—will be the submission of a planning application. Games organisers are working closely with Angus Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Ministry of Defence. Collaborative work with Carnoustie golf links on a number of recently installed core paths to improve access to the area has also been taking place.

A competition manager for shooting appointment has been made, with the individual concerned taking up their post next month. Given the experience and pedigree of Peter Underhill, who acted as shooting competition manager for both Manchester 2002 and London 2012, we can be confident that a successful event will be delivered.

Angus Council is at the forefront of the preparatory activity that is taking place on the ground. A series of working groups have been established within the council to address the priority issues, including legacy and youth ambassadors, volunteering, the event venue itself,

support to athletes and coaches, and external funding.

Margo MacDonald: Is there a plan for the future use of the new facility that is being provided?

Graeme Dey: I am not aware of one—my understanding is that it is impractical to leave a legacy facility on Barry Buddon for a number of reasons.

I want to highlight three other areas of working group operations—namely the baton relay, the promotion and tourism strategy and the adopt a second country initiative. With regard to the baton relay, events of that nature are a slightly delicate subject for my constituency as we were all but left out of the Olympic torch relay. Angus South boasts iconic locations such as Arbroath abbey and Glamis castle—after it emerged that neither was scheduled to be visited by the torch relay, I raised the issue with Lord Coe.

As the local MSP, I asked that the decision to not take the Olympic flame to either of those renowned places be reconsidered. I suggested as a compromise that the torch might make a brief detour from its procession along the Forfar to Meigle road and travel through the village of Glamis, home of the Angus folk museum and a particularly picturesque location, which I am sure we could have packed out. That idea, however—the adoption of which would have added only a few moments to the flame's journey—was rejected. I am therefore delighted to learn that determination of the route for the Commonwealth games baton will have local input and I know from discussions that I have had with the council that it is committed to ensuring that those iconic Angus landmarks and others are visited.

I stress to ministers the importance of that happening, along with perhaps ensuring that another flaw in the Olympic torch arrangements is not replicated. I understand that people from our county were nominated to carry the Olympic torch but carried out their duties outwith Angus's borders. I ask ministers to impress upon Commonwealth games organisers that in order to maximise interest in the baton relay and allow friends and relatives easy access to seeing their family members or pals carrying the baton they should, wherever possible along the entire route, look to have local people involved.

Under the adopt a second country initiative, which I believe is based on a sportscotland proposal, a number of competing countries will be allocated to each local authority area. Angus has been allocated Gibraltar, the Maldives and Anguilla, one of the Leeward islands. Among other things, the education departments of all councils will look to have schools become involved in

projects on the allocated nations, but I know that Angus Council will go a little further and will seek to promote the second countries to the wider Angus community and establish long-term twinning links.

I note in passing that the lead officer for the project is Ken McKay, the council's education development officer for physical education and sport, and I cannot think of any council official who is better suited to playing such a part. Ken McKay is a former Scottish long jump champion who competed in the Commonwealth games the last time that they were held in Scotland, in 1986, and finished eighth.

I am pleased to see that Angus Council has given the promotion and tourism strategy paramount importance. As a nation, we must seize the tourism opportunity that the games present. Angus has much to offer visitors and it is imperative that people who are coming to the games as a whole, and not just to the shooting, are made aware of that and are given every assistance to get around the county and see its attractions.

As part of the tourism strategy that is being developed by the tourism working group, promotional materials are to be developed and sent in advance to shooters, support staff and spectators; to supplement that, there is an agreement in principle with Dundee City Council, which is hosting the shooting village, to place such items in all games-associated accommodation. I welcome that collaborative engagement between the neighbouring councils, and I hope that it will lead to close working on a number of other games-related fronts.

I well remember the last time that the Commonwealth games came to Scotland. I covered the games as a reporter, and there is no doubt that they threw up some memorable moments—who will ever forget Dundee's Liz McColgan storming to victory in the inaugural women's 10,000m? However, my own abiding memory occurred in the media centre and concerned a visit that was made there by one Robert Maxwell and his entourage. Those of us who were around at the time will perhaps remember Bob Maxwell's much heralded intervention to "save" the games. What is less well known is that he sought to court favour with the press by having his visit to the media hub at Meadowbank accompanied by a tannoy announcement that, courtesy of Mr Maxwell, there would be a free bar for the press for the following hour. That incident sticks in my mind because it was one of the few occasions in my 30 years as a hack on which offering journalists free drink did not set off a stampede.

I am confident that, unlike the 1986 games, the 2014 games will be remembered for all the right reasons, and that Angus will play its part in ensuring that that happens.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I once again ask members who have asked to speak in this debate to ensure that they have pressed their request-to-speak buttons.

15:57

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): This summer, the Commonwealth deputy secretary general said:

"Sport isn't just about competition and elite athletes ... but under the right circumstances, it can convey important democratic principles such as tolerance, solidarity, co-operation and respect. It can also foster inclusion for marginalised people and support vulnerable people, including girls and women, people with a disability, those living in conflict and those recovering from trauma."

We might expect the Commonwealth deputy secretary to have such an insight about the potential of sport to transform lives, but what about young people from across the Commonwealth? As the your commonwealth website testifies, they understand the points that he made, too.

Twenty-four-year-old Tamica, from Jamaica, knows that spending on sport is commonsense preventative spend. She says:

"sports provide a fun and easy way to keep a nation healthy ... An unhealthy population is expensive ... and ... governments must spend more on healthcare instead of other social needs."

Alicia, 20, from New Zealand, says that sport

"brings all people—players, teams, coaches, volunteers and spectators—together"

and "establishes a shared bond".

On a legacy-minded note, Eva Maria, 21, from New Zealand, says:

"It's inspiring to see your own team win, but it's even more important to develop a country through promoting a healthy lifestyle for all its citizens. Compulsory PE class? I'm all for it! And not just for youths. Sport is for all ages."

She is right: sport is for all. London 2012 proved that. The Olympics and the Paralympics showcased talented diversity, and people across the globe—many of whom usually do not bother much with sport—watched in awe.

However, sportswomen are very much marginalised in the media. I and others have raised that issue in Parliament and elsewhere. Outwith what was a dazzlingly successful Olympics for women and the welcome coverage of women representing some nations for the first time, sportswomen are underrepresented in much of the mainstream press. That does not help to normalise active lifestyles for women in Scotland.

Coverage of bikini diets abounds, but coverage of physically active sportswomen is too rare.

It is extremely important that we embed physical activity at the earliest stage, so that it becomes part and parcel of everyday life and the individual gains so much from being active that the challenges that are presented by puberty, peer pressure and so on are milestones that are more ably managed due to increased self-esteem and improved body confidence.

Just this week, the BBC reported that women in Sweden are far sportier and fitter than women here. It is fair to say that we are obsessed with the weather, but we often use it as an excuse for inaction. Sweden has a harsher climate and fewer daylight hours, but women in Sweden are four times more likely to be active than women here. I know that the minister will share my discomfort with our fattest-nation-in-Europe tag and agree that we need to look at nations, including those fairly close to home, whose trends are more positive.

The BBC reporter was visiting a girls football club in Stockholm. It was pitch black at 4 pm, and it was wet and cold. The rain was horizontal, but she commented on the boundless enthusiasm of all involved. The coach said:

"I come from work. Sometimes I feel tired, depressed, but I leave full of energy. It's just joy - pure joy."

He thoroughly enjoys working with those young women. Half of all Swedes are members of sports clubs. That is not surprising if the attitude that was evident at that football club is the norm. The coach said:

"No one is ever turned away. Everyone can play."

He never says no. Now that is a legacy.

That enthusiasm does not surprise me as it is mirrored by my experience of coaching young people in Edinburgh. They are not put off by a few puddles on the track or a bitter wind. However, lack of volunteer coaches is an issue, and access to facilities is sometimes a challenge. I support the Scottish Sports Association's call for employer-supported volunteering.

The club that I mentioned was set up following the Swedish Olympics of 1912. Young girls there are following in their mothers' and grandmothers' footsteps.

Last week, due to cold conditions, the outdoor track at Meadowbank was out of action. Edinburgh Athletic Club's Lynsey Sharp raised concerns about the impact of the closure on athletes' ability to train. This year, Lynsey won the silver medal at the European championships and reached the semi-final of the Olympic 800m. She is now training to compete in the next Commonwealth

games, following in the footsteps of her mother Carol, who is with us in the gallery. Thanks to Lynsey's action, the matter was resolved and the track was available the next day, but it is essential that we do all that we can to ensure that there is access to training facilities. It is frosty, we must have contingency plans and have the right machinery in place.

There are particular issues about the use of the indoor track space at Meadowbank. It is the only such facility in the Lothians, yet at times it is let for antique fairs and clothing sales. Given the nature of the track surface, we need to ask whether placing chairs, tables and hanging rails on it really protects what is, after all, a public asset. Hires to raise revenue should take place in one of the region's many halls and not in its only indoor track facility.

Many local authorities rely on arm's-length organisations to deliver leisure facilities. In Edinburgh, tensions have arisen when athletes at club and elite levels have been unable to access facilities in venues that they often use because paid-for classes and events are taking place there. I do not believe that such challenges are insurmountable and it does not have to be an either/or, but better consultation of all user groups would go a long way towards ensuring that such tensions do not occur in the first place.

I realise that some of those points are matters for local authorities but, as John Mason said, these are Scotland's games, so I would warmly welcome a commitment from the minister to speak to colleagues in local government. I would also appreciate a comment on her commitment to deliver a games that are based on attractive passenger transport that will be sustained after the games have finished.

I support Patricia Ferguson's call for assurances regarding parliamentary scrutiny of the security budget.

Athletes—some household names and some who are yet to establish themselves—are training at this very moment. We will all support them in Glasgow in 2014, but it is essential that we also support them now, as they strive to get there.

16:04

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): I begin by focusing on the race equality and community cohesion opportunities that will be created by the Commonwealth games coming to Glasgow and Scotland in 2014. Ahead of the games arriving in Glasgow, the Commonwealth baton relay will be a wonderful opportunity and we can do so much with it. A fanfare will surround the baton relay across all Commonwealth countries and a positive message

will be sent about what awaits the athletes, their families and tourists when they arrive in Scotland.

I am delighted that the Commonwealth 2014 team plans to initiate related events for the diaspora of people from Commonwealth countries who are in Scotland. Working with that diaspora in Scotland is vital. We can produce as many glossy brochures as we like that say how wonderful Scotland is, but it will be what the diaspora in Scotland of Pakistanis, Indians, Sri Lankans and Cameroonians—we could go on and on—tell sportspersons and tourists from Commonwealth countries about their experiences of living in Scotland that really sells Glasgow's and Scotland's games to the rest of the Commonwealth. I am delighted that deep and meaningful engagement will take place, as that is vital.

Linked to that is the £4 million cultural fund that has been announced. I was delighted to hear about the variety of cultural events in Angus that Graeme Dey referred to, which will include work in schools. I am sure that that will be significant. I should plug the organisation of the former MSP Anne McLaughlin—the African Caribbean centre in Glasgow, which the minister has visited. That is an example of a community hub for a diaspora of people from the Commonwealth who are vibrant and active and who enjoy living in Scotland. We must make the link between people who travel to Scotland and the diaspora in Scotland. The cultural fund provides a wonderful opportunity to develop that.

Health inequalities have an impact on black and minority ethnic groups, as they do in significant ways on a range of groups in Scotland. Specific needs arise from the mental health issues that many minority ethnic communities face. In looking through my briefings in preparing for the debate, I was delighted to see that the Scottish sport relief programme has started to give out meaningful awards. It is a partnership between sport relief and the Scottish Government, and an additional £1.2 million has recently been put into the pot of cash for it.

I note that the Glasgow Association for Mental Health recently got £120,000 from that programme for training and advocacy work for black and minority ethnic mental health service users in the area that I represent. On dealing with ethnic and gender inequality, I note that £117,000 was awarded to the Rape Crisis Centre in Glasgow to support women refugees who have experienced rape and that Freedom from Torture Scotland got £120,000 for therapeutic support for women who have experienced torture and who are refugees or asylum seekers. That is a meaningful legacy and work that is taking place in relation to the Commonwealth games that is not just sport

related. The games provide an opportunity to do much across society.

I chair the cross-party group on racial equality in Scotland. At our annual general meeting in October, we were addressed by Paul Zealey of the Glasgow 2014 team. His presentation was impressive and comprehensive, and the BME stakeholders who were present—of whom I assure members there were many—unanimously welcomed it. As Hanzala Malik knows, getting unanimous support at a meeting of the cross-party group on racial equality is a pretty tough bar to reach, but the consensus was that things were proceeding well.

We will seek tangible outcomes in, say, six months' time and one year's time on delivery of Mr Zealey's vision. Part of that delivery will involve engaging further with the cross-party group, which I hope will happen at a stakeholder event in Glasgow in the new year, to ensure that black and minority ethnic groups are suitably consulted and engaged with on the games. In our cross-party group, Mr Malik has something to offer in relation to that.

I will widen out the discussion about volunteers. It is wonderful news that 40,000 people have volunteered, although we need only 15,000. I agree with the minister about keeping the volunteer registrations coming. I am keen that we do not have the usual faces as volunteers. We have a professional class of volunteers in Scotland and across the UK—sometimes that involves MSPs, too. We must ensure that the people who are least likely to volunteer are the most likely to be given support to volunteer.

Hanzala Malik: I just want to point out that minority communities are missing out on an opportunity in that regard. We should remember that all those people who are volunteering today will not necessarily be available for the games themselves, so we definitely need a large number of volunteers. However, a lot of communities are still not engaging with us, and we need to bridge that gap somehow.

Bob Doris: I completely agree with Mr Malik. He mentioned ineligibility for volunteering in his speech, and I add asylum seekers to the list of those whom we would like to be able to volunteer at the games.

I am delighted that 15,000 of the potential volunteers come from the rest of the UK outwith Scotland. Irrespective of where the volunteers come from—whether they are from Scotland or the rest of the UK—we should ensure that there is a vibrant ethnic mix. We should ensure that some of the volunteers from the rest of the UK who will come to Glasgow and offer their services, for which we are grateful, come from deprived

communities in which people are least likely to volunteer.

I will make a couple of brief points if I still have time. With regard to the games legacy, we have heard that increased sports participation is already happening due to the success of the London Olympic games. Many young people have presented at sports centres throughout Scotland and the UK, but coaching staff have not necessarily been in place to handle that demand. I am sure that the sports inquiry by the Health and Sport Committee, on which I and Nanette Milne sit, is considering that issue.

We must ensure that we find a solution so that there are enough coaches in place to meet the demand for increased participation in sport. Some leisure trusts in Scotland—including Glasgow Life from time to time—have slightly restricted practices with regard to who they define as a coach to allow that person to use the facilities. Perhaps, in the short term at least, we need to find more innovative ways to get volunteer coaches in to help to meet that demand. Of course, that is no replacement for fully qualified coaches, which would be my first preference.

I do not care who takes the credit for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games. I note that Jack McConnell and Steven Purcell, as well as Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond, led the way on the games, along with Glasgow City Council. However, there should not be a bunfight over who gets the credit. We should all just enjoy the games together and make them as good as they possibly can be.

16:12

James Kelly (Rutherglen) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to take part in this afternoon's debate. Before I go on to the issues that I had planned to cover, I have a couple of comments on the minister's announcement about security. I accept that it is correct to learn the lessons from the Olympic games in London, and the minister is correct to take on board advice from experts to update the budget and the security plans.

However, I think that members will want to study the plans that have been placed in SPICe in detail, because the minister's announcement is substantial, and a large sum of money—£90 million—is potentially being committed. I would be interested to hear from the minister when he sums up from which areas of the budget that extra £37 million has had to be taken in order to make up the security budget.

The Commonwealth games is—as other members have said—a fantastic opportunity for Glasgow and for all the other communities and areas in Scotland. We need only look back at the

success of the Olympic games, on which the recent sporting reviews allowed us to reflect. We can also reflect on the Ryder Cup and how much excitement it generated for us as spectators and for the participants.

The real test of the games will be whether we make the most of the opportunity not just to create a sporting spectacle in Glasgow, but to gain lasting benefits for communities in Glasgow and throughout Scotland. We will look for a knock-on effect in increased participation in sport throughout the country.

We have recently had reports about the alarming levels of obesity in Scotland; that could be overcome by people participating in sport and fitness activities. Alison Johnstone is correct to point out that, to get that right, we have to start in school with physical education and quality guidance from PE professionals. We also need to make the most of the school estate and open up the public facilities that are available to encourage greater participation.

The games will give communities a real opportunity to celebrate their happening and to get involved. In Rutherglen, Cambuslang and Blantyre in my area, there will be much excitement. Those areas are outwith Glasgow, but they are right on the doorstep of many of the games venues, being especially near to the outdoor cycling course at Cathkin Braes. The games give the community in my constituency a great opportunity to see the events and to participate by welcoming visitors from overseas. I am issuing a clarion call to those communities.

From speaking to a number of groups and individuals in my constituency, I know that people are very enthusiastic about the games and I look forward to working with local groups as their MSP during the coming months so that they can be involved and make the most of the games.

Margo MacDonald: Blantyre in the member's constituency is not the most salubrious or wealthy area, but the people who live there have a great interest in cycling. However, in two years' time we will be two years further into a depression. Is the member concerned about ticket prices and accessibility because of the lack of cash?

James Kelly: Margo MacDonald makes a relevant point and I know that she knows the Blantyre area very well. I have made the point before in these debates that we need to allow access for spectators from all areas of the community. The point is relevant today with the publication of the Scottish index of multiple deprivation, which highlights a number of areas in Glasgow. If we are really going to reach out, we need to make sure that tickets are reasonably

priced so that people can come in to the venues. I thank Margo MacDonald for bringing up that issue.

I am aware that the Parliament will discuss the budget on Thursday, and we need to be aware of the potential benefit that increased participation in sport can bring to other areas of the budget. If, after the games, we see greater participation in sport, that will help by lessening the strain on the health budget. As we saw last week in the Audit Scotland report, there are real health inequalities in Glasgow and throughout Scotland, and we want to take the opportunity of the games to boost participation and see the benefits of that across different parts of the budget. I know that the cross-party group on sport and the Scottish Sports Association are focused on that objective.

Like everyone else, I welcome the opportunity to celebrate the games, but I also look for the benefits that they will deliver to Glasgow and Scotland.

16:19

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): The Government says about legacy that

"We are determined to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the people of Scotland".

That is an absolutely excellent aim with which to set out.

As a member from north-east Scotland, I am delighted to be speaking in the debate, despite Hanzala Malik's suggestion that it is nothing to do with me and only to do with Glasgow. Glasgow is to be commended for bringing the games to Scotland.

I suggest that we need to link inspiration, which will come from the games, to perspiration, which comes from our pores. We know that lack of exercise kills. The physically active gain 20 to 30 per cent reduced risk of premature death and a 50 per cent reduced risk of major chronic disease, such as coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer.

We know that the inspiration is already in place. We have debated that this afternoon. We can see the absolute proof of inspiration in the fact that 40,000 people—and there will be more to come—have already volunteered for the 15,000 volunteer spaces. However, we need 5.3 million people being prepared to perspire, as well as to be inspired.

When Eric Liddell won gold and bronze in Paris in 1924, he inspired a nation. My father, along with huge numbers of other people, cheered him on his return to Scotland. Liddell was an athlete, a missionary and an inspiration. He ran in the 400m race because he had been unable to run in the

100m race as the heats were on a Sunday and he would not run on a Sunday. He ran with a quotation from 1 Samuel, chapter 2, verse 30 in his hand:

"them that honour me I will honour".

There is no higher honour than to be selected to run, jump or compete for one's country. I am sure that every athlete who comes to Scotland and Glasgow in two years' time will bear that honour with dignity.

My father carried Eric Liddell's achievements with him for the rest of his life. Perhaps that is why he continued as a determined competitor in a physical sport until my mother finally persuaded him to retire at the age of 75.

Our focus on legacy may be on physical infrastructure because that is tangible, visible and accessible not only in Glasgow but, I am sure, elsewhere in Scotland. However, the really important legacy that must flow from the Commonwealth games is a change in our people. Too many in our population fall into sloth and, at best, spectatorship.

Winning medals will assist in inspiring and, therefore, we must support our elite athletes. That support should not be limited to Olympic and Commonwealth games sports but should encompass any sport that can raise exercise levels cost effectively.

I have a personal interest in the world orienteering championships that are coming to Scotland in 2015, as one of my nephews has been world champion on two occasions. That sport no longer gets support for elite athletes from sportscotland. As a result, my nephew now lives in Scandinavia, not Scotland. Orienteering requires little more than the open country, a wheen of volunteers, maps for competitors and running shoes. It is engaged in by people from the age of five to the age of 100. We need to capture more of those five-year-olds for physical exercise and sport. We must move them from imagining that they are involved in sport when they simply watch it on satellite TV and into active participation.

Schools are an excellent place to start and I am pleased that the Government intends to build on the London 2012 get set education programme. That has shown a way of creating a network of schools, colleges and other learning providers that can support what we need to do. We need to link young people to schools and sports clubs. We need to enthuse parents so that they support their youngsters.

As other speakers mentioned, we have had Commonwealth games in Scotland before—in 1970 and 1986. In Edinburgh, we can see a pool and a stadium that were built for the games.

I took up badminton for the first time after watching that sport in the 1970 Commonwealth games. I know that others were similarly inspired to new initiatives. I almost hesitate to say this, but I noticed a couple of weeks ago that my wife has a legacy from the 1986 games. She has a pair of 1986 Commonwealth games socks, which have the symbol of the games on their ankle. Let us hope that all legacies endure in the way that they have.

Of course, the 1986 games were singularly ill-starred because they were boycotted by the majority of Commonwealth countries and, as others have mentioned, they were supported by that fraudster Robert Maxwell. We will not find it terribly hard to do a lot better than we did in 1986, both in the games and in the legacy. I cannot really think of very much legacy from 1986.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): You should be drawing to a close now.

Stewart Stevenson: The real challenge will be to try to keep pace with the achievements of the 2012 London Olympics, which was a hugely successful event, but all the signs are that we are up for that. However, if I may make one wee plea, I ask the minister and all those involved with the Commonwealth games to ensure that the torch comes to my constituency this time—it did not during the Olympics.

Glasgow 2014 will carry the name of Glasgow and of the host country to the four corners of the world; we also need to carry the spirit of Glasgow 2014 to the four corners of Scotland and inspire to persevere.

16:26

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): I can tell Stewart Stevenson that my Wimbledon socks singularly fail to improve my tennis game every time that I wear them, but I will keep on trying. Presiding Officer, I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the debate.

To host the Commonwealth games is a huge privilege for Scotland and for Glasgow. We have the chance to show the world the best of our great country: the generosity of our people; the beauty of our landscapes and our cities; and the power of our communities to welcome, through unmatched tolerance and acceptance, those from around the Commonwealth and beyond. However, I think that we all agree that the games are about more than sport. We have the opportunity to play a leading role in a community of nations to promote common aims, values, rights and obligations. Nowhere can we do more to play our part in that than by showing our commitment to tackling modern-day slavery.

The United Kingdom—and Scotland—as one of the world's largest destination countries for human trafficking, continues to be a nation where the promise of a better life can end in misery and modern-day human slavery. It is our moral duty in this Parliament—and there is a duty on the minister and the Scottish Government—to recognise the part that we must play when the world's spotlight is on us by righting this wrong in our country.

In an answer to a parliamentary question earlier this year, the sports minister Shona Robison said:

"There is currently no intelligence to indicate that human trafficking will be an issue for Scotland for either games."—[*Official Report, Written Answers*, 31 January 2012; S4W-05138.]

That may seem to be a reason not to act but, as Gordon Meldrum of the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency has made clear, solid intelligence is a luxury that we can rarely depend upon in preventing human trafficking. Gordon Meldrum said:

"Knowing whether you are one of ten victims or one of a hundred doesn't change the hell you have been through."

Speaking for the police and other agencies, he continued:

"So collectively we need to move on from looking to 'prove' that this is an issue, to one in which we accept it is an issue"

and act.

For the Olympic games, the early figures show that human trafficking to London occurred where intelligence had failed. Like Ms Robison, UK ministers did not recognise any specific threat of human trafficking during the London games, but the early figures show that there was a 35 per cent increase in referrals for human trafficking in London during this Olympic year of 2012. Therefore, lack of prior intelligence is no reason not to act, because human trafficking happens when intelligence is not available to our agencies—there is enough evidence of that.

The Olympic anti-trafficking group attributes that 35 per cent increase in referrals to the robust awareness-raising measures in London, which I think Scotland can learn from in advance of the Commonwealth games.

This year in London, in partnership with the United Nations, 23 life-sized art installations were set up throughout the city. They carried the stories of trafficking victims and information on how to identify trafficked people, and were manned by volunteers to raise public awareness. The installations did not take much time or money to set up, but their impact is evident in the 35 per cent increase in referrals that I mentioned.

Other anti-trafficking measures that have been used at sporting events in Athens, Berlin and Vancouver are awareness-raising information cards that were included in packs given to visitors, the provision of shelters and training for front-line staff. I have raised the issue of training previously in the chamber and asked the Scottish Government to consider anti-trafficking awareness training for police, ambulance staff and firefighters. I know that awareness training is taking place for police officers at Tulliallan—I have asked to go there and see that—but I ask the minister, in his summing up speech, to update the Parliament on how far the Scottish Government has got with putting in place anti-trafficking awareness training for ambulance staff and firefighters.

It is not only the Labour Party that wants more to be done. There is a UK-wide interdepartmental ministerial group on human trafficking, which comprises Kenny MacAskill and ministers from London, Wales and Northern Ireland, and which acts as our UK national rapporteur on human trafficking, as demanded by the European Union. That multi-minister group has asked the Scottish Government to do more to raise awareness of human trafficking ahead of the Commonwealth games in Glasgow in 2014. The group recognises that the Scottish Government needs to do more, so I ask the ministers to give a commitment to do so. It is the obligation of the Scottish Government and Parliament to heed the call of that ministerial group to learn the lessons from London 2012—where there was a 35 per cent increase in referrals—and to do more to tackle human trafficking during the Commonwealth games.

16:32

Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind): I appreciate Jenny Marra's sincerity on the issue, but I caution her about placing too much emphasis on a direct parallel between what happened in London and what is likely to happen in Glasgow. The intelligence flow is different in relation to those cities. I will say no more on that at the moment, because I do not want to crash into this debate about the Commonwealth games.

I support James Kelly—I usually end up supporting him—because the minister should really tell us from where the £40 million has been magicked. I do not imagine that she had that much spare change to play with. I, along with Patricia Ferguson, James Kelly and other members, would welcome information on where that money came from. If Chief Constable Stephen House is to account to the Parliament for the money, will he account to a committee? How will that be accounted for?

I want to ask about the Barry Buddon facility. This might sound as though I am picking up on

some of the more nebulous points in the debate, but I am trying to head off trouble. Unless there is a clear explanation of why we are spending the amount that we are spending on the shooting facility, what its future will be and what future provision will be made for shooting in Scotland, the Scottish Government will come in for the sort of criticism in the press that it usually comes in for as regards ill-spent money.

Shona Robison: I reassure Margo MacDonald that discussions are taking place with the governing bodies of shooting on a legacy from the facility. I cannot tell her what the outcome will be, because the discussions are on-going. We are conscious of the need to ensure that the legacy is maximised as much as possible.

Margo MacDonald: I am grateful for that assurance and I will watch to see what the result is.

Like Graeme Dey, I have memories of the Robert Maxwell games, but mine are about a lady following a gentleman into the gentlemen's toilet. Some other people may remember that, too—there were no medals awarded on that occasion.

I liked what Graeme Dey said about Angus's get-up-and-go as regards outreach, which I think is terrific. It made me track back to something that Willie Coffey said earlier about Kilmarnock. I wonder whether the local authorities are being given any hints or any template for advertising their wares to Commonwealth countries regarding what facilities they have and so on. The countries that have been allocated to Graeme Dey's constituency are very small, so I imagine that the people in Angus might want to do even more to try to get a bit more of the athletic prowess in the games to go there. I think that only about six people—well, not many more—will come from those three countries. However, it still has an excellent outreach programme.

As for Hanzala Malik, are no volunteers coming from the subcontinent's communities? That is just a straight question that I hope he will be able to answer.

My last point is on orienteering. I, too, am sorry that we do not put money into it. Let us have a proper debate on it, and we will find out why it does not get money from sportscotland.

16:36

Nanette Milne: This has been an interesting and worthwhile debate, which has brought us up to speed with the progress being made in preparing for what we all hope will be a highly successful Commonwealth games in 2014.

As an Opposition MSP, I put on record my thanks to the minister for keeping us informed

about plans and preparations for the games. I acknowledge the open and enthusiastic way in which David Grevemberg and his team have responded to our questions and our desire to keep abreast of their activities. The “Elected Members Newsletter” produced by Glasgow 2014 is particularly useful in updating us on progress, and I look forward to receiving regular updates as we head closer to the games.

I am pleased that the Government has heeded warnings about possible security issues surrounding the games and has taken early and appropriate action to deal with them. I hope that there will be no other serious concerns of that kind in the run-up to the games. However, I also hope that we will have the opportunity to consider the evolving plans for 2014 fairly regularly in the Parliament, with full discussion of the relevant issues as they arise.

We all hope, of course, that Glasgow 2014 will be the best-ever Commonwealth games. From what I have seen and heard so far, I think that there is the determination and expertise to follow the example of, and learn lessons from, this year’s spectacularly successful Olympic games—on a smaller scale of course, but with the same potential for success. However, as many speakers have said, even more important than the event itself will be the long-term legacy from the 2014 games, on which aspect many such events have failed in the past. The physical legacy is already taking shape in the regeneration of the east end of Glasgow and the development of major new or refurbished facilities, many of which are already used by the public and which I dealt with in my opening speech.

To my mind, however, the most important legacy that we must aspire to is to transform the culture of sport and physical activity in Scotland. I fully endorse the vision of the Scottish Sports Association that all children have the right to be physically literate and that their early education should help them to become regular participants in sport and physical activity by teaching them how to run, jump, throw, catch and swim, building up in early life the skills and confidence that will help them to reap the health and other benefits of being physically active throughout life. Regular high-quality PE for children of all abilities is key to achieving that skills standard and a culture of regular participation in sport and physical activity. In that regard, although progress is being made towards the provision of two hours or two periods of PE per week for children, more still needs to be done.

Many speakers have emphasised the importance of volunteering to sport, and I will say a bit more about that in terms of achieving a worthy legacy from Glasgow 2014. During the

Health and Sport Committee’s recent inquiry into community sport provision, witness after witness stressed the importance of volunteers to every sport, referring to them again and again as the lifeblood of sporting activity, without whom many sports clubs simply would not survive. From making the tea, washing strips after games, raising funds, keeping the books, arranging the fixtures and otherwise helping to organise club activities and social events, to coaching club members in the skills that they require to improve their performance in their chosen sport, volunteers are essential and there are not enough of them.

There are barriers faced by people who might think about volunteering. Many people think that they do not have the skills or time to become involved. Others would do so if they were asked, but they need to be assured of an enjoyable experience and they need to be assisted with the form filling around disclosure if they are to work with children, because many will fight shy of bureaucracy.

People need to be given training if they are to develop in their role as volunteers. In her evidence to the committee, Judy Murray spoke of the attraction of an inexperienced coach learning from an expert, as an apprentice, and developing skills that they might not otherwise aspire to and an enthusiasm that could be lasting and catching.

Employers could help greatly, for example by giving employees the flexibility to have regular time off at the end of a day—say once a week—that they could make up on another day, and I have no doubt that there are other imaginative ways of encouraging and retaining volunteers.

The London Olympics could not have been successful without its army of volunteers, and the 15,000 volunteers currently being sought for the Commonwealth games in Glasgow will be equally important. If those many willing people can be kept interested after the games are over and welcomed as volunteers in their own communities, that will be to the lasting benefit of Scottish sport and a very fitting legacy of a successful Commonwealth games. I am pleased that thought is being given to that by the games organisers.

There have been some excellent speeches in the debate, but I was particularly impressed by the many pertinent points that Alison Johnstone made about involvement in sport, particularly by women, support for athletes and the availability and use of facilities.

I will conclude by quoting from the SSA’s summary at the end of its excellent briefing for this debate:

“With the excitement of 2014 almost on our doorstep, the time to recognise the unique role and contribution of sport is now. It is time ... to support sport as Scotland’s greatest

social movement, and to commit to prioritising those actions which will leave a lasting legacy for Scottish sport. These legacy opportunities are crucial to the infrastructure and delivery of sport in Scotland, and would result in a true legacy from the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, not just for sport in Scotland, but for an improved Scotland.”

I hope and think that we are on track to achieve the ambition of the Commonwealth games partners to deliver a safe, secure and successful event in 2014, and I look forward to further progress reports as we get closer to that date.

16:42

Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): I am glad that we are able to have this debate today on the Commonwealth games and I hope that we will be able to have another debate in July next year about the youth Olympic games in 2018. What we all hope will be a successful bid document was submitted to the International Olympic Committee yesterday and I congratulate Glasgow City Council on building on the Commonwealth games by bidding for other international events.

Fantastic progress has been made on some of the venues for the Commonwealth games, particularly the Emirates arena and the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome, which are already open to the public and recently hosted the Scottish international badminton championships and the second round of the 2012-13 Union Cycliste Internationale track cycling world cup. I was lucky enough to attend the cycling event and the atmosphere in the velodrome was electric. Thousands of people were there to support some of the Olympic medal winners from team GB and I am sure that the cycling event will be one of the games’ main attractions. The venue certainly will not disappoint visitors from all over the world.

Construction of the athletes’ village is also well under way and it was good to see a district heating scheme at the heart of the development, as John Mason mentioned. I have spoken about that repeatedly in the chamber and I hope that that sort of development will become the norm in future schemes, as a way of reducing heating bills and improving efficiency.

The work at Hampden park to convert it for the track and field events and the closing ceremony is one of the big risks in the building programme, simply because the work is being carried out so close to the games. The Hampden working group has provided regular updates to the Public Audit Committee through the Scottish Government and appropriate plans seem to be in place, which organisers are confident of delivering.

We have heard today that there will be increases to the security budget, and changes to that budget are not unexpected. The cost of securing the games was always going to depend

on factors outwith the control of the Government or the organising committee. However, the Public Audit Committee should continue to be given regular updates on planning progress to allow for proper parliamentary scrutiny of the increased spending on security.

Another major aspect of planning for the games will be the recruitment of the 15,000 volunteers who are needed. After the success of the volunteering programme at the London Olympics, I do not think that attracting those 15,000 people will be an issue; rather, the issue might be that many people who want to contribute to the games simply cannot because of the volume of expressions of interest. We have heard that the number of expressions of interest has already hit 40,000, and there is still time to register. Obviously, it will take a massive amount of time and effort to process applications and interview everyone who is interested in volunteering. I have registered an interest in volunteering and I hope that I will be one of the lucky 15,000. Perhaps members or those in the gallery who might be involved in interviewing already recognise me as a friendly and welcoming person.

As Stewart Stevenson has already pointed out, we should ensure that the games are not just a spectator event. We need to plan for a sporting legacy from the games and ensure that people who are inspired by the events have the chance to take up some of the sports that they will see. Boosting physical activity levels can make a tremendous difference to people’s health and wellbeing—that was recognised in a previous debate in the chamber—and one of the most enjoyable ways to boost physical activity levels is through sport. Boosting physical activity levels in the Scottish population, particularly among sections of the public who tend to do little or no exercise, should be a key aspect of the games’ legacy.

The Scottish Sports Association spoke about a “sporting legacy” for Scotland in the briefing that was provided for members in advance of the debate. It mentioned physical literacy, high-quality teaching for the two hours or periods of PE a week in school to ensure that every child can run, jump, throw, catch and swim—the basic skills that children will need for almost any sport—and encouraging a culture of regular physical activity. It spoke about volunteering, breaking down some of the barriers that exist and encouraging more employers to support individuals in their companies in volunteering. That will have benefits for the company, the individual and the community in which the individual volunteers.

The association mentioned maximising the use of existing facilities. Members of the cross-party group on sport will know that opening up the

school estate for affordable or, where possible, free community sport use is a particular hobby-horse of mine. A number of members have covered that issue.

Finally, the briefing raises the issue of elite sports and asks that investment is continued in facilities and coaching to allow us to build on the tremendous performances by our athletes at the Olympics and other international events.

The sporting legacy fund that has been set up will contribute towards achieving some of those aims. I welcome the £10 million that has been allocated to it. The fund means that areas outside Glasgow should be able to benefit from improved sporting facilities. Its key aspect is that bids should be community led. From my own experience of the development of a sports facility in Croy, I know about the benefits of community involvement in the design and planning of facilities.

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): You need to bring your remarks to a close.

Mark Griffin: Such involvement means that the facility will best meet the local community's needs, and the local community will take pride in ownership of the facility.

It is clear that there are challenges for the organising committee in delivering a successful games. However, a large part of our focus should be on maximising the legacy from a successful games by boosting participation in sport, boosting physical activity, increasing volunteering opportunities and improving facilities, as the motion states.

16:49

The Minister for External Affairs and International Development (Humza Yousaf): From the excellent contributions that we have had from across the chamber, it is evident that there remains enormous good will and commitment to delivering in 2014 a fantastic spectacle that has a lasting and meaningful legacy.

Glasgow is undergoing a real transformation on the back of its hosting of the games. It is an exciting time for the city and for Scotland more widely. In Glasgow's east end, the Clyde Gateway urban regeneration company is using the games as a catalyst to attract new private investment. To date, it is estimated that £24 million has been invested in remediating derelict land, creating industrial space and developing state-of-the-art offices, and there is a promise of much more to come.

In addition, the games are giving a direct boost to the economy. Businesses across Scotland continue to win games-related contracts—75 per cent of the contracts that have been awarded have

been awarded to Scottish companies. The games are providing a legacy of tangible and sustainable benefits. Members across the chamber have mentioned the importance of the legacy to young people. Supporting jobs and providing pathways to employment for those who need them most are key legacy aspirations. The first element of our £5 million legacy 2014 young persons fund is up and running and helping the next generation to secure employment.

I will rifle through some of the specific points that have been made during the debate. In a very good contribution—her tone was understanding and welcoming—Patricia Ferguson asked about enhanced parliamentary scrutiny of the budget. Nanette Milne, Alison Johnstone and James Kelly, among others, raised the same point. The current structure of parliamentary scrutiny works. The Public Audit Committee has looked at the security budget, but if the Parliament decides that it wishes to carry out further scrutiny, it has the ability to do so. Shona Robison wrote to the three relevant parliamentary committees and I am sure that they would be happy to discuss further how parliamentary scrutiny could be further enhanced, but that would be a matter for Parliament to decide.

Patricia Ferguson asked about the preparation of our athletes. That is an important issue. The extra £1 million that has been put into preparing our elite athletes is vital, because the Olympics set the bar high. At a recent reception, I met individuals who are involved in Commonwealth Games Scotland. It is fair to say that they feel the pressure to bring medals home. The investment is extremely important.

Patricia Ferguson also asked whether the Commonwealth Games Federation has commented on the arrangements for the games. It has not done so yet, but the co-ordination commission identified security as a particular risk. We hope that the CGF will welcome the strengthened arrangements that have been announced today. If anyone of relevance is listening in the gallery, I can confirm that Patricia Ferguson is, as she said, a very friendly person. I thought that it was strange that straight after Patricia Ferguson announced that she wanted to be a volunteer, John Mason told us that he had a spare floor for any volunteer who needed somewhere to kip. It is great that there is cross-party working on that front.

John Mason's speech was fantastic. He made some great points about the legacy of the games; the point that the legacy can start before the games have begun was a good one. I loved his three-point observation on the games village—it was almost like an episode of "Through the Keyhole". On a serious note, what he said about

energy saving and the extent to which that is being incorporated into the games infrastructure was something that I noticed when I went to the velodrome.

I applaud Jenny Marra's rigorous and justified pursuit of the issue of human trafficking; her role in doing so ever since she entered Parliament is recognised. It is important to note that intelligence on human trafficking forms part of the strategy to combat crime related to the games. There will be proactive policing, with our UK partners. The information from the London Olympics is important. Human trafficking was a potential issue for the London Olympics, but it has been reported that there was no significant increase in human trafficking during the games, although I recognise that there was a 35 per cent increase in referrals, as Jenny Marra said. We must take that into account. I will ensure that Jenny Marra is written to with an update on anti-human-trafficking awareness training for ambulance workers and firefighters.

Hanzala Malik made some great points on equality. In the meetings that I have had with Glasgow 2014, it has been very aware of the issues that he mentioned, such as halal food. On the potential for Ramadan to conflict with the games, I think that we might just miss it. Glasgow 2014 is very aware of the diversity issues that Bob Doris touched on, too.

Mr Malik often likes to embarrass me outside of the Parliament by telling people that he has known me since I was in my nappies. I have known him as someone who fights doggedly and ferociously on Glasgow's behalf. I salute his indefatigability in that respect. More generally, it is fair to say to him that the Scottish Government had a small role to play in bringing the games to Glasgow and Scotland.

Willie Coffey's speech was fantastic and thoughtful. He was slightly misty eyed when he was recalling some of the previous games, which perhaps gives away his age, but his speech was an embodiment of how the games can leave a lasting memory in the nation's heart.

Graeme Dey made a good point about local people being involved in the Queen's baton rally as it makes its way across Scotland, which we should reflect on; Shona Robison will feed back on that.

Patricia Ferguson: I listened carefully to Graeme Dey's point and he is absolutely right. I was conscious of the fact that the people who ran past me at 6 o'clock one Saturday morning in Maryhill did not come from Maryhill. When I checked, one of the reasons for that seemed to be that the process of completing the application form was relatively complex and, for a number of

people, that would have been off-putting and not easy. Is that something that could be raised with Glasgow 2014, so that we avoid that difficulty?

Humza Yousaf: Patricia Ferguson makes an important point. That is one of the things that goes under the heading of "lessons learned" and we are already actively looking into it.

Alison Johnstone made a number of good points about embedding physical activity at a young age. We continue to invest in a number of activities to increase physical activity levels, with £3 million on physical activity projects, including paths for all and active girls, which are aimed at those who are furthest away from meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines.

Alison Johnstone raised an important and serious point about Meadowbank. She also made a good—and fair—point about the craft and other fairs that are taking place that could perhaps happen elsewhere in the local area. The minister met the convener of Edinburgh Leisure and it agreed to speak to sportscotland about how Edinburgh can capitalise and make a better sports strategy. Her points should be reflected on further.

In relation to Alison Johnstone's point on sustainable travel, on 4 October 2012, the Minister for Transport and Veterans announced an additional £6 million investment in cycling over two years, £2.5 million of which will be invested in Glasgow as part of the Commonwealth games legacy for active travel. That will be matched by Glasgow City Council.

A substantial point mentioned by James Kelly and others was where the £37.7 million of new funding will come from. It is important to stress that that will be from unallocated resources that are built into the 2014-15 budget. The point is that the budget—it is important to reiterate this—is unallocated. That will be subject to the scrutiny of the Parliament—of that there is no doubt. Opposition members, such as James Kelly, will have the right to scrutinise that, too.

Margo MacDonald and Stewart Stevenson were combined in their passion for orienteering. Orienteering is one of the activities that are delivered through active schools, which is creating almost 5 million opportunities for young people to be active, so there is opportunity there.

I will finish by talking about the cultural programme. Partners are working together to deliver a magnificent programme of cultural activity for Glasgow 2014. London set the bar high with its opening and closing ceremonies. At this stage, I cannot confirm or deny whether or not Her Majesty the Queen has been approached to hurl herself out of a helicopter with a parachute; nonetheless, there will be some twists and turns in the opening and closing ceremonies.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the debate and hearing members' passions for the games. We have made some real progress in 2012; we are in a good place. I recognise that today's announcement on increasing the security budget will, of course, generate some concerns, but we have spelled out exactly why that is necessary. Together with the continued support of members of this Parliament, I have no doubt that we will deliver a memorable games, with a lasting and meaningful legacy for the people of Scotland.

Growth and Infrastructure Bill

16:59

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of motion S4M-05228, in the name of John Swinney, on the Growth and Infrastructure Bill, which is United Kingdom legislation.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the provisions of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 18 October 2012, relating to the conferral of new powers on the Scottish Ministers to vary consents granted under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the construction, extension or operation of electricity generating stations and to the amendment of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 in relation to the granting and variation of deemed planning permissions, either in relation to such generating stations and ancillary development or in relation to overhead electric lines and ancillary development, should, insofar as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament or confer new functions on the Scottish Ministers, be considered by the UK Parliament.—[*John Swinney.*]

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

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are three questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S4M-05225.3, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-05225, in the name of Shona Robison, on the Commonwealth games 2014, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-05225, in the name of Shona Robison, as amended, on the Commonwealth games 2014, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

That the Parliament notes the continued good progress being made in the preparations for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games; acknowledges the endorsement of the Commonwealth Games Federation for what has been achieved so far and the strength of legacy planning for the future; welcomes the announcement of the volunteer recruitment programme; expects the relevant lessons from the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games to be incorporated into Commonwealth Games planning, particularly in relation to planning and budgeting for security; notes the progress being made with the cultural programme to accompany the Games; endorses the ambition of the Games partners to deliver a safe, secure and spectacularly successful event; recognises that a solid foundation is now in place to maximise the legacy impacts for all of Scotland and commends the benefits that have already been secured, and recognises that 2012 has been a remarkable year for sport and that this can be used as a springboard for Glasgow 2014.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-05228, in the name of John Swinney, on the Growth and Infrastructure Bill, which is United Kingdom legislation, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the provisions of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 18 October 2012, relating to the conferral of new powers on the Scottish Ministers to vary consents granted under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the construction, extension or operation of electricity generating stations and to the amendment of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 in relation to the granting and variation of deemed planning permissions, either in relation to such generating stations and ancillary development or in relation to overhead electric lines and ancillary development, should, insofar as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament or confer new functions on the Scottish Ministers, be considered by the UK Parliament.

Migrants' Rights Day

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S4M-04857, in the name of Christina McKelvie, on migrants' rights day. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Christina McKelvie cannot be with us this evening, for understandable reasons, so I call Sandra White to open the debate on her behalf.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament welcomes the Migrants' Rights Day celebrations that will take place across the country on 18 December 2012; notes that the date marks the 22nd anniversary of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1990; appreciates the continuing contribution that migrants from around the world make to Scotland, both economically and culturally, and continues to support people seeking sanctuary and solace in Scotland; commends the work of the organisation, Migrants' Rights Scotland, in its bid to promote the rights of all migrants, regardless of where they are from and acknowledges their commitment to providing support for migrant community organisations (MCOs), and understands that Migrants' Rights Scotland supports MCOs in representing themselves more effectively in the immigration system by sharing information and building on existing knowledge and campaigns on their behalf for justice across all social policy areas.

17:02

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I congratulate Christina McKelvie on securing the debate and I wish her a speedy recovery. I am sure that she would have been fantastic and I hope that I will say much of what she wanted to say.

It is an honour to lead a debate to celebrate migrants' rights day and to mark the 22nd anniversary of the "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families", which was adopted by the United Nations general assembly in 1990.

The United Nations says:

"Throughout human history, migration has been a courageous expression of the individual's will to overcome adversity and to live a better life."

As globalisation has increased, the number of people who have the desire and the ability to migrate has also increased. In the past 10 years, the total number of international migrants has increased from an estimated 150 million to 214 million. It is interesting that women account for 49 per cent of migrants worldwide.

After adoption of the convention, a first round of high-level dialogue on international migration and

development took place in 2006. Participating member states affirmed a number of key messages. First, they underscored that international migration is a growing phenomenon that can make a positive contribution to development in countries of origin and destination, provided that it is supported by the right policies. Secondly, they emphasised that respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all migrants is essential if we are to reap the benefits of international migration. Thirdly, they recognised the importance of strengthening international co-operation on international migration bilaterally, regionally and globally.

The next round of high-level dialogue will take place next year and will give member states and their partners a chance to discuss practical measures to facilitate labour mobility, to foster sustainable development and to protect the rights of migrants, especially women and girls.

As the secretary general of the UN said in his address to mark this year's migrants' rights day:

"Attention to the rights of migrants is especially important at this time of global economic and financial distress. As budgets tighten, we are seeing austerity measures that discriminate against migrant workers, xenophobic rhetoric that encourages violence against irregular migrants, and proposed immigration laws that allow the police to profile migrants with impunity. During economic downturns, it is worth remembering that whole sectors of the economy depend on migrant workers and migrant entrepreneurs to help to create jobs.

When migration policies are developed without attention to vulnerability, marginalization and discrimination, millions of migrants become cheap, disposable labour, the scapegoats for failed economic and social policies, and even casualties in an ill-defined war against 'illegal migration'."

It is a sad fact that in such difficult times, attitudes to migration harden. We must ensure that here in Scotland we continue to welcome migrants, who make a positive contribution to our society. It is perhaps timely, therefore, that only yesterday it was reported that Scotland's population has hit a record high of nearly 5.3 million people after a surge in inward migration and increased life expectancy.

As the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs has said, those figures represent a

"historic moment for our country ... A decade and more of devolution has delivered a growing and record high population. That is not simply a sign of the dynamic, attractive nation we are building. It is also a key factor in delivering economic growth in future years."

Everyone in the chamber will have among their constituents many first-class migrant workers—people who came here not just to work within and help to boost our economy, but to help to enrich our country with their cultures and their attitudes. They should be praised for that. Instead, we

sometimes see xenophobic comments in certain tabloid newspapers, and some politicians have a very wrong hard-line attitude towards migrant workers. It is important that we have this debate so that people in Scotland and throughout the world can realise the worth of migrant workers.

One organisation that is to be commended for its work in ensuring that migrants are welcome to Scotland and that they are able to become involved in the community is Migrants' Rights Scotland. After setting up a separate organisation in Scotland in early 2010, it has supported migrants here in Scotland in a number of ways, including through the support of migrant community organisations, or MCOs. Without those volunteers, we would not know what was happening to migrants with regard to certain aspects of their experience, so it is incumbent on us to pay tribute to the workers in Migrants' Rights Scotland for the hard work that they do to ensure that migrants have a welcome in our country. Also, as I said previously, the culture that migrants bring is greatly welcomed.

MCOs help migrants to share information and expertise while allowing them to become part of their local communities by putting them in touch with local organisations and encouraging them to get involved.

So far, the work that Migrants' Rights Scotland has done has been hugely successful. However, there is much concern over recent changes to immigration policy by the United Kingdom Government. Those changes will have a detrimental impact on migration and even on migrants who are long-term British citizens. Undoubtedly the minister will be aware of those changes and how they will adversely affect migrants who already live here and those who wish to come here. What discussions has the Scottish Government had with the UK Government with regard to that?

The portfolio of experiences that is currently being compiled by Migrants' Rights Scotland on migrants' hopes and fears will be presented to the family migration inquiry at Westminster early in 2013. However, would the minister consider setting up a migrants conference here in Scotland, to hear from migrants who live in Scotland, in the hope that it would inform any future approach by the Scottish Government to the Westminster Government on the issue? I am interested to hear the minister's response.

I draw members' attention to the reception that is being held after the debate in committee room 2 to bring together representatives of minority civic society groups, migrants and their families and MSPs to develop a deeper understanding of who counts as a migrant and of the issues that face real people as a result of immigration policy. I

believe that the minister will be attending the reception. I ask members who are here, and others, to come along to committee room 2 to hear about the real experiences of the people there.

17:10

Helen Eadie (Cowdenbeath) (Lab): I congratulate Christina McKelvie, in her absence, on securing the debate.

Those who know me will know that I do what I can to assist migrants, particularly migrants from eastern Europe, and especially Bulgaria, which is a beautiful country that I have come to know well since 2006, when I first visited it. I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests, where I have made a voluntary declaration in that regard.

Every moment, around the world, people leave their countries in search of safer or better lives. Globally, more than 214 million people are on the move. Many flee difficult conditions only to face even greater struggles, including human rights violations, poverty and discrimination, but these migrants have more than fear and uncertainty; they also possess hopes, courage and the resolve to build a better life. With the right support, they can contribute to society's progress. I agree with Sandra White's call for a migrants conference in Scotland. That is an excellent idea.

Migration is a global issue that is rightly attracting more and more global attention. The United Nations general assembly facilitates high-level dialogue on international migration and development, giving member states and their partners a chance to discuss practical measures to facilitate labour mobility, foster sustainable development and protect the rights of migrants—especially women and girls.

Attention to the rights of migrants is especially important at this time of global economic and financial distress. As budgets tighten, we are seeing austerity measures that discriminate against migrant workers, xenophobic rhetoric that encourages violence against irregular migrants and, in some countries, proposed immigration laws that would allow the police to profile migrants with impunity. During economic downturns, it is worth remembering that whole sectors of the economy depend on migrant workers and that migrant entrepreneurs help to create jobs.

When migration policies are developed without attention to vulnerability, marginalisation and discrimination, millions of migrants become cheap disposable labour, the scapegoats for failed economic and social policies, and even casualties in an ill-defined war against "illegal migration". As human mobility becomes more complex, and the journeys that are taken by many migrants more

perilous, it becomes all the more urgent to forge national policy responses that address migration, based on human rights principles.

In the lead-up to the high-level dialogue, I hope that member states will approach human rights as a central issue in migration governance. At national level, I encourage them to take such measures as decriminalising irregular migration, setting up effective alternatives to immigration detention and ensuring that the functions of public service providers such as nurses or teachers are kept strictly separate from those of the immigration authorities. I also hope that participants will duly consider the issue of migration in the context of the post-2015 global development agenda.

As we mark international migrants' rights day, I join with others who call on states to ratify and implement all instruments on this issue, and to encourage all people to help to foster a principled, practical and creative discussion on how we can ensure the protection of migrants across the world, wherever they are and whatever their status.

Over our history we have seen how, for example, Polish people fled from the terrors of Nazism. Many are still here today because of the friendship and security that they found in Scotland, and they have made a life for themselves.

In Fife, when I chaired the Fife Regional Council equal opportunities committee, there were 29 languages, and we established a community interpreting resource to ensure that appropriate help and support were given to people.

If anything was a defining moment of the Olympics, amidst so many defining moments, it was Mo Farah's victories—and was it not amazing when he was asked by an interviewer, "Wouldn't you rather be running for Somalia?" and he replied, "This is my country, mate."

17:14

Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP): I congratulate my colleague Christina McKelvie on securing the debate and send her my best wishes as she recovers. I also pay tribute to Sandra White, who did a fantastic job in standing in for Christina at such short notice.

I believe that, fundamentally, Scotland is and always has been an open, inclusive and welcoming nation. Migrants from across the world have enriched our land throughout our history. We can see that in our education system—last week we had a debate on Camphill Scotland, which was founded by Austrian migrants—as well as in our language, architecture, food, song, literature, wider cultural output, sport and even our politics, as my colleague Linda Fabiani has pointed out to me. She is of immigrant stock, and I am sure that

everyone would agree that she has greatly enriched the politics of Scotland in her time.

The important point to mention is that “immigration” is not a dirty word. Far too often, politicians and commentators use the terms “migrant” and “immigrant” in a pejorative way, looking to cast a negative association with them. That is extremely dangerous rhetoric.

Helen Eadie was right to talk about times of economic difficulty. When we enter such times, there is often a tendency to look for a scapegoat—for a section of society that can be marginalised and blamed for the difficulties that ordinary indigenous workers are facing. Often, it is migrant communities that are targeted as the people who are taking jobs away from the indigenous workforce. We must be vigilant against that tendency and we must reject those sentiments, whether they are explicit or implicit. Some politicians will make such statements in a more explicit fashion than others, but the sentiment still exists, however it is put across.

We should also remember that migration is very much the key to Scotland’s future. We talk a lot about the demographic challenges that Scotland will face in the future when the number of people who require to be supported by the working-age population will put a strain on the taxation base of our nation. That is a simple fact. We have to find a way to increase the working-age population of Scotland, and the only way we can do that is to attract skilled migrant workers who will come to Scotland and make it their home.

The difficulty that we face in trying to do that is that we are living in a situation in which the Westminster Government is taking decisions on immigration that seek to solve a problem that does not exist in Scotland. We need immigration and we need to encourage it. I believe that immigration is fundamentally a good thing in and of itself, even if we take the economics out of the issue. When people come to Scotland from elsewhere in the world, it enriches our land—irrespective of the economic arguments—simply by increasing the diversity of our communities and by helping us to develop new experiences as a people.

I passionately believe that the only way we can continue the cultural enrichment that comes from migration, and which is celebrated through events such as migrants’ rights day, is through Scotland’s having control of its own immigration system. People can say that that is a political point; it is, but I believe that it is the key to the issue, whether on the economic side or the cultural enrichment side. I believe that the UK Government is taking the wrong approach, which is based on the negative perceptions of immigration that I outlined. It would be far better if we had the powers here in Scotland to do things that are in Scotland’s

interests when it comes to immigration. I look forward to the day when Scotland has its own immigration policies.

17:18

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con): I thank Christina McKelvie for bringing this important issue to the chamber, and I thank Sandra White for her opening speech. I support the motion.

In my remarks, I want to concentrate on Scotland. Historically, Scotland has been a country of net out-migration, but over the past 45 years that has greatly reduced. Indeed, in every year since 2002, Scotland has experienced net migration gains of at least 19,000 per year. In 2010-11 there was a net migration gain of 27,000, which was the highest since estimates began in 1951.

Some of the most recent and reliable data and information on migrants in Scotland is contained in the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee’s fifth report in 2010, which followed its inquiry into migration and trafficking in Scotland.

The committee made the following findings. It said that Scotland has demographic problems, and its report noted that the

“Demographic projection of an ageing population and an increase in the ratio of workers with dependents has led to the view that Scotland will need to attract migrants in order to support the economy.”

The committee was prescient, because we have learned from the 2011 census results that were published yesterday that, for the first time, there are more pensioners than young people in Scotland. That has huge implications for a range of policies, but foremost among them must be that of achieving a sustainable economy. The migrant population’s importance to the economy was—rightly—underlined by the committee’s report in 2010, and it is highlighted by the census data that was published yesterday.

That is why the committee’s other findings are significant. The committee said that there is a lack of reliable data. That must be addressed. We need to know the extent to which the economy depends on the migrant workforce, the skills and experience that are being deployed and the sectors in which they are being used.

The committee pointed out that the public perception of migration in Scotland is negative—some members have referred to that. I think that we all agree that that is utterly unacceptable. People need to be educated about the asset that is our migrant population; our economy would not function fully without them.

The committee observed that there is a lack of awareness about migrants' entitlements and that migrants lack knowledge and awareness about public services, rights and entitlements. That is also unacceptable. In this day and age, with the benefits of technology, surely we can make a far better fist of providing such basic information—this is not a large country. The committee said:

“it is vital for information to be made available to migrants on their arrival in Scotland so that they know what their legal and civic rights and entitlements are, and to assist them in sourcing help and information so that they can have access to the full range of public services that will assist them and help make their transition to life in Scotland as straightforward as possible.”

I agree with that. How do we make that happen?

In 2009, the Scottish Government commissioned a report into migration in Scotland, which found that

“there is evidence of poor employment practice ... for example breach of regulations on working hours. Migrants have been found to have limited awareness of their employment rights. Many migrants are over-qualified for the low-skilled and low paid work in which they are predominantly employed.”

The findings in that report also highlighted the need for more robust data about Scottish migration.

I would welcome the minister's comments on the Equal Opportunities Committee's report and the Scottish Government's 2009 report, with an emphasis on progress to date. The migrant population is an asset to Scotland and we need to do everything that we can to recognise and support that asset.

17:22

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): The modern United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Brazil exist as they do today only because of migration, albeit imposed migration that failed to respect indigenous people's rights adequately. My great-great-grandfather Archibald Stewart left Stirling in 1852 to cross the Atlantic. I now have 400 or so living relatives in North America—more than I have anywhere else in the world, although I have a substantial number of relatives in Australia. There is nothing uncommon about that story, which will be true for many of us.

Modern migration has a rather different character. Much of it comes towards us in response to our economic needs and to migrants' economic needs. Probably 3,000 to 4,000 people have come to my constituency in recent years, because we need people to fill the vacancies in many of our important industries. Unemployment is less of an issue in my area than it is elsewhere.

In the early stages, some of the problems that are associated with migration were immediately manifest. Single men came, which created social pressures—and opportunities for many of the unattached young ladies in Peterhead, Fraserburgh and other fishing communities.

Now, the pattern has changed. It is important that the immigration system does not create barriers that prevent families from coming. When families and couples come, that is a much more stable form of immigration that helps receiving communities—such as mine and those elsewhere in Scotland—and those who come to live and work with us.

There are some surprising side effects from all that. I once visited a primary 6 class at the Peterhead Central school. There were 14 children in the class, of whom eight were native Doric speakers—as is the case in the north-east of Scotland—and six were native Latvian speakers, because for some reason the Latvians all seem to come to my constituency. Of course, the children had reached an accommodation by teaching one another the other language, so they were all bilingual and spoke a hybrid Latvian/Doric language. The genuine difficulty was that the teacher had been no part of that process and was having substantial difficulty understanding what the kids were talking about. I found that hugely amusing; the children tried to teach me a little of their new Lat-Doric language, but they utterly failed to do so as I am not much of a linguist.

From time to time we will all meet people who make remarks about immigrants. I always respond simply by saying that, if we send everybody home to their point of origin, what would we do with the 40 million Scots whom we would have to take back to Scotland?

Immigration is part of the modern world, and it contributes to many of our areas. In my area 10 years ago, we had one quarter of the number of dentists per head of population that Edinburgh had. Many of my constituents had to travel to countries in Europe for dentistry, as they could not even access private dentistry facilities. Now we have a lot of Polish dentists and a stable dentistry system, so that is one example of the benefits of immigration.

The Poles have been coming in waves of immigration. When I was a boy scout, my patrol leader was Zbigniew Klemens Skrodski—members will be able to guess where he came from.

I am delighted that Ban Ki-moon has given an excellent statement in support of international migrants' day. I am also delighted that we are having this debate, and I thank all those who have made it possible.

17:26

Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to discuss the important contribution that migrants make to Scotland's unique social and cultural identity. I thank Christina McKelvie for securing time for a debate to celebrate international migrants' rights day, which is held on 18 December annually. I wish her a speedy recovery and thank Sandra White for stepping in as cover.

I am confident that the majority of us will have been personally affected in some way by those who have moved from other nations to settle here in Scotland. I know that, in my region of Glasgow, a huge number of individuals have a family history that extends far beyond the boundaries of Scotland or even the UK, and they are proud of their truly international roots.

Historically, Glasgow has been home to many Irish immigrants, who sought refuge in times of hardship at home and have regarded Glasgow, along with many other parts of our nation, as their home ever since. Today we can draw parallels between Irish immigration in previous generations and the more recent arrival of those from eastern Europe, from nations such as Poland, who have already made a profound and lasting impact on Scottish culture and identity.

Scottish people are no strangers to welcoming those from other parts of the world to our country. Our historical experiences of the benefit that that brings to our communities has, I believe, made us a far more open and inclusive society.

I celebrate the valuable role of immigration in Scotland by attending the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council—known as WSREC—and supporting local groups to challenge discrimination and stigma in their communities. Alongside my colleague Hanzala Malik MSP, I am fortunate to be involved as a board member of WSREC and take part in grass-roots campaigns to end racial segregation and promote diversity, particularly with young people across Glasgow and the west of Scotland.

My work with the cross-party group on Poland has enabled me to take part in crucial work to build links between ethnic groups and to understand better the type of issues that immigrants who live and work in Scotland may face. Members of the cross-party group have invited professionals from a range of sectors to contribute to discussions on racial integration, and, through those discussions, we are able to co-ordinate cultural events and opportunities that break down barriers in communities. The cross-party group is currently planning some key partnership working with outside agencies and groups such as WSREC, and intends to further

integrate support and advocacy services for Polish people living in Scotland.

Migrants' rights day is about celebrating the invaluable contribution that those from other nations make to the countries in which they settle. It also presents an important platform from which to tackle issues of racism and discrimination in our communities.

Although I believe that Scotland is an open and tolerant society in which differences are celebrated and enjoyed, I also acknowledge that there remains an uncomfortable level of prejudice and misconception around immigration that must be tackled. Through community activism and engagement, we can continue to make significant progress in the campaign against racial and ethnic discrimination, and we can illustrate to the generation of tomorrow the profound importance of immigration and the cultural diversity that it brings to the whole of Scottish society.

17:31

The Minister for External Affairs and International Development (Humza Yousaf): I thank Christina McKelvie for proposing the motion on international migrants' rights day and, like the other members, I wish her a speedy recovery.

I thank Sandra White for stepping in at the last minute and all the MSPs who spoke for their thoughtful contributions to an interesting debate. I thank Migrants' Rights Scotland for raising the issue consistently. Yesterday it was tweeting about the debate early doors and it was rightly excited in its anticipation.

Today we are drawing attention to the rights of migrant workers and their families and raising awareness of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. It is right that we should recognise this day, and I want to be clear that the fundamental rights of migrants and their families are incredibly important, not only to migrants themselves but to us all in Parliament. Marginalisation and exclusion from participation in society, and the denial of basic human rights to a family, can only have negative results. Helen Eadie made that point very well in her contribution.

If we put in place the right policies that reflect our country's values and aspirations, and which are welcoming, fair, forward-looking and progressive, immigration can be a tremendously positive force as opposed to the somewhat negative, dirty word that it has become. Mark McDonald and others made that point very well during their contributions. Immigration can inject vibrancy and new ideas into our economy and culture, and it can encourage those who have

come here to live and work to play a full and productive part in the society in which we all live.

Mark McDonald also made the point that immigration is about more than giving us an economic boost, important though that is. We gain so much culturally from immigration.

I am from Glasgow and many members here are from Edinburgh. Both cities have *melas*, which show the great fusion of the different cultures. We also have the cuisine. I have often commented that Scotland's favourite dishes are chicken tikka masala and spaghetti bolognese, which come from two of the biggest immigrant communities that have come to Scotland during recent decades.

I am proud to be the son of immigrants to Scotland. My father was an economic migrant from Pakistan and my mother's family had to flee Kenya after the uprising that made life very difficult for Asians in that part of the world. I am therefore very aware of the difficulties that migrant families can face, as well as the real opportunities that draw hard-working people to Scotland to live and work.

Migrants' Rights Scotland plays an important part in ensuring that people know their rights by supporting migrant community organisations to work effectively and to support people whose lives are fundamentally affected when their rights are abused or ignored.

Some members of Migrants' Rights Scotland are in the public gallery, including its director, Pat Elsmie. She has been a vocal champion for migrants' rights for years and—if she does not mind me saying this—although she is somewhat petite in stature, she does not pack a small punch at all when it comes to this issue. She often says what needs to be said, even if it is controversial.

I look forward to going to the reception later on and speaking at it. I commend Migrants' Rights Scotland for the work that it does.

Sandra White made some really important points about the demographics of our population. Annabel Goldie reflected those points. At 5,295,000, our population is now the highest ever recorded. It has increased partly because there were more births than deaths but mainly because more people moved to Scotland than left.

Those statistics not only represent the fastest growth rate between two census years over the past century but demonstrate that hard work to grow Scotland's population to support economic growth is paying off. However, Scotland still faces many challenges. In common with almost every mature economy, we have an ageing population, as other members mentioned. We have a large, established migrant community, and we welcome

the contribution that new Scots make to our economy and society.

Our universities and colleges also benefit greatly from the thousands of foreign students who come here to study every year. Many of them will want to stay on and work in skilled professions when they graduate; some will have met their life partners here and want to get married; many more will return to their original countries with an impression of Scotland that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. I want that impression to be one of a forward-thinking country that is open to new ideas, is open to technology and embraces new people for the contributions that they can make to many aspects of society.

As members all know, immigration is reserved to Westminster and dealt with by the Home Office. The Scottish ministers want an immigration policy that reflects our Scottish values of openness, equality and fairness, which are at the core of the Government's vision.

Sandra White asked what discussions we have with the UK Government. We have frequent discussions with it and I am happy to ensure that she is written to so that she can be updated on the latest of them. However, it must be said that we have incredibly little flexibility.

Annabel Goldie's speech was good, but it had a glaring omission on UK policy. That was unfortunate, because UK policy does not take Scotland's economic or social needs into consideration. It offers no flexibility or ability to reflect regional variation, such as in salaries, despite the Scottish Government's pressing for those flexibilities. Regardless of where members sit on the constitutional debate, there has to be an understanding that Scotland needs flexibility.

Annabel Goldie: This is not the occasion to go into the pros and cons of immigration reforms. I am genuinely interested in what the minister says about engagement. It seems to me that we lack specific, compelling data about where our migrant population works and what skills and experience it brings to the economy. A forceful argument on that could be made to the UK Government and I would support the minister in making it.

Humza Yousaf: Annabel Goldie will know that the Government is nothing if it is not forceful when it comes to dealing with Westminster. However, she raises a serious issue and I accept that more data could be collected to show the impacts that migrants make, where they make them and where they could make them better. She should be aware that immigration is one of the few issues that have united the Institute of Directors, the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Scottish Refugee Council, which all believe that there should be some degree of flexible variation.

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab): If the Scottish Government has not already raised family visas with the UK Government, will the minister undertake to do so the next time that he discusses the issues with it? A number of members in different parts of Scotland have serious concerns in that regard. Those concerns are also concentrated in particular areas of work. The minister mentioned university students; a large number of people in academia would like to bring their partners or family members into the UK and now find that the UK Government's changes have almost entirely blocked that, which is very much to that Government's discredit.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I would be grateful if you could begin to come to a conclusion, minister.

Humza Yousaf: I will. Time has escaped me.

I take Drew Smith's point. I would be happy to raise it with the UK Government at our next discussions as it is an important point to make. Immigration policy should reflect the importance of family life to migrants' stability and their integration into our society. Stewart Stevenson made that point as well.

Recent changes to the rules on family migration are designed severely to restrict the number of people who can qualify to join their family in the UK, which puts people in a terrible, if not impossible, position. Like Mark McDonald, that brings me to the political point—although we are politicians so I suppose it should not be unexpected that we make such points. For me, that situation is why we need control over immigration, whether that be through independence or through the other means that some members may propose. However, such powers are not an end in themselves but a means to achieve our vision of a fair and inclusive nation that values the contribution that migrants can make and that gives them and their families the basic human right to family life, which Drew Smith alluded to.

I believe that independence will give Scotland the opportunity to make different decisions, to implement policies that are designed for our own needs, to speak with our own voice, to raise our own resources and to take responsibility for our own future. That future is currently up for debate and, by engaging with those who will be affected by our policies, we hope to develop new policies that are relevant, informed by evidence and true to our principles. To answer Sandra White's final point, which Helen Eadie also made, I would be happy to explore whether that should be done through a conference or some other means.

In conclusion, we want to send the clear message to the world that Scotland welcomes

hard-working people and their families who want to live and work here. With one voice, this Parliament should send out the message that we are very much open for business.

Meeting closed at 17:41.

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