



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 30 January 2014

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Scottish Parliament

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[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 11:40*]

General Question Time

Common Housing Registers

1. John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Ind):

To ask the Scottish Government what it does to support shared or common housing registers for local authorities, housing associations and housing co-operatives. (S4O-02857)

The Minister for Housing and Welfare (Margaret Burgess): The Scottish Government has published a number of documents that provide advice on how to establish a common housing register. They are all available on the Government's website. I can provide the member with directions to the relevant part of the website.

John Finnie: I have raised a number of issues about dwelling houses that are owned or are under the control of the Scottish Government. It has been suggested that there is no central database for those properties. Would the minister undertake to consider the opportunities for those properties to be made available to local authorities, housing associations and housing co-operatives, rather than having them disposed of on the open market or, worse, to property speculators?

Margaret Burgess: I am willing to discuss the suggestions that the member has in that regard. I will arrange to meet the member, along with officials, to get the details of what is being proposed. We will then consider the proposal and get back to him.

James Kelly (Rutherglen) (Lab): Given that housing completions are at their lowest since 1947 and waiting lists are at 155,000, does the minister recognise that there is an issue with getting affordable housing in many of our communities? Will she agree to work with Labour on a national housing action plan to address those issues?

Margaret Burgess: The Scottish Government has a vision for housing and a plan to increase the supply of affordable housing and housing in the rented housing market. We are already doing that. If the member wants to make any suggestions, we will certainly consider them. We have offered meetings in relation to the Housing (Scotland) Bill, which is currently going through the Parliament, and are willing to discuss housing issues that are raised with us. Certainly, however, we are doing

all that we can to increase the supply of affordable housing in Scotland.

School Closures (Consultations)

2. Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to amend the statutory consultation period for school closure decisions by local authorities. (S4O-02858)

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell): We have no such plans at this time. The changes to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which are being taken forward as part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, implement a number of recommendations of the commission on the delivery of rural education. The commission considered the consultation process for school closure proposals as part of its remit and did not recommend a change to the statutory consultation period for local authorities.

Mark McDonald: The cabinet secretary might be aware that, later today, Aberdeen City Council will finally abandon the proposals to close Bramble Brae and Middleton Park schools. The decision to consult on those proposals was taken on 7 February 2013, meaning that the entire process has lasted just a week short of a full calendar year. It took six months from the decision to consult to the consultation actually beginning. Can the cabinet secretary consider the issue of timescales between decisions to consult and the commencement of consultations, because protracted delays lead to great uncertainty and anxiety for pupils, parents and communities?

Michael Russell: I remember seeing at least the exterior of Bramble Brae primary school when the member was the by-election candidate in the constituency. It is a very good school, and I am glad about the decision that has been made. I also remember the Labour candidate in the by-election claiming that the delays were due to a failure of Education Scotland, which turned out not to be the case.

There is a strong argument to be made about ensuring that the process is timeous and respects parents. I have concerns that councillors who operate what one might call a pre-consultation consultation are perhaps doing that not to gain information or gather views but in order to soften up or wear down opposition to closure.

I hope that councils will be mindful that this is a difficult and stressful time for any community or group of parents. The legislation is designed to help and protect both sides and to create a level playing field for both sides. *[Interruption.]*

Mr Kelly seems to have views on this matter that he wants to give from a seated position. When the

amendments to the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill come to the chamber, I hope that Mr Kelly—voluble as he now is about the matter—will support the measures that are designed to assist parents and local authorities.

101 Non-emergency Telephone Number

3. Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the effectiveness of the 101 non-emergency police telephone number. (S4O-02859)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): That is a matter for Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. However, I understand that the number of calls to the 101 non-emergency number is steadily increasing, which has helped to make the police more accessible while reducing pressure on the 999 system. There are, on average, 280,000 non-emergency calls to the 101 number per month and around 46,000 emergency 999 calls per month.

The 101 non-emergency number replaces all local police station numbers with one easy-to-remember number that can be used to contact police anywhere in the country. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can also be used to arrange for a police officer to visit a member of the public in their own home at a time that suits them.

Linda Fabiani: I thank the cabinet secretary for that very informative answer. I am aware that the 101 number costs a flat rate of 15p wherever it is called from and for however long the call lasts, and I recognise that Police Scotland does not make any money from it. Nevertheless, I wonder whether consideration could be given, further down the line, perhaps with the cabinet secretary's encouragement, to making the 101 number free to call. Many people rely on mobile phones these days and if they had no credit they would find it difficult to phone 101. That could keep people phoning 999 when doing so is not appropriate.

Kenny MacAskill: I understand the member's point and I will feed that back to both the chief constable and the Scottish Police Authority.

The Police Scotland advice is clear: if people are in any doubt, they should use the 999 number. When a crime is in progress or somebody nearby is suspected of acting in a way that may endanger life and limb, people should not hesitate to use the 999 number, which, as Linda Fabiani said, is free to call.

The non-emergency 101 number is intended to allow people to contact their local police station or police officer to get advice, to make arrangements and to address non-emergency matters. As Linda Fabiani correctly points out, the number is charged

at a flat rate of 15p from a land-line or mobile network, no matter what the time of day or how long the call lasts. In many instances, that will be cheaper than previous non-emergency numbers and cheaper than calling the local police station. However, I will happily feed back her suggestion to those who are responsible for the number.

Care-home Residents (Council Tax Exemption)

4. Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what powers local authorities have to exempt care home residents from council tax payments on their unoccupied properties. (S4O-02860)

The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Derek Mackay): Statutory responsibility for the implementation and administration of council tax, including eligibility for discounts or exemptions, lies with the relevant local authority. Ministers have no powers to intervene in individual cases.

An unoccupied dwelling can be exempt when the liable person was formerly resident there and has moved to receive personal care, whether in a hospital, a home or elsewhere. However, local authorities must take all circumstances into account in assessing any individual's council tax liability and there may be some cases in which that exemption does not apply.

Fiona McLeod: Is the minister aware that East Dunbartonshire Council is demanding council tax payments of up to 90 per cent from care home residents whose unoccupied properties are on the market for lease?

Derek Mackay: Thanks to the member's information, I am now aware of those circumstances. However, as I said in my original answer, ministers have no power to intervene. I advise the member that there is an appeals process that can be followed and that any challenge to the decision of the local authority can be taken to the valuation appeals committee. I refer the member to that source.

Historic Scotland (Meetings)

5. Cameron Buchanan (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government when it last met Historic Scotland and what issues were discussed. (S4O-02861)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): I last met Historic Scotland officials on Monday 20 January, on the very top of the Forth rail bridge, as we marked the submission that week of the dossier supporting the nomination of the iconic Forth bridge as a world heritage site. The Forth bridge is renowned throughout the world, and I am sure that

members across the chamber will want to express support for the nomination.

Cameron Buchanan: Given the concerns about the recent planning application at Culloden and yesterday's call-in of the decision over New Lanark, both of which involve hugely important historic sites, does the cabinet secretary retain full confidence in the organisation and the statutory framework within which it operates? Furthermore, has she sought assurances from Historic Scotland that its procedures for investigating the potential impact of planning decisions are suitably robust? It is critical that we demonstrate that safeguards are in place if we are to secure world heritage site status for the Forth bridge.

Fiona Hyslop: I have confidence in Historic Scotland's procedures; indeed, they are very robust. Every application is different; some, for example, relate to different types of sites.

On Culloden, I reassure the member that, for the first time, we have an inventory of battle sites. We are consulting on draft legislative proposals on planning. We will ensure that under the draft proposals, which are under consideration by the Minister for Local Government and Planning, planning authorities

"protect, conserve and, where appropriate, seek to enhance the key characteristics and special qualities of sites on the Inventory of Historic Battlefields."

The Hyndford situation has been called in to ministers, so I am sure that the member will understand that I cannot discuss the matter at this time.

Private Rented Housing

6. Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to increase the quality and affordability of private rented housing. (S4O-02862)

The Minister for Housing and Welfare (Margaret Burgess): All private landlords are required to ensure that homes that they let meet a statutory repairing standard throughout a tenancy. Tenants can apply to the Private Rented Housing Panel to force landlords to carry out repairs to meet the standard. The Housing (Scotland) Bill includes measures to improve the quality of private rented housing. Rents in the private sector are set at the market rate.

Patrick Harvie: The Housing (Scotland) Bill includes welcome measures such as the regulation of letting agents, which may help to drive out some of the most exploitative practices in the industry. Is the minister aware of the many tenants who are landed with unfair and, in some cases, illegal fees and charges or with deposits rebranded as advance rent in order to get around

the deposit protection scheme? Is the minister open to amendments to the bill to address some of those matters, as well as other issues, such as energy efficiency in the private rented sector, where the uptake of measures is not high, which increases the unaffordability of costs that people face in the sector?

Margaret Burgess: The member will be aware that, next year, we will consult on energy measures in the private rented sector, so we are taking on board the energy efficiency issue.

We are aware of some of the issues that the member has raised about tenancy deposits, fees and premiums. We have clarified those matters. However, during the course of the Housing (Scotland) Bill, we are listening very carefully to stakeholders and members. I am open to listening to any suggestions on how to improve the situation for tenants.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): There has been a huge growth in the number of people who own one buy-to-let property. What assurances will the minister give that the proposed regulations in the Housing (Scotland) Bill will ensure that single property landlords are regulated properly to protect individual tenants from unfair charges and poor standards?

Margaret Burgess: All landlords are registered under the landlord registration scheme. The bill aims to ensure that tougher measures are put in place to enforce that. We have enforcement actions available and we want to make sure that those are used and strengthened.

We will have regulations on the registration of letting agents. There will be consultation on the whole sector, including landlords, letting agents and tenants, to produce a meaningful code of conduct. We will target landlords who are not meeting the standards that we want them to meet.

We are doing what we can. As I said, we have offered a meeting with members of the Opposition to discuss their concerns as the bill progresses. I hope to continue the discussion with the member then.

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Question 7, in the name of Clare Adamson, has not been lodged. The member has provided an explanation.

Oil and Gas Revenues (Post-referendum Negotiations)

8. Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what role oil and gas revenues will play in any post-referendum negotiations with the United Kingdom Government. (S4O-02864)

The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing): With access to all the policy levers that independence would bring Scotland could, at last, create the fiscal incentives that would not only allow the industry to realise its potential and avoid the damaging taxation provisions previously made by successive United Kingdom Governments, but allow all Scotland's people to benefit.

For decades our oil wealth has been squandered and, unlike in Norway and virtually every other oil-producing country, no oil fund was set up. That was a huge error, as politicians including Alistair Darling, David Steel and Neil Kinnock have indicated. As Denis Healey said, the UK has underplayed the value of Scotland's oil.

Maureen Watt: I thank the minister for that full answer. I take it that he agrees with the former Scottish Office economists, the Cuthberts, who say that Scotland deserves billions of pounds in compensation for the way that oil revenue has been squandered since the 1970s. What steps can he take to recompense the Scots for that?

Fergus Ewing: The answer lies in our hands on 18 September.

Since oil and gas production began in Scotland, the UK Government has raised approximately £180 billion in direct tax revenue from it. Adjusted for inflation, that is equivalent to approximately £300 billion in today's prices. Those revenues have gone directly into the UK Exchequer, with successive Governments failing to invest the windfall for the long term.

To date, around 90 per cent of total oil and gas tax revenue has been generated in Scotland's waters. Independence for Scotland will ensure that Scotland's vast oil and gas reserves are efficiently and safely extracted for the benefit of the Scottish people. With more than half of oil and gas reserves by value still to be extracted, there is ample opportunity to invest Scotland's oil wealth for future generations.

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): Will the minister's consideration take into account the potential impact on future tax revenue of decommissioning costs?

Fergus Ewing: Yes, it will. It will also be based on a policy that has been sadly absent in the UK: namely, stability and predictability. With three unheralded tax hikes in the past decade or more, as Sir Ian Wood said:

"fiscal instability has been a significant factor in basin under-performance."

We rely on what Sir Ian Wood says, not what the Conservatives say.

Scotrail Franchise (Consultation)

9. Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what consultation it has had with trade unions since the publication of the ScotRail franchise draft invitation to tender. (S4O-02865)

The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown): Building on the extensive engagement prior to the publication of the draft invitation to tender—ITT—on 19 November 2013, officials from Transport Scotland were in discussions with the trade unions on 10 January this year, concluding discussions with the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen regarding apprenticeships, and on 20 and 21 January with the Scottish Trades Union Congress clarifying issues on staff uniforms.

Mark Griffin: Will the minister tell me why the Scottish Government felt that it was appropriate to ban the wearing of trade union badges and ties in the new ScotRail franchise, given the long tradition of that on our railways? Why were officials upholding that ban on trade union insignia up until a last-minute U-turn?

Keith Brown: I think that the member is perhaps misinformed. The issue concerned the branding of the new franchise holder and ensuring that the ScotRail brand was maintained and made clear to future passengers. As soon as the issue was raised with the STUC talking to officials, we clarified the point.

We support trade union membership in the rail industry. I have met the trade unions involved in the industry more than any previous transport minister. We have had effective engagement on the ITT. I think that the unions would tell the member that it is probably the best deal that they have in a franchise throughout the UK and compared with previous Administrations. The one, fairly minor issue that the member raises was dealt with quickly to the satisfaction of the STUC. That is proper and constructive engagement.

Independence (Childcare)

10. Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of childcare provision in an independent Scotland. (S4O-02866)

The Minister for Children and Young People (Aileen Campbell): In "Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland", the Government set out its ambition to establish after independence a universal system of high-quality early learning and childcare for children from the age of one to when they start school. We have also published two papers on the Scottish Government website setting out our assessment of childcare provision in an independent Scotland.

Annabelle Ewing: To be clear, will the minister explain to women throughout Scotland why only a yes vote can secure such transformational change in childcare provision?

Aileen Campbell: Independence will mean that we have access to tax and revenues generated by increased female participation in the workplace to fund childcare. It also means that we do not need to invest in immoral weapons of mass destruction or rely for further expansion on handbacks of our own money through consequentials. Only with independence do we have the chance to create the fairer and more equitable country that we seek.

First Minister's Question Time

12:00

Engagements

1. Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what engagements he has planned for the rest of the day. (S4F-01854)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): Engagements to take forward the Government's programme for Scotland.

Johann Lamont: The Bank of England governor, Mark Carney, said yesterday that he would have no say in there being a currency union if there was a yes vote but that, if there was one, we would need to have shared institutions, shared mechanisms and tight fiscal rules. We would cede sovereignty. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Order.

Johann Lamont: Scottish National Party members obviously did not listen to what Mark Carney said, but that, of course, is par for the course—they do not listen to anyone who says anything that might challenge them.

That would mean that an independent Scotland would have to share mortgage rates, tax rates and a banking system and have our spending, borrowing and welfare decided by a foreign country that we had just left. In that respect, I pass on my gratitude to John Swinney, wish him all the best in his next role and ask the First Minister whom he would prefer as his replacement—Ed Balls or George Osborne?

The First Minister: I do not know how I can break the news to Johann Lamont: we do not control the currency or interest rates at the moment, and George Osborne does not control interest rates, because they are controlled by the independently operating Bank of England. That control was ceded some time ago.

Of course being in a currency union means not having control of the currency and not having control of interest rates. We do not control those things at present. We do not control the other things that Johann Lamont listed, either—they are controlled in London.

Johann Lamont will find some of the things that we shall control as an independent Scotland on page 46 of the economic levers report that was published last year. They include excise duty, air passenger duty, value added tax, capital gains tax, oil and gas taxation, national insurance, income tax, corporation tax, competition law, consumer protection, industry regulation, employment legislation and the minimum wage—that is hugely

important—energy markets and regulation, and environmental regulation. All those things are controlled in London at the moment and all of them will be controlled in Scotland in an independent Scotland.

Johann Lamont: I fear that the First Minister thinks that all this questioning is just another “ridiculous frippery” that he does not have to deal with; the rest of us are in the real world.

I had thought that the First Minister said that the reason for wanting independence was that all decisions about Scotland should be made in Scotland, but it turns out that he does not mind that all those things will be decided elsewhere.

Mark Carney said two other things yesterday, one of which was that he reported to the United Kingdom Parliament—a Parliament from which Alex Salmond proposes to remove all Scottish representation. Mark Carney also said that the decision on a currency union was entirely one for politicians. Considering that both George Osborne and Ed Balls have said that a currency union is highly unlikely and that, yesterday, the Treasury said that it was highly unlikely, what is the First Minister's plan B if a currency union fails?

The First Minister: I say to Johann Lamont that sterling is as much the people of Scotland's currency as it is London's currency, and the Bank of England is one of the assets of the United Kingdom to a share of which Scotland is entitled. That is the shared governor proposal that was put forward by the Scottish Government.

I read out a long list of things that an independent Scotland would control, and I think that those are really important things. I think that it is important to be able to set a minimum wage that keeps pace with inflation, as opposed to allowing it to reduce, as has happened over the past five years. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

The First Minister: Instead of looking for ways to mitigate the bedroom tax, why do we not have the power to abolish it? I think that it is important to be able to transform childcare in this country and to get the revenues from that transformation into Scotland so that we can finance it. I think that it is important to be able to abolish weapons of mass destruction in Scotland. I think that it is important not to have to participate in illegal wars. Those are the things that we can do with independence that we cannot do as a devolved Parliament. That is perhaps why the support for independence is growing and the support for Johann Lamont's scaremongering is reducing.

Johann Lamont: I am not sure at what point arrogance simply becomes delusion, but I think that we are pretty close to that point now. The First

Minister must think that all Scots' heads button up the back but that, after independence, at least they will have zips. It is a ludicrous defence by a man who used to cry freedom but who now gives us a list of wee things that we could do, which we could do—*[Interruption.]*

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell): Oh!

The Presiding Officer: Order! Mr Russell!

Johann Lamont: I am not sure that the bravehearts in the SNP imagined that the reason they wanted independence was childcare. The First Minister's list exposes the fact that he no longer even defends the concept of independence himself.

The First Minister reminds me of Hiroo Onoda, the Japanese soldier who fought on for 30 years after 1945 in the Philippines, refusing to admit that the war was over. The war on the First Minister's currency plan is over, and Alex Salmond has lost it. Instead of trying to nail his currency plan to its perch to make it seem alive, will the First Minister just be honest with the people of Scotland? His adviser John Kay told him to come up with a plan B. Will he now have the decency to share that plan B with the people of Scotland?

The First Minister: Somewhere in that question, Johann Lamont said that things that I had mentioned were “wee things”, rather like her deputy, who said on television the other night that nuclear weapons were a peripheral issue. Does she really believe that the bedroom tax, the transformation of childcare, abolishing nuclear weapons in this country and not getting dragged into illegal wars are wee things? Is that the Labour Party's proposition to the people of Scotland—that those are wee things or peripheral issues? They are the substance of the independence debate. Those are the things that people in Scotland want to control.

As I read out a long list of the economic levers that would come under our control in an independent Scotland—which are quite substantial things, not wee things—I will put it this way, so that Johann Lamont understands it. We control 7 per cent of the taxation of this country under this Parliament. Under the much-vaunted Scotland Act 2012, that will increase massively to 15 per cent. Under an independent Scotland, we would control 100 per cent of the taxation base of this country. That is independence.

Johann Lamont: I expected that there might have been something in there that responded to the challenge of the question that I was asking. This is all displacement activity. Most of the things that the First Minister mentioned he could do right now. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Johann Lamont: What he concedes about his vision of independence is that it would be constrained by a foreign Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was the message from yesterday. What the First Minister is proposing is not going to happen. If it ever did, it could give this Parliament less power in the future than we have now. *[Laughter.]* SNP members should come back and listen to what is happening in the real world. The First Minister's answer is that, after a yes vote, those in the rest of the United Kingdom will recant—they will U-turn and start agreeing with everything that he says. If they are going to go that far, they might as well call themselves Nicola.

It was reported that, as Mark Carney left his press conference yesterday, he said, "It's over. It's over." Why will the First Minister not reveal his real plans for a new Scottish currency and admit that his plans for a currency union are over?

The First Minister: Mark Carney set out yesterday the conditions in which a monetary union—a sterling area—would work. They were not a surprise, given that every single one of them was anticipated by the fiscal commission working group's report, which was published last year.

I noticed that, on the first page of Mark Carney's speech, he paid respect to the

"pioneering work of"

great

"Scottish economists from Adam Smith to Sir James Mirrlees",

who have

"had great influence on"

the economics profession. That was quite a significant reference, because Sir James Mirrlees was one of the authors of the fiscal commission working group's report. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that it anticipated the requirements to make a sterling area work.

Is Johann Lamont seriously going to maintain that the areas of taxation policy that I mentioned—income tax, corporation tax, oil and gas taxation, excise duty, value added tax, air passenger duty and capital borrowing—are peripheral or wee issues? They are not peripheral or wee issues; they are the substance of just about every political debate that we have had in the Parliament.

John Swinney is currently in discussions with Iain Gray to decide how we might be able to find a way, by going round the legislation, to mitigate the bedroom tax. Would it not be a lot easier if the Parliament had the power to abolish the bedroom tax? *[Applause.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

The First Minister: We have had to make a huge effort to maintain capital spending in this country. That is one of the reasons why our economic performance has been better than that of the United Kingdom as a whole. Would it not have been better if we could have decided to increase capital spending in this country over the past few years? If Johann Lamont actually believes that oil and gas taxation and the great natural resources of Scotland are a small, wee or peripheral matter, she is talking to an electorate that is well aware that, if we mobilise those natural resources and combine them with the human resources in Scotland, we can create a society that is both more prosperous and just. That is the point and logic of Scottish independence.

Secretary of State for Scotland (Meetings)

2. Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Secretary of State for Scotland. (S4F-01849)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): I have no plans in the near future.

Ruth Davidson will take the opportunity to disassociate herself and her party from remarks by a previous Secretary of State for Scotland that were circulated by the Conservative Party and which argued that a vote for independence would somehow dishonour the sacrifice of people in the war. We are going to have great debates, but can Ruth Davidson at least put that ridiculous point outside the scope of this debate?

Ruth Davidson: I am not sure, given the campaign that is running in one of Scotland's national newspapers, that the First Minister is on the strongest ground in talking about intemperate statements that have been made. The previous exchange that we heard had a little bit more heat than light, so I suggest that we all take a bit of a step back as we look at the issue.

The First Minister's white paper says that an independent Scotland would have "full autonomy" over revenue and spending issues. Yesterday, Mark Carney said that an independent Scotland would need to cede national sovereignty. Those statements are diametrically opposed. I ask the First Minister a very specific question. Who should the people of Scotland believe: Alex Salmond or the governor of the Bank of England?

The First Minister: Clearly, if we enter a monetary union, we cede control over exchange rate and interest rate policy. My point to Johann Lamont was twofold, in the spirit of adding some light. My point is that we do not control those things at present, and neither does the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because the Bank of England has been operationally independent and has set interest rates over the past 10 years and more.

I think that it is right and proper to draw attention to the areas of fiscal policy—the substance of mobilising the natural resources of Scotland—and I think that it is independence to control 100 per cent of the taxation base as opposed to the 7 per cent that we control at the moment.

Ruth Davidson: What is proposed in the white paper is a eurozone-style pact, which Mark Carney yesterday specifically said had not worked for Europe and would not work for us, either. More ceding of sovereignty and more pooling of fiscal resources is a two-way street.

The First Minister is expecting the spurned spouse to agree to give up their independence over areas of tax and spend. Exactly what powers does he expect England, Wales and Northern Ireland to give up to join his currency union?

The First Minister: A currency union is an agreement so that countries can enjoy the benefits that Mark Carney set out in his speech yesterday. There are two reasons why the rest of the United Kingdom will want to join a currency union. The first, which is obvious, is that Scotland is the second-biggest market for the rest of the United Kingdom. The second is that, according to the most recent indications, 71 per cent of the people of England and Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom want Scotland to share the pound after Scottish independence. So if that is what the Scottish people want and what the English people want, and it is in the best interest of both countries, I come to the conclusion that it is a sensible proposition. At the end of the day, I have infinitely more confidence in the good judgment of the people of England than I will ever have in the bad judgment of George Osborne.

The Presiding Officer: We will have a constituency question from Christine Grahame.

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): The First Minister will be aware that this is the third week of an outbreak of norovirus in the Borders general hospital in my constituency. Is he kept regularly informed of progress in eradicating the outbreak and is he satisfied that everything possible is being done to bring the matter to a swift conclusion?

The First Minister: Yes, I am. For understandable reasons, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing and I are keeping a careful watch on the norovirus outbreak, given the disruption that norovirus causes to hospital wards. In Scotland as a whole, the level of norovirus has been less than it was last year thus far, but the member is right to point to the issue in the Borders, where there have been specific and particular difficulties. Overall, the level of norovirus has been declining in recent years, but outbreaks

can have a severe and dislocating effect on particular hospitals. That is why the health secretary and I have the issue uppermost in our minds and why we aim to continue the plans to deal with norovirus outbreaks when they occur and to try to eliminate norovirus and other hospital-acquired infections from our wards.

Judicial Complaints Reviewer (Review)

3. John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the First Minister when the Scottish Government last reviewed the powers of the office of the Judicial Complaints Reviewer. (S4F-01852)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): Last year, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice said in evidence to, I think, the Public Petitions Committee that the Government does not see a need for a review of the office of the Judicial Complaints Reviewer at this time. The Judicial Complaints Reviewer has been in office since September 2011. She has told Mr MacAskill that she does not wish to be reappointed. We are grateful for her work to date and her commitment to assist with a smooth handover to her successor.

John Wilson: As the First Minister has done, I highlight the valuable contribution that Ms Ali has made in her role, especially in relation to the 20 cases that she has identified as breaches by the Judicial Office for Scotland in relation to the judiciary since 2011. Following Ms Ali's decision not to seek a second term and her comments, which were reported at the weekend, could the powers of the Judicial Complaints Reviewer be enhanced to give the role greater independence, especially given the equivalent powers and budgets in England and Wales and the role of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman?

The First Minister: Let me put it on the record again that, like the member, I am grateful to Ms Ali for her valuable public service over the past two and a half years and for the improvements that she has encouraged in the judicial complaints process. The Judicial Complaints Reviewer carries out her responsibilities independently of Government and the judiciary. In her report for 2012-13, she records having to see 43 review requests and inquiries. By comparison, the Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman for England and Wales received 810 complaints and written inquiries, of which 482 concerned the personal conduct of judicial office-holders. The powers and the budget reflect that difference in the workload. There is not actually a process of independent review of judicial conduct complaints in Ireland.

That is the current position. We are grateful to Ms Ali for her work and, in particular, for the

commitment that she has given to smooth the handover to her successor.

Internet Domain (.scot)

4. Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what support the Scottish Government is giving to the dotSCOT process. (S4F-01866)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): We have actively supported the campaign for the new .scot domain since the proposal was referred to us by the Parliament's Public Petitions Committee in 2008. Earlier this week it was confirmed that Dot Scot Registry has concluded contractual negotiations with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers and that .scot domains will be available for sale this summer.

The .scot domain gives individuals and organisations in Scotland and the wider Scottish diaspora an option for clearly expressing their Scottish identity or affinity online.

Clare Adamson: I concur that there are opportunities for industry, not least for companies in the gaming industry, to distinguish themselves as Scottish companies.

Will the First Minister say how the .scot domain can be used to engage with the tens of millions of people in the Scottish diaspora?

The First Minister: Clare Adamson is right to point to the video games industry, which has particular strength in Scotland, as one for which the opportunity will be attractive.

Around the world there are tens of millions of people who claim a family connection to Scotland and many more tens of millions who have an affection for and affinity with our nation. Now that the new Scottish domain name has been confirmed, we have begun research into the practical applications of how best to use .scot domains. We will consult a number of diaspora organisations as part of that process.

There have been a number of occasions recently when a process that started with the Public Petitions Committee has come to fruition. We should all take pride in the work of that committee of the Parliament.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I am sure that we all agree that there will be commercial opportunities for Scottish companies that use the .scot domain name. However, can the First Minister confirm that there are no plans to replace the existing .uk suffix that is used by Scottish Government and many public bodies throughout the country?

The First Minister: I thought for a second that we were going to get the same unwavering

support as the member gave to the Bannockburn celebrations before he realised that he was out of touch with the rest of his party.

I would hope that even the Conservative Party would agree that this is an opportunity that the public authorities, Government and people of Scotland should embrace. If that attitude leaves Conservative members behind, I think that I know which side the people, the companies and the public authorities of Scotland will be on.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report (Response)

5. Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation about the number of families living below the minimum income standard. (S4F-01853)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): The Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that the rate of households below the minimum income standard in Scotland was 21 per cent in 2011-12—a rise of 3 per cent since 2008-09. The report concluded that in 2011-12 the proportion of families below the standard rose sharply as benefit and tax credit cuts started to kick in.

It is unacceptable that, in a country as prosperous as Scotland, a fifth of the population should be living below socially accepted minimum incomes. That is why we need the powers of independence, to defend the welfare system, expand childcare and abolish the bedroom tax.

Jackie Baillie: I thank the First Minister for his expected response. The JRF report states that the number of families living below the minimum income standard has actually increased by 70,000 over the past five years.

Some 82,000 of the families are now under even greater financial strain due to the bedroom tax. We have asked the Scottish National Party Government, for the best part of a year, to fully mitigate the bedroom tax. We have provided evidence of the power that the Government has to do that, as Audit Scotland confirmed in relation to Renfrewshire Council's assistance fund.

Will the First Minister tell me whether his Government will provide the funds to mitigate the full impact of the bedroom tax?

The First Minister: I welcome Jackie Baillie's implicit acknowledgement that control of social security is fundamental to defeating inequality in Scotland, which makes her and the Labour Party's position—that such powers should continue to be reserved to Westminster—all the more incredible.

I say to Jackie Baillie, as gently as possible, that we know that the way to get money into people's hands is through discretionary housing payments.

John Swinney has been meeting Iain Gray and Jackie Baillie to see whether there is a measure that we can use legally to try to defeat the bedroom tax in Scotland. However, every one of us—and, incidentally, just about every person in Scotland—knows that the way to defeat the bedroom tax and the rest of the impositions on the poor and disabled in Scotland is to take the powers over social security that Jackie Baillie alone seems to want to continue to have reside at Westminster.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): Is the First Minister in favour of people on a minimum wage paying more tax? If not, why does his white paper reject the Liberal Democrats' proposals to raise the income tax threshold to £12,500?

The First Minister: The white paper sets out the policies of the Scottish National Party that will transform the lot of the poor and low-paid in Scotland, as opposed to the Government that his party so loyally supports that, as we have heard, has covered and layered sections of Scotland with inequality and poverty. Therefore, anyone supporting the Tory-Liberal alliance, which has visited this on the poor of Scotland, requires a brass neck that is even greater than the Liberals will need in Scotland when they face the people again in the European elections.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Does the First Minister agree that the statutory minimum wage should be at a higher level that people could actually live on, and that Labour and Conservative Governments at Westminster have failed to achieve that? [*Interruption.*]

The First Minister: I hear the Labour members saying that that is ridiculous. Since the recession of 2008, under the Labour Government and the Tory-Liberal alliance, the minimum wage has failed to keep pace with the cost of living. If the inflation increases had been introduced five years ago, some of the lowest-paid Scots would have been earning more than £600 a year more.

That is why the white paper indicates that the way forward is that we should at least—and perhaps we can all agree on this—ensure by statute that the minimum wage has to keep pace with the cost of living, so that we do not ever have a situation in the future in which the lowest paid bear the brunt of the economic sacrifices that have to be made.

Primary School Places

6. Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the First Minister what discussions the Scottish Government has had with local authorities regarding the provision of primary school places. (S4F-01859)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): There are regular discussions with local authorities, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland about a range of issues.

It is, of course, the statutory responsibility of each individual local authority to provide an adequate number of school places for children and young people within its area. As a result of action by this Government and this Parliament, however, we have reduced the legal primary 1 class size limit from 30 to 25, which ensures that our youngest pupils get more time with their teachers.

Liz Smith: Parents at the successful and popular Hillhead primary school have been told by the local authority that their children might not, after all, be entitled to a place at the school because it is so heavily oversubscribed, and that the catchment area might have to be redrawn: a decision which is, not surprisingly, causing a great deal of anger, particularly among parents who have moved into that catchment area.

Will the First Minister agree that a system of school placement that is based on catchment areas and is purely supply driven is not working well enough, and that it should be replaced by one that is demand led, in which the money follows the pupil and in which parents have maximum choice to decide which school their children attend?

The First Minister: I do not agree with that because the system that is being proposed by the Conservative Party, as indicated in the past and indicated elsewhere, leads to chaos and the disruption of the school catchment and area place system. I have indicated the local authorities' statutory responsibility and I am sure that Glasgow will follow that through.

During the first parliamentary session, we had a range of debates in which a successive number of speakers said that there were not enough schools being refurbished or built. I have heard less of that in recent times and I now know the reason why. In the whole period of two sessions of Labour Government, a total of 328 schools were completed or refurbished in Scotland. The total thus far for this SNP Government is 463, which, I have to say, given the capital constraints we have been working under—[*Interruption.*]

Well, the Labour Party does not want to talk about this any more. No wonder, because it indicates the success of the SNP and the failure of the Labour-Liberal alliance.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): The First Minister might be aware that classroom assistants in primary schools in Dundee are being moved out of primary schools where they give support to primary 1 and 2, and put into nursery schools. Will the First Minister commit to making

sure that there will be no reduction of support for primary 1 and 2 across Scotland?

The First Minister: I have already given the figures in a previous answer about the improvements that have been made in primary 1 and 2. Given what we saw in the discussion—let us put it that way—between the Educational Institute of Scotland and the Labour Party administration in Glasgow that was reported in the press today, Jenny Marra should hesitate before she starts attacking individual local authorities.

Local authorities have statutory responsibilities. The improvements in the pupil teacher ratio in primary 1 to 3 are clear and evident to see, as indeed is the vast number and increase in schools that have been built and refurbished the length and breadth of Scotland.

I know that Jenny Marra was not around, but I assure her that, in the previous session of this Parliament, her colleagues wanted to attack the SNP Government because, as they saw it, not enough schools were being built. Now that the figures demonstrate exactly the opposite, apparently it has nothing to do with this Government. I think that it is part of the success of the Scotland's schools for the future programme.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I wonder whether the First Minister would like to clarify something that he said in his answer to Liam McArthur. I believe that he said that the white paper sets out the policies of the Scottish National Party. Was that a Freudian slip, in which case he can just clarify the record, or was it a statement of fact, in which case he could refund the taxpayer for the cost of that document? [*Applause.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order. As Mr Macintosh well knows, that is not a point of order. I am not responsible—

The First Minister *rose*—

The Presiding Officer: I call the First Minister.

The First Minister: I know that Mr Macintosh wants to reread the white paper carefully. It sets out the case for an independent Scotland, goes on to say that the choice of Government will be for the Scottish people, and gives an indication of what the SNP would do if we were lucky enough to be chosen by the Scottish people in an independent Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: That ends First Minister's questions. Members who are leaving the chamber should do so quickly and quietly.

Melbourne Declaration on Diabetes

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-08516, in the name of David Stewart, on the Melbourne declaration. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes that the first meeting of the global Parliamentary Champions for Diabetes Forum was held in Melbourne from 30 November to 2 December 2013; understands that there are an estimated 382 million people with diabetes, including in the Highlands and Islands, and that this number is expected to rise to 592 million by 2035, that 80% of people with diabetes live in low and middle-income countries, that diabetes will cause 5.1 million deaths in 2013, one every six seconds, that the 66th World Health Assembly held in May 2013 has adopted nine global targets and 25 indicators to help address the non-communicable diseases (NCD) pandemic and that diabetes is the only one of the four major NCDs with its own global target, to halt the rise in diabetes and obesity by 2025; congratulates the 90 nations that have signed the Melbourne Declaration on Diabetes, and acknowledges what it considers the pivotal role of the International Diabetes Federation as the unique global voice for people with diabetes.

12:32

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): A few short months ago, I strolled in the Melbourne summer sun from my hotel to Victoria state Parliament House. I was due to speak to an unusual audience—nearly 100 national champions for diabetes from as far afield as Russia, Ukraine, Nigeria and Canada. We even had South Africa's own first lady. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr Stewart, but I ask those in the public gallery who are leaving to do so quietly please. Thank you. Please resume, Mr Stewart.

David Stewart: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

It was a privilege to be asked by the International Diabetes Federation to represent Scotland at the first-ever global forum of parliamentary champions for diabetes. The next forum will be in Canada in 2015 and I hope that Scotland will be represented again by other members, such as Nanette Milne, who, along with me, co-convenes the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament on diabetes.

The conference concluded with the signing of the Melbourne declaration, which committed Parliaments around the globe to ensuring that diabetes is high on their political agenda. The declaration called on nations to have a stronger emphasis on preventative work, early diagnosis,

management and access to adequate care, and to ensure that treatment and medicines are available for all those living with diabetes. The declaration was the brainchild of the International Diabetes Federation, the president of which is Sir Michael Hirst, former MP and ex-chair of Diabetes UK.

I was proud to talk to the conference delegates about Scotland but also about issues of international significance for diabetes. I am proud to come from a nation of Scots with a strong track record in innovation and discovery, such as Alexander Fleming, who discovered penicillin; James Watt, who invented the steam engine; and Alexander Graham Bell, who invented the telephone.

However, international collaboration is where real strides can be made. In 1922, Professor John Macleod from Aberdeen worked with two other outstanding scientists, Dr Banting and Charles Best, and discovered insulin. Macleod and Banting won the Nobel prize for medicine in 1923, which was shared with Charles Best.

Fast forward to today and, as co-chair of the cross party group on diabetes, and convener of the Public Petitions Committee, I have worked with politicians, the public, medical experts and campaign groups to be an evangelist for the treatment of diabetes.

As a non-diabetic, why am I so passionate about the subject? In 1997, as a freshly elected, fresh-faced member of Parliament—hard to believe as that might be today—I was given a tour of the diabetic unit in my local hospital. I met a diabetes nurse who encouraged me to take an interest in the subject. She told me that diabetes is the main cause of blindness among people of working age. It is responsible for half of all non-traumatic lower limb amputations and, then, was costing the national health service £0.5 billion.

I joined the all-party parliamentary group on diabetes at Westminster and was its secretary for eight years. As part of my duties as secretary, I hosted a reception in the House of Commons for MPs, peers, patients, doctors, nurses and NHS bosses. There were 200 guests and I met the star attraction, Gary Mabbutt, who football fans in the chamber will know is the ex-captain of Spurs and an English international. Gary has diabetes and he told me that when he was preparing to leave home to travel to Mexico for the world cup, he received a phone call from the England team doctor who told him he could not go to Mexico because it was too hot and, as a diabetic, he would be unable to cope. It was a ludicrous decision because he was probably the fittest person on the team. In my view, that was a clear example of discrimination against diabetics. We also heard about newly diagnosed diabetics being sacked or downgraded in the police, the fire service and the armed forces.

The other event that focused my attention was personal. My late father-in-law had type 1 diabetes for more than 70 years and lost sight in one eye. He taught me that it is possible to lead a normal life with well-controlled and well-maintained pen-needle injections.

Last time I asked a parliamentary question of the health minister, I was told that approximately 250,000 people in Scotland were diabetic and that a further 620,000 were at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. In addition, 49,000 people in Scotland have the condition but are undiagnosed. That means that approximately 1 million people in Scotland are directly affected by diabetes, either by having it or by being at high risk of developing it. It means that, if my maths is right—of which there is no guarantee—there are about 800 undiagnosed diabetes sufferers in each Scottish parliamentary constituency and that scores of staff in the Scottish Parliament, and perhaps one or two members, have diabetes without knowing it.

Screening for type 2 diabetes is vital but it requires planning that tackles local needs within a national framework. The key is targeting, so that interventions can do the most good. We should view screening as a form of prevention rather than as a cure. It would allow general practitioners, or indeed diabetes and practice nurses, to offer screening earlier to patients who are most at risk, which is normally people over 45 who have a family history of diabetes and are overweight. Early detection is vital. Diabetes UK Scotland reports that most people with type 2 diabetes suffer the condition for between three and seven years before diagnosis. Early detection will reduce the number of patients suffering from complications and will reduce costs. That detection can be done by a simple and inexpensive urine or blood test that takes about 30 seconds.

There have been some strong, positive steps in the care of people with diabetes, such as the provision of insulin pumps to under-18s, but the number of people with the condition is rising, which will have a serious effect in Scotland's immediate future. Beyond the grave social cost of the condition on individuals and families, there is the huge economic cost to the NHS in Scotland, estimated at £1 billion annually, 80 per cent of which goes on managing avoidable complications.

With the Melbourne declaration focusing on the prevention of diabetes, the Scottish Government must have a focus on the condition that properly reflects the size of the problem. There are now more people in Scotland living with diabetes than with coronary heart disease. Two and a half times more people have diabetes than have all cancers combined. Each year in Scotland, 1,900 people have an emergency admission for diabetic

ketoacidosis—a critical, life-threatening condition that requires immediate medical attention. More than 40 per cent of those admissions are of people under the age of 25.

At any one time, people with diabetes account for a fifth of hospital in-patients. In Scotland, a person with diabetes can face a reduced life expectancy by up to 14 years. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness among people of working age and a main contributor to kidney failure, amputations and cardiovascular disease, including heart attacks and strokes.

People with diabetes should be getting their 15 healthcare essential checks from the NHS and previous action plans have been instrumental in taking that forward.

We have a great opportunity in Scotland to raise the bar in healthcare. Scotland has one of the highest incidences of type 2 diabetes in the world—it is time that we tackled that ticking time bomb. Not only would it be cost effective, it would, on an individual basis, tackle a condition that blinds, maims and kills.

12:40

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): I congratulate David Stewart on securing this important debate. I join others in congratulating the International Diabetes Federation on organising the global parliamentary champions for diabetes forum, which was held in Melbourne last year. I understand that parliamentarians from 90 countries have signed a commitment to establish a parliamentarians for diabetes global network.

Diabetes is, of course, a global crisis as well as a crisis here in Scotland. There are 382 million people around the world with diabetes. That number is expected to rise to perhaps 600 million by 2035. Diabetes will have caused 5.1 million deaths in 2013—that is one every six seconds.

It is an economic issue as well as a social issue and a health issue, with 80 per cent of people who have diabetes living in low and middle-income countries. The annual world cost is about £330 billion. It is a very significant issue on a whole series of different levels.

More fundamentally, the number of diabetics who have been diagnosed continues to rise in Scotland. Of course, that is partly due to better diagnosis and screening procedures but the number of cases is rising by between 4 and 5 per cent per annum.

The Melbourne declaration identifies three specific areas where action could be taken: in prevention, in increasing early diagnosis, and in

increasing access to diabetes care and to therapies.

In Scotland, we have the diabetes action plan, which is an excellent way of focusing on some of the issues. In particular, the plan seeks to reduce obesity, which is a primary cause of type 2 diabetes, because as we have heard—and I have some limited personal experience in this regard—diabetes carries with it a whole series of secondary consequences such as amputations and blindness.

The Scottish Government has provided substantial support to diabetes research organisations—it has provided £10,000 to Diabetes UK Scotland in the current year.

I myself am lucky because I have an annual medical so at least in the last 12 months I know that I am not subject to diabetes. The simple urine test that comes as part of that medical is a kind of reassurance that I hope more and more people across Scotland can have.

I have some direct interest in this issue through a member of my own family, who is in Australia. My nephew, Alan Baxter, is a professor at James Cook University—in Townsville, Queensland—who specialises in diabetes. He established a facility there and he is one of a range of scientists around the world who have come up with some remedies. He has come up with one variant of an inoculation for one of the variants of type 1 diabetes. Many of the variants are genetically driven by a series of different triggers. The inoculation is designed to switch off one trigger. I hope that he and the many other doctors and researchers who are working to address the causes and effects of the disease continue to undertake that good work, while our policy makers must continue to support them.

The Melbourne declaration on diabetes has put diabetes on the world stage. I hope that we in this Parliament will add our parliamentary weight to this worldwide parliamentary initiative.

12:44

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): I congratulate Dave Stewart on lodging his important motion, and I pay tribute to his passionate championing of the issue during the past 17 years. As his motion commends the International Diabetes Federation, it is appropriate that I pay tribute to the work of Sir Michael Hirst as the president of that organisation. His position is a great honour for Scotland and, as some members will know, he was formerly a Conservative member of Parliament.

The motion refers to the Melbourne declaration and the World Health Organization, and highlights

the great increase in the number of diabetes cases worldwide. In Scotland, the number of those with diabetes has increased from 150,000 in 2002, when the first framework was launched, to 258,000 now. Of course, those figures do not take account of the many people whose diabetes is undiagnosed; the figure of 46 per cent is generally accepted as a good guide to the proportion of type 2 diabetes cases that have not been diagnosed.

In addition to the importance of general prevention programmes on exercise, diet and so on, support should be given to activities that aim to raise awareness of the risks of diabetes, which are perhaps not so well known. I support the work of Diabetes UK Scotland, for example, which takes roadshows to local communities.

More focus is needed on early diagnosis, as Dave Stewart emphasised with regard to effective targeted screening programmes. Perhaps the minister will say something about that—I am not sure where we are at with screening, but it is clearly necessary given that so many cases remain undiagnosed. There has been progress as a result of the focus on diabetes in the quality and outcomes framework, and I know that GPs do a lot of good work on diabetes that they did not necessarily do before, but I do not know whether any of that work encompasses screening.

There has been other progress—a lot of progress, really—in the past decade. There is now a high uptake of screening for retinopathy, which is important as blindness is one of the serious potential complications of diabetes. There have also been many other great advances. When the first action plan was launched in 2002, during my time as Minister for Health and Community Care, I was a great admirer in particular of the work of the Tayside diabetes managed clinical network.

The current minister is very lucky to have Professor Andrew Morris, who was the main driving force behind that network, as his chief scientist at present. We should pay tribute to Professor Morris for all his great work on diabetes, which has been internationally recognised. His work has included the diabetes register, and more generally work on the therapeutics and genetics of diabetes.

We in Scotland have a lot to be proud of in dealing with diabetes, but the focus of this debate—as in other health debates—must be on what more needs to be done. Dave Stewart mentioned insulin pumps, on which he has done a great deal of work. I had a constituent at my surgery two weeks ago who told me that her daughter was not able to achieve blood sugar control through the normal means, and she asked me to write to NHS Lothian about the provision of an insulin pump. I hope that she will get that if it is

appropriate for her, and I hope that insulin pumps will become more generally available.

It is perhaps time to update the action plan, which must recommit to bringing down the numbers of diabetes cases and continuing to improve the care of those who have the condition.

12:49

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I am very pleased that David Stewart has brought the debate to the chamber, following his attendance at the recent meeting in Melbourne that culminated in the signing of the declaration that we are discussing today, and I thank him for doing so. I am sorry that I was unable to get to the meeting in Australia, but I am delighted that the declaration secured support from parliamentarians from a wide and diverse range of nations.

I also congratulate my good friend Sir Michael Hirst—Micky, to those who know him well—on his efforts to tackle the growing scourge of diabetes through his work with Diabetes UK over many years, and with the International Diabetes Federation, of which he is current president. Micky has taken a very active part in efforts to secure early diagnosis of diabetes and to ensure that those who have it receive effective glycaemic control in order to avoid the awful complications that can result from the condition, if blood sugar is not kept within the normal stable range. He has also been actively involved in studies of the emotional and psychological problems that are associated with type 1 diabetes—in particular, during the transitional adolescent years between childhood and adulthood, which is a time when it is all too easy to let the condition get out of control.

I will digress a little. I am very pleased that the Health and Sport Committee has taken on board my concerns about transitional care for not just diabetes, but several other long-term conditions, and that it is, in a few weeks, having a round-table discussion with experts to find out how the transitional years are being dealt with and to discuss how the situation could be improved for the young patients involved.

As we know, diabetes of both types, but especially type 2, is on the increase around the globe. In Scotland, the number of people with diabetes is growing at an annual rate of 4 per cent to 5 per cent, which means that if trends continue there will by 2030 be 350,000 people in Scotland with the condition. Just think of the effect that that—never mind the other pressures that will result from the increasing ageing population—will have on the NHS. We know that more than 600,000 people in Scotland are at risk of developing diabetes, so it is crucial that we have an action plan that aims to reduce its prevalence—

in particular of type 2, for which the increase is explosive.

Closely aligned with the increasing incidence of type 2 diabetes is the increasing obesity of our population, with 64.3 per cent of adults in 2012 being classed as overweight and getting on for half of them being classed as obese. In 2012, 16.8 per cent of children were overweight and 13.8 per cent were at risk of being obese. All credit is due to those who are behind the Melbourne declaration, and who want to see more preventative work, with early diagnosis and access to adequate care, treatment and medicines for all those who are living with the condition.

We are a bit ahead of the game in Scotland compared with some other countries, thanks to the strategic approach that has been taken by successive Governments—from the publication of the first “Scottish Diabetes Framework” in 2002 to the “Diabetes Action Plan 2010”—although there are disparities across the country. Clearly, more needs to be done to bring down the rate of increase of diabetes by an effectively targeted screening programme for diabetes and support activities that raise awareness of the condition. Malcolm Chisholm mentioned the Diabetes UK road shows as a case in point.

Our successes so far lie in the greater availability of insulin pumps, particularly for the under-18s—that was fought for very hard by the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament on diabetes—which can achieve better glycaemic control in the people for whom they are suitable; in better staffing levels of specialists in diabetes, both nursing and consultant; and in the national retinopathy screening campaign, which is highly rated. However, the diabetes action plan needs to be updated and to build on the improvements of the past 12 years. I understand that we may—the minister will tell me whether I am right—hear more of that fairly soon, which will be welcome.

The Melbourne declaration gives us the ideal opportunity to reinforce our commitment to improving diabetes diagnosis and care, and to support the global parliamentary alliance that is now in place and focused on dealing with what has been described as a modern pandemic. I commend David Stewart for bringing it to our attention.

12:53

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Lab): I thank David Stewart for securing this debate on an issue that is of great concern to people in this chamber and in Scotland, and around the world. Further, I congratulate David on having had the honour to represent the Scottish Parliament at the first-ever meeting of the global parliamentary champions for

diabetes in Melbourne. He has done a fantastic job in raising the profile of diabetes in the Scottish Parliament. I am sure that we all pay tribute to that work.

As colleagues have stated, diabetes is a major public health challenge. The motion highlights that last year it was responsible for 5.1 million deaths around the world, which is one every six seconds. In my constituency of Dunfermline in Fife, in Scotland and around the world the number of people who suffer from diabetes is rising at an alarming rate. Colleagues have already talked about the figures in Scotland, and it looks like we are on the brink of a diabetes epidemic.

The figures are extremely worrying for us all. In 2002, it was estimated that 150,000 people in Scotland were living with diabetes, but by 2006 the estimate was 170,000 and it rose to 228,000 in 2010. Today, the figure is almost 260,000. That means that, in just over a decade, we have seen a 42 per cent increase in the number of people who have been diagnosed with diabetes in Scotland. When we factor in the substantial number of people who are living with diabetes but are undiagnosed, we are looking at a major public health time bomb. With 50 people being diagnosed with diabetes every day in Scotland, those are shocking statistics that are of deep concern to all of us here today.

The cost of diabetes is not measured only in the suffering of those who are afflicted with the condition, or by the impact on their families and friends. As colleagues have said, it is also counted in the resources that it uses in our national health service and in our social services, and in the productive lives of which it robs our society.

It is absolutely vital that we take action to tackle this costly disease, but we also need to do more to ensure access to adequate care, treatment and medicines—including insulin pumps—for those who are living with the condition, in order to ensure that they have a better quality of life.

Although not all diabetes cases are preventable, the vast majority of type 2 diabetes cases are weight-related, and the numbers will inevitably keep going up as the Scottish population grows older and fatter. A recent report by NHS Fife revealed that one in five primary 1 children in my constituency, Dunfermline, is overweight or obese. The same report found that one in three adults in west Fife is obese, and that only a third of adults there do 30 minutes of physical activity a day.

We are all, rightly, proud of Scottish food and drink, but the reality is that most people's diets in Scotland feature too much sugar and fat, and that most people do too little exercise. Those are the key factors in the diabetes challenge that we face.

If we are to tackle diabetes successfully, we need a complete change in our attitudes, but small simple steps will also make a big difference. Taking the stairs instead of the lift, having an apple instead of a digestive biscuit and walking to the shops instead of jumping in the car are just three small steps that will make a huge difference in the long term.

We need to reach people early. The worrying obesity figures for children in Dunfermline show the importance of early intervention. I would like to highlight Fife Council's take time for a cuddle campaign, which was launched recently at the excellent Beanstalk nursery in my constituency. The campaign is aimed at showing parents how making small behavioural changes can make big differences to a child's development and have a significant impact on their future life chances by reducing the likelihood of their suffering from conditions such as type 2 diabetes later in life. Although, inevitably, early intervention work will take a long time to reap results, if we are to successfully tackle the growing diabetes epidemic in Scotland, it is vital that we invest in it.

The motion highlights the global nature of the problem, and although there is much that we can do to tackle diabetes in Scotland, we must keep sight of the fact that it is a global issue. We must continue to work with our colleagues in the UK, Europe and across the world to develop solutions and ensure that people are aware of how to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and to address the common challenges that we face.

I look forward to hearing from the minister about how we can ensure that diabetes stays high on the political agenda in Scotland.

12:57

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): As other members have, I offer congratulations to David Stewart on securing time for this debate. I also want to acknowledge the expertise that he brings to Parliament, not only as the co-convener, with Nanette Milne, of the cross-party group on diabetes, but also as a result of the eight years that he spent as the secretary of the Westminster all-party group on diabetes, which he mentioned. It should be recognised that he has been committed to the issue for a considerable time, to his credit.

This afternoon's debate has given us an opportunity to underline the serious challenge that diabetes presents to countries all round the world. Scotland is not immune to the challenge. I want to spend some time outlining some of the work that we have done to improve the lives of people with diabetes.

The International Diabetes Federation estimates that one in 10 of the world's population will have diabetes by 2035. Scottish figures for 2012 saw the number of people with diabetes increase to more than 258,000—that is 4.9 per cent of our population, or one in 20 people. Those sobering figures demonstrate the significant challenge that we face.

I also very much welcome the renewed focus that the Melbourne declaration on diabetes has brought to the subject, and the work of the global parliamentary champions for diabetes forum. I hope that, at some point, they will be able to come to Scotland as part of their programme in the years to come. I recognise the important work that has been undertaken by the IDF in promoting the ethos of the declaration, to promote solutions for managing and preventing diabetes globally, as David Stewart outlined.

As several members, including Nanette Milne, have recognised, we are thankfully well placed to answer some of the challenges in Scotland. We are very fortunate to have outstanding clinical leadership as well as a strong patient voice. I record my thanks to Professor John McKnight, Professor Donald Pearson and Professor Andrew Morris, who have all chaired our Scottish diabetes group over the past decade and have provided excellent clinical leadership to ensure that diabetes services in Scotland are second to none. I also recognise the work that Sir Michael Hirst has undertaken, as president of the IDF, and the work of Professor Steve Green, who chairs the International Society for Paediatric and Adolescent Diabetes. Both are fellow Scots and both are highly regarded, with reputations both at home and internationally.

Our national diabetes programme has, for over a decade, helped to co-ordinate the safe, effective and person-centred diabetes care that we want to be delivered throughout Scotland. Members are familiar with the diabetes action plan and have referred to it. That plan has been key in driving forward improvements in a number of important areas of diabetes care, including delivery of state-of-the-art e-health solutions for monitoring progress; the improvement of foot care services; an increase in access to insulin pump therapy; and the enhancement of the knowledge and skills of staff in our NHS in both acute and primary care.

I do not have sufficient time to go into all the successes of our diabetes programme in great depth, but I will update members on a couple of key areas. A key measure of diabetes care in Scotland is our Scottish diabetes survey, which is perhaps the most comprehensive national record of its kind in the world. One of the major issues to be highlighted in the most recent survey is the fact that the percentage of people with diabetes who

have had their foot risk recorded more than doubled between 2008 and 2012, rising from just 31 per cent to 70 per cent. That has had a major impact by reducing the incidence of foot ulcers and lower-limb loss, and we want to make further improvements through developing that service. There is evidence that our world-leading triage system for assessing foot risk, which was developed by our diabetes foot action group, is working, and that people with diabetes are having their foot risk properly assessed to avoid complications in future life.

A second area in which we have made substantial improvements is access to insulin pumps. Several members have referred to that, and Malcolm Chisholm mentioned it in relation to his constituent. Insulin pump provision for under-18s has increased from 8.4 per cent to 22.6 per cent across Scotland since December 2011. We have also seen a more modest increase in provision for those aged over 18. As Malcolm Chisholm said, his constituent feels that her daughter would benefit from an insulin pump, and we have provided additional resource to our boards to allow them to make the pumps available when that is clinically appropriate.

The whole insulin pump issue has been driven forward by the interest of David Stewart and the cross-party group on diabetes and the work of the Public Petitions Committee. I am sure that he knows that health boards that have not come up to the mark have been left in absolutely no doubt that the Government wants them to make progress and to ensure that they achieve the target that we have set for them.

Members have also mentioned a national screening programme. The Government is advised on such programmes by the National Screening Committee. The most recent review of evidence on a national screening programme on diabetes and the modelling work that was undertaken concluded that there was no conclusive evidence on whether screening should be undertaken, or which population sub-group would potentially benefit. In light of the review's findings, the NSC recommended that screening the general population for diabetes should not be offered. However, that recommendation is under review and we expect to receive further advice on screening programmes in May.

As members have rightly highlighted, we do not just need excellence in and equality of access to clinical services that we offer to people who have diabetes; we need also to ensure that we take action to prevent diabetes from occurring in the first place. The world health assembly's global target to halt the rise in diabetes and obesity by 2025 is very much welcomed and will give added focus to our work.

We are progressing a range of programmes to address the need for healthy eating habits and we have taken forward work with a range of stakeholders to achieve that. Last year, we funded Diabetes UK's live for it school programme, which teaches children how to eat healthy meals and to be active, and about how that can have a positive impact on long-term health. The programme has been very successful and we are giving further consideration to how we can work with Diabetes UK to develop the work in the months and years to come.

I hope that I have reassured members that we take the issue seriously. We are committed to building on the progress that has been achieved under the "Diabetes Action Plan", to looking at what further measures are required to ensure that we provide patients with the best clinical care, and to taking the right measures to prevent diabetes from occurring in the first place.

13:07

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Commonwealth Games and Legacy

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is a debate on motion S4M-08879, in the name of Shona Robison, on the Commonwealth games and its legacy across Scotland.

We have a wee bit of time in hand, so if members were to take interventions, we would ensure that they were compensated for the time.

The Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport (Shona Robison): I am delighted to address the chamber on our state of preparedness ahead of hosting the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games and, as important, on the legacy that we are delivering throughout Scotland.

This afternoon I will reflect on the significant milestones that were achieved throughout 2013; I will also detail our plans to ensure that everything is in place on this, the final stretch, in advance of the games beginning. I am delighted at our achievements so far. With 174 days to go until the opening ceremony, final preparations are on-going to ensure that we are ready.

The Commonwealth Games Federation's co-ordination commission has recognised that progress. In October, I was very encouraged by the feedback received from the commission, which praised the organising committee for demonstrating

"a clear understanding of all aspects of Games delivery",

and commended the excellent collaboration between games partners.

With today's news that Mike Hooper will be standing down as chief executive of the Commonwealth Games Federation after the games, I express my personal gratitude for and appreciation of his support and guidance. Having worked closely with the federation for many years, his expertise and knowledge have proved invaluable. He and his team have made a major contribution to ensuring that Scotland is ready to welcome the world for the Commonwealth games. I wish him every success for the future.

I very much welcome the continuing support for the games from all political parties in the chamber. The strength of the cross-party support has been extremely important, from the bidding process for the games under the previous Administration to their being secured under this Administration. The discussions on the games that we have had in Parliament have demonstrated that it is possible

for us to work collaboratively, whatever our political position on other matters.

I am also delighted to see the support for the games from the people of Scotland and people throughout the Commonwealth. That is clear from the unprecedented demand for tickets. There have been 2.3 million applications for around 1 million tickets, with 94 per cent of tickets now sold. Perhaps that is because fairness and accessibility are at the heart of the ticketing strategy. Two thirds of tickets are priced at £25 or less. Half-price concession tickets for under-16s and over-60s are available for all sessions—a Commonwealth games first.

There is no better evidence that people throughout the Commonwealth share our excitement than the warm welcome the Queen's baton relay receives on its journey around all 70 nations and territories of the Commonwealth. The Minister for External Affairs and International Development recently saw for himself the enthusiasm that the baton generated as it travelled through Malawi and Zambia before arriving yesterday in Namibia.

I expect an equally enthusiastic welcome when the baton returns to Scotland on 14 June. For 40 days, it will visit each and every local authority and will be proudly carried by 4,000 baton bearers, who will be drawn from our athletes of the past, present and future; our schools; and heroes in our communities who embody the values of the games.

It is not only baton bearers who will get a hands-on games experience. Last week, we announced our search for 3,000 people to join the cast for the ceremonies during the games. There was a wonderful response to the games volunteering campaign, with more than 50,000 applications. The organising committee has now finished the huge task of selecting the lucky 15,000 Clydesiders.

I know that those who are unsuccessful may be disappointed. However, we are determined to capture their enthusiasm and direct them to other exciting volunteering opportunities that are available beyond the games.

In addition, there will be countless opportunities for Scotland's people and communities and visitors to participate in the Glasgow 2014 cultural programme. Just this morning, 42 new cultural projects were announced, from traditional ceilidhs to a project led by Nicola Benedetti—there is absolutely something for everyone.

Fantastic progress was made last year on completing permanent venues, all of which are now open. Anyone in Scotland can ride a competition bike around the Sir Chris Hoy

velodrome or try the spectacular mountain bike trails at Cathkin Braes.

The newly built athletes village will provide a first-class home away from home for 6,500 visiting athletes and officials. Post-games, the village will leave a lasting legacy for the east end of Glasgow, providing 400 affordable homes—300 of which will be for private sale—as well as a care home for the elderly.

Work is also moving apace on transport, operational and security plans. The safety and security of all spectators and participants at the games is an absolute priority for the Government. London 2012 demonstrated how security was enhanced and public confidence was increased when private security guards worked closely with our highly regarded police and military personnel. I have therefore agreed with Police Scotland and with the organising committee to deploy a mixed workforce involving military, police and private industry resources to ensure a safe, secure and peaceful games. To assist with that, the chief constable of Police Scotland requested military assistance from the United Kingdom Government, and I am pleased to announce that yesterday I received confirmation from the Home Secretary that that request has been supported. That is a welcome development that illustrates the co-operation between both Governments to ensure the security of the games.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Can the minister expand a little on how we will combine keeping the games as secure as possible while keeping them as friendly as possible? We do not want people to be facing the police or the military or whatever at every corner.

Shona Robison: The look and feel of the games is really important. It will absolutely be the case that the presence of different security resources will create a secure games, but the games will feel friendly. That is why we were very keen for the Police Scotland and military element to be the public-facing, friendly face of security that people will see when they are getting their bags checked, for example. That worked very well at the Olympics, and it is a lesson learned from the Olympics that we are applying to the Commonwealth games.

Today, I wrote to the Home Secretary thanking her for her support and requesting that consideration be given to the Royal Regiment of Scotland helping to fulfil the military role at the games.

Of course, as exciting as those 11 days of world-class sport will be, there is no doubt that the games are about so much more. I know the great importance that members around the chamber

place on the legacy that we are working to deliver and what it means for their constituencies.

Over the course of the past year, I have certainly felt the level of excitement about the games rising. The facts and stats are very welcome but what will really make the games successful will be our ability to make the legacy meaningful to people across Scotland. That is why I was delighted to announce yesterday the Scottish Government's gift in connection with the games. The 5,000 legacy tickets will provide an opportunity to attend the games to those who are making a contribution to Scotland's legacy—those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend the games.

Since my last update to Parliament, my Cabinet colleagues and I have had the pleasure of undertaking numerous visits to see at first hand the positive impact that the legacy is already having across Scotland's cities, towns and villages. I will highlight some examples.

The First Minister visited Wilton Lodge park in Hawick in the Borders in August, when he had the pleasure of announcing that it had been successful in obtaining £77,000 to create three state-of-the-art tennis courts in the town through the legacy 2014 active places fund. Since the launch of the fund, a total of 64 projects from 20 local authorities have received £3.2 million to build facilities that encourage communities to get active.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Comely Park primary school in Falkirk to unveil Scotland's international hockey player, Holly Cram, as the first ambassador for game on Scotland, the official education programme for the games. The appetite to get involved in that programme has been truly remarkable, with more than 35,000 visitors to the game on Scotland website and an estimated 250,000 young people having benefited from its educational resources to date.

Just last month, I visited the Dundee Repertory Theatre in my home city to officially launch the aspire Dundee project, which uses dance, music and drama to improve the lives of almost 2,000 children from across the city.

Similarly, the First Minister was recently in Aberdeen to launch the legacy 2014 street soccer Scotland programme. Four thousand people from the north-east will be supported to overcome homelessness, mental health issues and unemployment. Funding will allow the programme to enhance its reach in Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, providing a total of 37,500 opportunities.

On the west coast, in Argyll and Bute, two social enterprises—Mid Argyll Community Pool, known as MACPool, in Lochgilphead, and Stramash, which is based in Oban—will receive mentoring and coaching through the Pilot Light Scotland

project to build more effective organisations. In North Lanarkshire, the NVT Group secured a major games technology contract, which has enabled it to offer modern apprenticeships within its 100-strong workforce.

For companies throughout Scotland, the direct business benefits have been significant. To date, more than £300 million of contracts have been awarded for the Commonwealth games, and 83 per cent of that value has gone to firms in Scotland. That is more than £250 million of contracts, going to more than 400 companies across 23 local authority areas.

To build on those economic benefits, we have developed an ambitious business legacy programme, which will promote the very best of Scotland on the international stage and improve business capacity at home.

I cannot continue without highlighting the legacy that is being delivered for the community at the heart of the games, Glasgow's east end. It really is an exciting time for the area. Clyde Gateway continues to attract inward investment, bringing sustainable jobs for local people. In addition, major transport improvements are opening up that area and the rest of the west of Scotland to significant economic opportunities. That is not to mention the two world-class sporting facilities, in the shape of the Emirates arena and the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome, which are spearheading an increase in local sport participation.

In the past month, I have attended a reception at the Emirates arena to mark the construction of the £3 million Dalrnock legacy hub, which is an exemplar of community-led regeneration, bringing under one roof many of the services that are so important to communities.

Although I cannot cover everything, I hope that that gives members a flavour of the breadth of activity across the country. Earlier in 2013, we developed an interactive map as part of the legacy 2014 website, and I invite members to use the map to see at first hand the positive impact that legacy is having for the people of Scotland in their constituencies.

In previous updates to Parliament, I have stated that the key to securing the geographic coverage of legacy is strong partnerships with our local authorities. Through discussions with local government partners such as the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, VOCAL—the voice of chief officers of cultural and leisure services in Scotland—and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the local authority legacy leads network was created to drive legacy activity across Scotland. The network has grown throughout 2013, and I recognise the important part that each

local authority has played in enhancing the reach of legacy throughout Scotland.

I will touch briefly on the priorities for legacy moving forward. Young people remain at the forefront of our ambition, and the games present a fantastic opportunity to inspire and encourage our young people to fulfil their true potential. I have no doubt that that ambition is shared by members on all sides of the chamber, and it is something that Scotland's sporting heroes acknowledge in sharing their own legacy aspirations.

Allan Wells said:

"I hope seeing new world-class facilities being built on their doorsteps will inspire more young people to get active and those already involved in sport to get to the next level. Having the Commonwealth Games come to Edinburgh all those years ago certainly did this for me and I look forward to what the Games will mean for future generations to come."

Our efforts to ensure that Scotland becomes a more active nation continue. The evidence on the multiple health and wellbeing benefits that can be gained from increasing physical activity is overwhelming, and we will shortly be launching a national engagement campaign to encourage workplaces to champion the efforts of staff to become more active in 2014, inspiring people to live healthier lives.

Scotland's physical activity charter will shortly be published. It is based on the latest international expertise on what works in tackling inactivity, and contains our long-term vision for a more active population.

Support for volunteering remains a key priority for this Government, as we know that volunteers make such a big contribution to our society. We are working closely with partners and the third sector to harness the passion for volunteering that has been ignited by the games, connecting people to further opportunities to volunteer in their local communities.

I finish by noting how proud I am of our state of readiness for delivering a safe, secure and successful Commonwealth games. I am proud of our world-class offering and the plans that are in place to showcase it on the international stage in a year in which Scotland will receive global attention like never before. I am proud of what we have achieved to maximise the reach of our legacy from the games, ensuring that it will be felt in communities from Shetland to Hawick and everywhere in between.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the positive steps taken by Games partners in Scotland's final preparations to host a successful Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games; recognises the long-lasting active, social and economic legacy being delivered for the whole of Scotland by Legacy

2014 programmes; acknowledges once again the endorsement of the Commonwealth Games Federation for what Scotland has achieved; celebrates the success of both the Games ticketing programme and the launch of the Queen's Baton Relay, engendering anticipation and excitement in Scotland and the Commonwealth, and welcomes the cross-party support for the delivery of a successful Games this summer.

14:45

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): As we have heard, there are only 174 days to go until the start of the Commonwealth games. At times like this, I am always grateful to the Commonwealth games 2014 website for that little reminder.

It is appropriate that we take stock and consider the progress that has been made, and perhaps even areas where more work needs to be done, if the Glasgow games are to be the resounding success that we all want them to be and if we are to be on track to guarantee the promised legacy.

We know from the evaluation reports delivered by the Commonwealth Games Federation evaluation commission that it is more than satisfied with the progress that has been made and the state of preparedness of the games organisers, which is very welcome. In that regard, I join the minister in recognising the efforts of Mike Hooper, who has announced today that he will be standing down as the chief executive of the Commonwealth Games Federation. I first met Mike at the Commonwealth youth games in Bendigo in 2004. I take this opportunity to thank him for his guidance in advance of the bid for the 2014 games being submitted—and won—and his unflinching support for Glasgow ever since. I wish Mike and his family all the very best in the years ahead.

We know from the evaluations that have been done that the venues are up and running, and many of us have been able to see for ourselves just how good they are. Others are also able to report from personal experience that the process of recruiting volunteers has been professional, not to say robust. Of course, great strides are being made behind the scenes in the organisation of the events. Around the city of Glasgow and in other areas that will host events, hotels and businesses are gearing up for the influx of visitors that we can expect in a few short months. Our athletes, with support and assistance from their sports' governing bodies, sportscotland and the Institute of Sport, are preparing to perform and compete in front of a home crowd.

As we heard from the minister, almost all tickets have now been sold and those that are still available will go to community groups and schools to ensure that our young people and those with a direct interest have an opportunity to see a world-

class sporting event live. The 5,000 tickets from the Scottish Government for those involved in delivering the legacy are very welcome, as are the 6,000 from Glasgow City Council. We know that every ticket will also act as the spectator's travel ticket for access to the venues. That is an important and worthwhile facility that has been provided in perhaps only two previous Commonwealth games. It is certainly a recent and good innovation that we do not hear so much about because it is perhaps not as exciting as some other aspects of the games that we discuss from time to time, so it might be quite helpful if the minister could tell us in her closing speech a bit more about the transport arrangements for the games.

It occurs to me that park-and-ride facilities will be required, and I know that there have been some discussions about that. If I may, I will make a personal point in that regard, because there are a number of unused brownfield sites in my constituency that might meet the requirements for park and ride. I am sure that I will not be alone in making such a point. I am also sure that any disruption to local residents during the games might be remedied by improving the landscaping or lighting of such areas.

I know, too, that the subway network in Glasgow will be a very important element of the transport plan. I wonder what negotiations have been held with Strathclyde partnership for transport about how it will be reimbursed for the additional costs that it will incur and how the transport plan for the games will fit with the city's other transport requirements over the period of the games.

We have heard today about the excellent support for and response to the baton relay. It has been fascinating to watch the baton's progress on television. It has also been fascinating to see the schools in my home city and constituency involved in their own little baton competitions, the participants' enthusiasm and the imagination that they are bringing to how they prepare for the games that they have heard so much about. Of course, that means that expectations are high, and so they should be, because a great deal of public money has gone into making these Commonwealth games the best yet. We all want to ensure that that is money well spent.

There has to be a commercial aspect to the games—public money alone will not fill all the funding gaps that there might be—and sponsorship is important in that regard. Although many of the sponsors are welcome, I mention one sector that gives me cause for pause. Given the depth of cross-party feeling in the chamber on the issue of payday lending, I sincerely hope that no such company will be able to take advantage of

any opportunities for sponsorship that the games might offer.

John Mason: I agree with the member about payday lenders. However, does she agree that it is quite difficult to say what is a good company and what is a bad company? Atos has been mentioned before. Although it does some things that we disagree with, bits of what it does are probably quite good. The same could probably be said about most of the sponsors.

Patricia Ferguson: I agree with Mr Mason entirely, which is why I couched that part of my speech in the language that I did. It is a hard judgment call to make, but I think that payday lending is a little bit different, as there is only one thing that those companies do. We all know what it is and I think that we all abhor that practice. There is no dubiety. I do not think that they are fit to be involved in the games.

From the earliest discussions about the possibility of a bid to host the games being made, it was clear that the legacy that could be delivered by a successful games was as important, if not more so, than the games themselves. As the minister knows, it was expected that the games could deliver on our ambitions for the economy, help to raise Scotland's profile in the world, encourage tourism and promote Scotland as a destination. The legacy would also deliver in terms of social cohesion, by bringing all Scots together with something to celebrate. Of course, perhaps the most significant part of the legacy was that we wanted to make more people in Scotland more active, more often. At the time, we were told that big sporting events did not produce that kind of legacy, that it had not been done before and that Scotland could not do it either. That is why the legacy became as important a part of the planning as the games, and why successive Governments have, quite rightly, been committed to making the idea of a lasting legacy a reality.

Some big sporting events have delivered on some of those targets. For example, Barcelona was put firmly on the map by the 1992 Olympic games and its new infrastructure, which included the creation of 2 miles of beachfront where derelict industrial buildings once stood. However, it is argued that no host city had been able to demonstrate an actual increase in physical fitness and involvement in sport as a result of hosting a large-scale games. That is where our biggest challenge lies. The big question in today's debate must be whether we will secure that legacy and whether more Scots will be more active, more often as result of the Commonwealth games.

We know that good work is going on. The minister outlined some of it and it was good to hear about that. I add to that list the interesting work that Scotland's colleges and universities

have done in organising their game changer awards—I understand that the closing date for nominations is tomorrow—and the efforts of companies such as Sainsbury's, which is committed to encouraging 20 million children to become more active by 2020 through its active kids programme, which has dovetailed with the Commonwealth games legacy. Closer to home, the *Evening Times* active 2014 challenge is an excellent contribution to that effort. The partnership working between the newspaper and Glasgow Life and the health board will, I am sure, be a major contribution to achieving a legacy in Glasgow. But—there is a but—the legacy must be for the entire country.

The data supplied by the most recent social attitudes survey is revealing, if not worrying. It tells us that there has been no progress in getting children active; that the proportion of children meeting the physical activity guidelines has not changed significantly since 2008; and that children's participation in sport, which increased between 1998 and 2009 from 69 to 73 per cent, had declined to 66 per cent by 2012. We also find that those with a disability or long-term illness are less likely to participate and that the greater the level of deprivation of the area in which someone lives, the less likely they are to be involved in sport or physical activity. I know that the Scottish Government will share my concern about those figures and that efforts are afoot to address them, but I hope that in closing the minister will talk a little more about the additional work that the Government might do to address that particular problem.

I have been interested in the legacy leaders network, which is an important aspect of the work that is being done. However, a recent freedom of information request that was submitted by my colleague Siobhan McMahon resulted in some interesting if worrying reading. Siobhan McMahon asked all Scotland's local authorities whether they had employed someone as a Commonwealth games legacy officer and 16 of the 19 local authorities that replied did not have anyone in that role. Of those authorities that did, one indicated that it had 0.4 per cent of a full-time post devoted to the task. I argue that, although the appointment of a dedicated legacy officer may not be the only measure of an authority's activity, it is surely quite worrying that there may not be such a clear focus as we would like in some areas.

Shona Robison: I can reassure the member on that point. I attended a meeting of the legacy leads that was organised by COSLA and there were over 100 people in the room. Although they might not have been appointed as legacy officers, they were taking their legacy lead responsibilities very seriously. Each local authority is coming up with some impressive legacy work, which I am happy

to share with the Parliament if that would be helpful.

Patricia Ferguson: That would be helpful. I am grateful to the minister for that offer. Although I would expect a local authority to be precise in answering an FOI request, I would also expect that, if it were doing other things that explained its stark response, it would take the trouble to explain that.

I cannot cover all the issues that I want to raise in the time that has been allotted to me, so I will address some of them in my closing speech. In bringing my opening speech to a close, I say that I share the minister's pride in much of what has been done. We should all share that pride. As the clock ticks down and the games come closer, we will all have great reason to celebrate and I very much look forward to the games' arrival. It has been a long time in coming, but I think that it will be worth it.

I move amendment S4M-08879.2, to insert at end:

“; believes in the ability of sport to inspire social change and improvements to the nation's health; calls on the Scottish Government to make further efforts to improve participation in physical activity and sport for all, and believes that, with the right approach, the Commonwealth Games is a chance to encourage all Scots to become more active more often”.

14:57

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I thank the minister for an encouraging and comprehensive update on where we are. We are pleased to support the Scottish Government's motion and the Labour Party's amendment.

A number of members in the chamber were present at last week's meeting of the cross-party group on sport, which was ably chaired by Alison Johnstone. We heard some key speakers, including the minister, talk about legacy. It was an interesting meeting for all sorts of reasons—in fact, I think that there was a record turnout—but I shall focus on my own thoughts about what was said.

No one can doubt the extent of the challenge that we face in providing a meaningful and lasting legacy. I say that because I do not think that it is terribly easy to define the term, particularly in its qualitative sense. I was struck by an article in this month's GTC magazine written by David Grevemberg, in which the author talks about seeing it

“as defining and connecting and giving people a sense of identity. It is ... about ambition, peace, prosperity and democracy”.

In other words, it is about some important aspirations and values that are not easy to

measure. As Patricia Ferguson rightly said, it must include some aspects that can be quantitatively measured—for example, the increasing number, we hope, of people who participate in sport, the reduction in obesity totals, and how much additional money is raised. Those are all important aspects, but the legacy must be much more than that, and that is the tougher call. Indeed, I am not entirely sure that it is the politician's job to dictate what it should be, but it is our job, which we must do in line with the other stakeholders, such as sportscotland, Glasgow 2014 and local authorities, to deliver the circumstances that will help communities to develop the more qualitative aspects of that legacy across Scotland.

What do I mean by that? For one thing, it is about improving wellbeing just as much as it is about improving welfare—we had a very interesting debate in the context of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill about whether it is possible to legislate for wellbeing, given that it has no accepted meaning in law—and, at the same time, we need to allow communities a sense of purpose, so that people feel better about themselves and can develop team spirit and an understanding of the crucial role provided by volunteers.

Patricia Ferguson mentioned the Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland initiative, the game changer awards, which, I think, are funded by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. The awards provide new incentives for individuals and communities—in whatever way—to provide that added value in community life and, even if they cannot be measured by a politician, an economist or perhaps even the media, those incentives are important.

A legacy is therefore not just about improving the level of physical participation, physical education in schools, additional money or the bigger sports; rather, it must go deeper than that. The Scottish Government is absolutely right to identify the economic and social aspect of that in its motion and the Labour Party has raised the health aspect in its amendment, which is absolutely right and proper.

At the cross-party meeting, lots of interesting comments were made about what must still be done to achieve the legacy that we desire. I was struck by a number of things. First, sportscotland commented on the need for a more joined-up approach across the sector. It is clear that lots of good things are happening on the ground, but the fact that there is not always a co-ordinated approach can make life pretty tough in some areas. For example, there is a history of very poor data collection about what facilities exist, who runs which sports programme, who can access them and when and, in some local authorities, an

inability to provide local people with sufficient relevant information. That seems to be changing, thanks to an extensive audit that has been undertaken by Audit Scotland and sportscotland, but I was struck by the statistic provided at the meeting that although 50 per cent of senior schools have really good sports facilities, many remain underused.

Comment was made about the problem of access or, in many cases, about the high prices that are charged to allow certain groups to use the facilities. That seems to be a particular problem in some of the poorer areas, which are exactly the areas that we need to target when it comes to increasing participation. On the same basis, it has been pointed out that some of the most successful sports clubs are those that have managed to turn aspects of their sports into family affairs and, although that might need a slight refocusing of attitudes, it is clearly something that we need to think about. Invited speakers made several comments that community remains a slight gap when it comes to successful organisation and they urged politicians to consider that when deliberating on policy with local authorities.

I was also struck by a second comment on the need for a modern, coherent digital strategy when it comes to the promotion of sport. The BBC and STV came in for a bit of criticism for their coverage of sport. Mention was made of the very high dependence on football, the fact that only 5 per cent of coverage is devoted to women's sport, their failure to recognise that young people have turned away from both these channels in favour of other online programmes and the poor coverage of so-called minority sports, despite Scotland doing very well on the international stage in some of them. The minister was at the same meeting, so she may wish to reflect on the digital strategy for the future.

A key point is about schools and I will focus on that, not just because it is the theme of the Conservative amendment, but because nothing is more important when it comes to inspiring participation in sport than what happens at school. I was sad to hear the reflections at the meeting that made it abundantly clear that there is still a long way to go in some schools to ensure that all pupils have the right opportunities. I know that we have had a lengthy debate in the past about PE in schools, the two-hour commitment, the need for fully qualified PE teachers and how to ensure that more girls are enthusiastic about sport, but the issue is much more than that. Stewart Harris summed that up when he said that developing the right ethos in sport is so very much easier if it happens in school rather than in a club, after the young person has left school. He also drew our attention to team sport.

At the weekend, there was much discussion in *The Sunday Times* about the Office for Standards in Education south of the border and its alleged failing to support teaching methods that foster healthy competition among young pupils. I cannot comment on Ofsted's activities, but I know that similar criticisms have been levelled at too many schools and, in some cases, local authorities, which, for one reason or another, have chosen not to promote competitive sport. Indeed, in some cases, they have campaigned against it because it was thought to be somehow divisive.

Having spent 40 years of my life actively involved in playing sports at different levels and coaching many youngsters from a variety of backgrounds, I am appalled when anyone says that competitive sport should be banned. I cannot think of anything more contrary to the spirit of young people or real life or that does more harm to the self-discipline of young people. It will clearly do great harm to our school communities and, possibly, some of our international development squads. Competitive sport must return to all schools. It should not be compulsory, but the offer must be there for everyone and be enshrined in the legacy of the Commonwealth games.

The Conservative Party is happy to support the Government motion and the Labour amendment. I move amendment S4M-08879.1, to insert at end:

“, and notes the comment from sportscotland that to maximise the impact of the Games, both in 2014 and in the decades ahead, competitive sport should have an important place in all schools”.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

We have some time in hand, so I can generously give members up to seven minutes and still have a little bit of time for interventions at this stage.

15:06

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):

Like others who are in the chamber, I was in the Candleriggs when the announcement was made that we were getting the Commonwealth games. I think that John Mason and Sandra White joined me and I suspect that Patricia Ferguson and Hanzala Malik were both there as well.

It was an exciting time. We were enthusiastic, but I am sure that we were a wee bit nervous about how we were going to cope with it—the Commonwealth games does not have an unblemished track record, to use a pun. However, congratulations are due to the minister, the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, the Commonwealth games team and their partners because, to date, it looks like the games will be a resounding success. The news that the minister announced about thousands of legacy tickets

going to those who may well not have been able to attend events is welcome indeed.

I am in the privileged position of representing the constituency that will host the track and field events at Hampden and the biking events at Cathkin Braes. I am fortunate that the facilities in my constituency have benefited from upgrading. In the case of Cathkin Braes, a new facility was created that will be used long after the games go.

I suggest that, given the fact that the closing ceremony will also take place in the national stadium, Glasgow Cathcart is at the centre of the Commonwealth games, despite the ludicrous claims that we are about to hear from another MSP. I look forward to them over the next few months.

I suspect that the legacy of the games will be wider than we first envisaged and than that to which we were looking forward, because I have been fortunate to be involved in the conception of a couple of local organisations that have come into being now because of the Commonwealth games. They would have come into being anyway, but the Commonwealth games focused minds on ensuring that they were in place. Both organisations will benefit from the publicity that the games will give them and the focus that they will have. I suggest that that is part of an unplanned legacy.

Liz Smith might be delighted to know that one of those organisations is Scottish Women in Sport, which is the brainchild of Maureen McGonigle. I was fortunate to be part of the creation of Scottish Women in Sport along with the television presenter Alison Walker. We are now ably supported by a number of extremely high-profile and talented women from the sporting world and beyond. We were privileged to have Kathleen Grainger, Judy Murray and the inestimable Belle Robertson at the launch supporting us. The main aims of the organisation are to educate women about sport, encourage the participation of women in sport and celebrate women in sport. I hope that one of the lasting legacies of the Commonwealth games will be more and more people getting involved in sport, particularly women.

Southside routes came about from me asking a group of southside organisations that are involved in the tourism industry how best we could work together to redress what we consider to be the imbalance that exists between the south side, the city centre and the west end of Glasgow—I am not really making any friends; I have had a go at John Mason and I am just about to have a go at Sandra White—regarding the promotion of tourism facilities.

The organisation is in the process of being formally constituted, and we are working together to produce a leaflet for tourists with the working

title “50 Things to Do in the Southside.” The timing of the launch is primarily due to the approaching Commonwealth games and the document will be a lasting legacy of the games. The list of tourism facilities will include amenities that have been built for the games, such as the mountain bike tracks at Cathkin Braes.

As a local example, we have the Kings Park community festival, which has been put together by local volunteers led by the Rev Sandra Boyd and will celebrate the games and the positive impact that they will have on the Kings Park community. That can only have a long-term benefit or legacy for the area.

However, I think that the prime example of a local community legacy is the one that will be provided by celebration city, which will be based in Cathcart old parish church. Many members will be familiar with the good work that the Rev Neil Galbraith has done over many years, not just in the Cathcart area, but throughout the city, elsewhere in the country and beyond. He has put together an unbelievable programme of events. It is a case not just of hands across countries, but of hands across parties, because Tom Harris and I will jointly host a couple of the celebration city events. There are not many things of which it could be said that Tom Harris and I have been jointly involved in them but that just goes to show the beneficial effects of an event such as the Commonwealth games.

The legacy that we hope will be achieved from celebration city will be for veterans, who should feel as much a part of society as anyone else. There is a veterans centre in Cathcart and, just beside Cathcart old parish church, there is a Territorial Army centre, which, unfortunately, will be closed down at the end of the year. A close relationship exists with the veterans, and it is important that they feel part of the Commonwealth games and their legacy.

There will be a legacy from celebration city for better community relations, whether between young people and the police, between people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds, or between younger and older people. Celebration city will also have a positive legacy for disabled people and their carers, and a positive legacy through arts, music, history and literature. I could go on.

Among the events that will take place are the gathering of the Commonwealth parliamentary group, with entertainment being provided by MP4—members will all know someone in that band; Scottish National Party members all know Pete Wishart. In addition, there will be the southside special games and the Bravehearts musical, which is a great event that will be put on by children in a club that is based in Cathcart old

parish church who have special needs. It is an extremely special place that is very well attended, and I am really looking forward to that event. There will also be the Cathcart fair, the Cathcart festival of food and much, much more.

There will be a number of large multicultural celebrations of faith and an African village experience, where it will be possible for people to stay overnight and to live as people live in some African villages. As well as having a real Commonwealth flavour, that will provide a legacy in that, when people leave and the village closes down, school pupils, adults and all those who have experienced it will have an understanding of what other people have to put up with and how they have to live.

There will also be an impact on young people. I am delighted that the baton relay has been so popular. In my constituency, Dean Thornton, who is a pupil at Castlemilk high, was elected to be the baton carrier for his school. He must be a very proud man, and his family must be proud of him; I congratulate him.

It is clear that a number of community groups are working hard to prepare for the Commonwealth games. The Jeely Piece Club in Castlemilk is playing an extremely important role; there are far too many others to mention. I have a question for the minister. Is there some way in which we could give such groups some sort of recognition? Could the minister write them a letter? That could be issued through the local MSPs, if that would be the easiest way to do it. We could let the minister know about the relevant organisations, or we could distribute the letter to them. I am sure that many of those organisations would be delighted to get recognition from the Government and the Commonwealth games organisation for the good work that they are doing and the legacy that they will leave behind once the games have finished.

15:13

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): I am very much looking forward to the third Scottish Commonwealth games of my adult life. As the first two were in Edinburgh, I am very happy that, on this occasion, the games are going to Glasgow.

I do not intend to talk about arrangements for the games, as many members know far more about that than I do. Instead, I want to concentrate on the content of the Labour amendment and the legacy of improving

“participation in physical activity and sport for all”,

and the resulting

“improvements to the nation’s health”.

In preparing for the debate, I was very interested to read the Scottish Government research paper, “Legacy Lessons from Past Large-Scale Sporting Events”, which said:

“The evidence for increases in physical activity was very limited and often of low quality.”

In particular, it said that there was

“No automatic ‘trickle-down effect’.”

It went on to say:

“Rather than happening naturally, the evidence stresses that long-term legacy needs to be carefully planned and implemented.”

Credit should go to the Scottish Government for taking that message on board some time ago. The first games legacy for Scotland document was produced in 2009, with its four themes of being flourishing, active, connected and sustainable. Underlying each of those themes are five laudable principles, which include ensuring equality and encouraging community engagement. I will concentrate on the active element of the legacy. In relation to the sustainable element, I echo what Patricia Ferguson said about sponsorship from high-interest lenders. It would help if the minister in summing up ruled out such sponsorship.

In preparation for the debate, I looked at the legacy website—I am ashamed to say that that was the first time that I have done so. I was taken by the amount of detail on it and by the amount of activity that is and has been going on throughout Scotland. Other members probably know more about that than I do.

For example, sportscotland has been involved in many sport hubs being established throughout Scotland, and it has the £10 million active places fund. I was reminded not just by the website but by the Big Lottery Fund stand outside the chamber of the BIG 2014 communities programme, which has given hundreds of grants to sports clubs and to voluntary and community organisations. A great deal of activity is going on; much of it is funded by the Scottish Government and much is funded by the lottery.

I cannot give such a glowing report of Edinburgh, because I must highlight issues in my area. To be fair, the refurbishment of the Commonwealth pool has proceeded apace. The pool is a legacy of the 1970 games, and I will remember swimming in it for the first time in 1970. We should also acknowledge the sport hubs in Edinburgh.

However, another legacy from previous Commonwealth games in Edinburgh is Meadowbank sports centre. It would be remiss of me not to flag up to the minister the problem that Edinburgh’s major sporting venue, which was used in previous Commonwealth games, is in dire

need of rebuilding. The City of Edinburgh Council is preparing proposals for that, but there are two funding problems. The short-term problem is that £300,000 is needed for a feasibility study and the longer-term problem is the capital cost of a new build, which will run into millions of pounds. Some of that might come from elsewhere, but I hope that, in the not-too-distant future, the Scottish Government might make a significant contribution to that.

I raised the general issue of participation in sport for all. The Scottish Government has flagged up the health dimension of that, particularly through Sir Harry Burns, whom we will all miss as chief medical officer when he goes. From hearing him speak on several occasions, I think that the fact that physical activity is important for health has almost become the single most important health improvement message. I have no doubt that that is why increasing physical activity is one of the Scottish Government indicators in the Scotland performs framework.

Physical activity is important for people of all ages. The older people are, the less likely they are to be active, in general. Perhaps the most important health advice that can be given to older people, such as me, is to take more exercise. That is important for young people and people of all ages, so it is a concern that levels of participation in sport and exercise are not improving. Patricia Ferguson gave the figures, which seem to have gone down over the past three or four years. That was pointed out a few years ago in an Audit Scotland report, which said that figures for adult participation were declining, while elite athlete performance was satisfactory. We want to encourage good elite athletic performance, but the really important issue for the legacy is taking action to improve activity levels and sport participation rates among all sections of the population.

As Patricia Ferguson said, the physical activity targets are being met least in deprived areas. There could well be a financial dimension to participation in sport. A recent Health and Sport Committee meeting included a round-table discussion about community sport. I was not on the committee when it did its original study, so perhaps its convener, Duncan McNeil, will mention that in his speech. Quite a lot of interesting points were made in that discussion, on 14 January, some of which I will refer to in my last minute.

I was particularly struck by what was said by Charlie Raeburn, who is a sports consultant and can often be quite critical of what we as politicians are doing, but is always worth listening to. He emphasised issues such as the lack of affordable access and the importance of improving the quality of coaching, and he raised the possibility

that the self-management of sports facilities by local communities could be helpful. Christine Scullion of the Robertson Trust made that point, too, and said that community-owned facilities would help to bring down costs.

The importance of more investment in training and volunteers was also highlighted in that round-table discussion. Kim Atkinson of the Scottish Sports Association, for example, made that point and emphasised the importance of employer-supported volunteering.

There are many suggestions and ideas out there to deal with the problem. We have to be honest. We are not really succeeding in improving and increasing the scope of participation in physical activity and sport, and we need to address our attention to that this year. For me, that will be the key part of the legacy. However, that does not, of course, take away from all the great work that has been done in preparation for the games.

15:21

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):

We can all be enthusiastic about the Commonwealth games coming to Scotland, but I hope that I can be allowed to be a little bit extra enthusiastic, because a number of the venues are in the east end of Glasgow.

A lot of the east end has been completely transformed, to the extent that people who have not been there recently would hardly recognise it all. That is especially true of the new road that was built, which runs from the north to the south, from Parkhead Forge down towards Polmadie and the motorway. The road was originally called the east end regeneration route; it is now called Clyde Gateway after the urban regeneration company that has been involved in regenerating the area.

In the Glasgow Shettleston constituency specifically, we have Celtic Park, where the opening ceremony will be, the games village, the Emirates arena, the Tollcross pool and Glasgow green hockey. I remind the member for Glasgow Cathcart, Mr Dornan, that my stadium is bigger than his.

It is especially good that Scottish Hockey is now based at the new facility on Glasgow green. I think that there were some doubts about that earlier on, but it is good that progress has been made. The staff whom I met there are extremely enthusiastic. One of the hopes has to be that hockey can be rolled out to youngsters from a wider range of backgrounds. During my lifetime, rugby has changed from being a largely regional sport in the Borders and the preserve of private schools to a sport that has huge appeal right across the board. I hope that that can happen to hockey, too. The

superb new facilities should certainly facilitate that, but we have to accept that that will not happen overnight and that it will take some time.

I was encouraged to hear from Scottish Hockey that some of its young players who are coming through are being allocated tickets so that they can go and watch the hockey specifically. That has to be an encouragement to them.

We still face challenges across the east end of Glasgow, of course. For example, there is vacant and derelict land there that we still want to be used. However, the 32 per cent reduction in such land over the past few years is hugely encouraging.

I was struck by the figures that showed what people thought when they were asked whether they thought that their area had got better in the past three years. Nationally, 14 per cent thought that their area had got better; in the east end of Glasgow, the figure was 44 per cent.

A piece of good news for me was that, earlier this month, I was accepted as a volunteer. I understand that I can now consider myself a Clyde-sider, which is the official term. That fits well with my football allegiances. Whether that is good news for the spectators whom I might direct around Glasgow remains to be seen, of course. The interview and selection process was very impressive. I do not think that I have ever been interviewed for a job or other role by somebody so much younger than me. That could be a sign that I am getting older. The questions included one on whether I could work as part of a team. I was tempted to say that perhaps they should speak to our whips—but then I thought that perhaps I should not suggest that. However, I got through, and I am looking forward to the first training session, which is on 8 March.

One of the most encouraging pieces of news in the run-up to July has been how well the tickets have sold. At the beginning, some of us wondered whether there would be an appetite for some of the minority sports, so I am both surprised and delighted at the level of sales. Of course, that has also brought expressions of disappointment from those who did not get the tickets that they had hoped for, but the process seems to have been handled much more fairly than the process for the London Olympics. I just hope that youngsters who are interested in particular sports will be able to get tickets for them.

With any such event, some disruption is inevitable. Local roads will be closed and venues will be unavailable to the public for a spell, but we just have to accept that and look at the longer term. People in my constituency will in particular face disruption, but the longer-term gains are

world-class facilities that are available to the public and more world-class events coming to Scotland.

When I mentioned local benefits, I concentrated on sports events and the new transport infrastructure, but I would also like to mention what I see as one of the best aspects of the games' legacy for local people: the games village, which will become housing. As the minister mentioned, there will be about 700 houses, several hundred of which will be for social rent, plus a care home for 120 people. The homes are of an exceptionally high standard that is beyond what is normally available on the open market. Unsurprisingly, constituents have asked me whether they can get a house in the area, and that is probably without many people realising just how high the standard is. The district heating system and high insulation standards should mean that heating costs are much lower than normal. Clearly, supply will not meet demand, although that is perhaps a good problem to have.

One knock-on challenge of the new housing is whether the local primary schools will be able to cope with the number of young children who come to live in the area. I hope that Glasgow City Council is considering that. If the council ends up having to build a new school, that is obviously a good problem to have.

While I am on the subject of accommodation, I should perhaps mention More than Gold 2014, an organisation that has been put together by the churches and which seeks to make accommodation available for athletes' families, especially those who come from less well-off countries and who might struggle to get hotel accommodation in the Glasgow area. They can perhaps be put up by people opening up their homes, which is to be welcomed.

As we look forward with less than six months to the games, we know that there is a lot of hard work to be done, but we can be positive about it and about what has been achieved so far.

15:27

Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab): When I was a city councillor in Glasgow, I was honoured to be given the opportunity to be part of the bid team for the Commonwealth games. The team ran a fantastic campaign that ended with our winning by a large margin the opportunity to host the Commonwealth games in Glasgow. James Dornan suggested that I was perhaps in the Trongate to hear the decision, but I have to disappoint him on that, because I was actually in Sri Lanka fighting for our bid with the First Minister, the leader of the council and other colleagues.

I cannot express the feeling that I had when I met people from the Commonwealth who spoke highly of Scotland and the United Kingdom and who talked about how, historically, we had cared about people around the world. Two comments will never leave me. One of them was when a member of the Commonwealth games team said, "We don't know Nigeria, but we know the UK because, in times of trouble, you have always been there for us." That made me really proud of being British. The other comment was, "Nigeria might have the money, but it does not have the will of the people behind the bid." I took that comment to heart, too.

When the announcement was made and the BBC was covering the events, I remember a news item from Nigeria from which I could see that the local community did not really know anything about the games. That aspiration was missing, which is perhaps one reason why Nigeria was unsuccessful.

It is hard to believe that seven years have passed since that day in Sri Lanka and that we are only a few months away from the opening ceremony, which will showcase the best of Scotland and what it has to offer, and—most important—Scotland's people and the friendly atmosphere that I am sure everyone will enjoy.

We must congratulate Glasgow City Council, which has risen to the challenge and used the opportunity of the games to create substantial jobs through the Glasgow guarantee, new affordable housing and world-class sports facilities. That will be the legacy of the games. Glasgow has done well to achieve that, despite the setback of the Government taking £150 million from the city.

We must not be complacent. The legacy is fantastic and offers many possibilities for young people in Glasgow. We must build on it and ensure that everyone in Glasgow can participate fully. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many people.

The games will be hosted in other parts of Scotland. We should be proud to have the opportunity to share our heritage and culture with the 6,500 athletes, from 71 countries, who are expected to arrive in Glasgow this summer. I know that they will get a friendly welcome from Glaswegians, in particular.

Glasgow is increasingly multicultural. I am very proud of that and I am keen that our visitors take that on board.

James Dornan: On the different ethnicities among people in Glasgow and the people who will come to the city, does Mr Malik share my delight at hearing today that Anne McLaughlin, our former colleague, and Graham Campbell have secured funding for the emancipation jam, which will mark

the importance of emancipation day at four venues in Glasgow's merchant city and consider Scotland's links to the slave trade and to emancipation and subsequent good work?

Hanzala Malik: The member offers a glimpse of what we hope to achieve. What is important is that, whatever people's culture, faith and background, they will come to a friendly host city, which is proud of its history and its engagement and connections with people around the world. I believe in my heart that a main reason why we were successful is the friendship that we share with other people. What is important is the message that people take away. We say, "Haste ye back", and I hope that every participant comes back with their family.

The games are for Glasgow, in particular, but I am a little fearful that they might be hijacked by others. There is a huge temptation for other cities, and for people who have perhaps not been fully involved, to try to hijack the games. We need to recognise that, in the main, it is Glasgow that has done all the running for the games.

Shona Robison: I would certainly pay tribute to the role that has been played by Glasgow City Council—it has been an important partnership—but surely Hanzala Malik will recognise that the Scottish Government's contribution to the public cost of the games is 80 per cent, amounting to £381.6 million. Surely we can all agree that, yes, they are Glasgow's games, but they are also Scotland's games. We need to agree on that and then just get on to celebrate and enjoy the games.

Hanzala Malik: Although I have no difficulty with accepting the fact that the Government is putting in 80 per cent of the cost, and I have no problem with other parts of Scotland celebrating the games, I will have a problem when other people take the credit for it. When a city has made the running and taken up the challenge, that needs to be recognised. That is important. I do not agree with the minister or agree that other people are making a contribution at this late stage by coming in with the resources that belong to Scotland and that that means that they can take the credit for it.

Shona Robison: They share the credit.

Hanzala Malik: Yes—but I do not want to be interrupted in that way.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Indeed. Members should speak through the chair, please.

Hanzala Malik: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

All I really want to say is that, when all is said and done, Glasgow and the people of Glasgow have made a huge sacrifice. They have been planning and running throughout the bid system. They have made huge sacrifices, and I do not

want someone to steal the lollipop from them at the end.

15:36

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): The one person who got the whole tone of their contribution completely wrong is Hanzala Malik. I remind him about the first part of his speech when he talked about missing money. If the Westminster Government had given back money that was used for the Olympics, we would have had more money. Hanzala Malik should know what he is talking about before he starts casting aspersions.

I am from Glasgow and I represent Kelvin, which is one of the biggest constituencies that is hosting the games. I am happy and enthusiastic about that, as I am for the rest of the people of Scotland and those who will come here from the Commonwealth. As a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association executive, I thank my colleagues and the clerks on the executive committee for the hard work that they have been doing with the Commonwealth games committee to push the games forward with a positive message. That is all I have to say on that particular point.

I cannot emphasise enough how important the games are to Scotland and to Glasgow, where a number of sporting and cultural events will take place. The bowling competition will take place in Kelvingrove, in my constituency. James Dornan, Patricia Ferguson, Bill Kidd and I had great pleasure in playing a friendly game on the new bowling green against MPs. I will not say what the score was, but we were cheated and the MSPs lost. It was a wonderful day: the weather was good and it was fantastic to be working together to promote the Commonwealth games.

The bowling green is a legacy for the people of Glasgow and the people of Scotland. I heard John Mason saying that his football stadium is bigger than James Dornan's football stadium, so I would just like to tell them that Kelvin constituency is bigger than both football stadiums, and many of the cultural and other events that are taking place just now and will take place throughout the games are taking place in my constituency.

For example, the Hydro in the precincts of the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre will host gymnastics, boxing, judo, netball, wrestling, weightlifting and powerlifting. It has fantastic facilities and they will be the legacy for all to enjoy after the games have finished.

Patricia Ferguson talked about the games achieving a lasting legacy for Glasgow and for the whole of Scotland, particularly for young people and their participation in more physical activity. Partnership working is key to that and we must

consider it, whether it be with the Scottish Government, local authorities or the excellent campaign that the *Evening Times* is conducting at the moment. Such work must continue after the games to ensure that the games have a lasting legacy.

Liz Smith mentioned access to schools facilities and the prohibitive costs of that. That has always been a bugbear of mine and I have raised the issue on many occasions. There can be a school—a public building—in the middle of a community but the people of the community cannot use it because it is not open or because the costs are too prohibitive.

I know that I have raised that issue with the minister and with previous Government ministers. Can we please have a word with local authorities in round-table discussions or whatever? If there is a community facility—in some cases these are swimming pools—why can the community not use it to access physical activity? Perhaps the minister could have a round-table discussion or perhaps there could be partnership working to ensure that such facilities are able to be used.

We have mentioned sporting activities and physical activities. Malcolm Chisholm is not here at the moment; maybe he went for a walk for some physical activity. I would probably benefit from that also, as would many people. I look forward to accessing many of the excellent facilities.

Loads of events are taking place before, during and after the games. We have to remember the great economic benefits that they will bring, not just to Glasgow—within and outwith my constituency—but to the whole of Scotland. They will bring cultural benefits, too. I say to Hanzala Malik once again that we welcome everyone. Being a member of the CPA executive, I know exactly how many people are coming from throughout the Commonwealth. We are going to be there to greet them. We will also have something here in the Parliament to greet them. We are reaching out internationally as well as nationally, which has to be something to look forward to.

I will mention some of the cultural benefits that are coming forward. The Glasgow mela is Scotland's greatest multicultural festival. We had more than 35,000 people attend the mela in Kelvingrove park last year. One of the lasting benefits and legacies of that was the £2 million revamp of the Kelvingrove bandstand from the 2014 cultural fund. That bandstand will be opened and it will host other events. It will get its first airing during the Glasgow mela. That is a fantastic contribution to multiculturalism in Scotland. We have to remember that aspect as well.

Hanzala Malik: You mentioned the Glasgow mela. Did you know that the Scottish Government does not provide funds for the Glasgow mela?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Members should please address their remarks through the chair.

Sandra White: I can see that we will not have any positive contributions from Mr Malik—I wonder why. I did mention the £2 million for the Kelvingrove bandstand, which was from the 2014 cultural fund. Lots of money is given from other organisations as well.

I turn to the music aspect. The big big sing is fantastic. It is a nationwide celebration of singing produced by Glasgow UNESCO City of Music, inspiring thousands of people, not just in Glasgow but throughout the country to sing and learn to sing during the games. That is a fantastic opportunity to get involved.

We have comedy. Thousands of people will come to the stand-up comedy in the Glasgow international comedy festival. We have the Aye Write book festival, which is a fantastic thing attended by lots of people. We also have a Wee Write festival for younger people to take part in. Encouraging our younger people to take part in not just sporting activities but cultural activities will be a lasting legacy.

Festival 2014 will transform the merchant city and other areas, such as Kelvingrove and the areas around Glasgow green, part of which is in John Mason's ward. Those areas will have zones with live music and other forms of activity taking place.

The Commonwealth games are a fantastic opportunity to welcome people into the city. Culturally and economically, the Commonwealth games will be a fantastic opportunity to showcase the people of Glasgow and its warmth and vibrancy and the rest of the country as well.

15:44

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I agree with Liz Smith's comments regarding competitive sport. In that vein, I suggest to Mr Mason that my swimming pool is bigger than his. I say to Mr Malik that Edinburgh will give those visiting the Commonwealth games a welcome every bit as warm as Glasgow.

A review published in 2010 by *The BMJ* of the health and socioeconomic impacts of major multisport events between 1978 and 2008 found insufficient evidence

"to confirm or refute expectations about the health or socioeconomic benefits"

for the host populations. The review does not suggest that there are no benefits, only that the outcomes are not well researched and that, as other colleagues have highlighted, the evidence on outcomes consists of a relatively small number of poor-quality studies.

The review states that benefits from future events such as the London Olympics and Paralympics or the 2014 Commonwealth games in Glasgow cannot be expected to occur automatically. I agree—and I am absolutely certain that that point has been recognised and that there is a genuine desire on behalf of the Government, the games organisers, Glasgow City Council, other local authorities and the governing bodies of all sports involved in these games, and even those that do not feature specifically in them, to ensure that they provide a positive and long-lasting legacy.

The dictionary defines legacy as "something handed down or received from an ancestor or predecessor", and it is important that the games pass on the legacy that we would wish them to pass on. Major sporting events have the potential to generate a wide range of benefits for the population of the host city or nation, including transport improvements; housing provision, as demonstrated by the games village; environmental improvements; and associated increases in employment. The fact that there are already numerous legacy publications, a legacy website and, indeed, legacy badges so far in advance of the opening of these global games demonstrates an understanding of the need for the games to deliver benefits beyond that of the sheer joy of being involved as a participant, spectator, official or volunteer.

I feel certain that these games will focus on legacy in the way that London 2012 did. That will be important; after all, investment in the games has the potential to improve health at a time when Scotland itself faces significant health challenges. Diabetes and obesity are stretching an increasingly tight health budget; health inequality continues to plague us; and the difference in people's life expectancy depending on their postcode is staggering in this small country and must be addressed. In fact, that is recognised in my own party's proposal for a healthy challenge fund.

There are many reasons why people do not get involved in sport. They might think that it is not for them or that it is too expensive, or they might have been scunnered at school by one too many freezing winter afternoons on an exposed blaes hockey pitch without the luxury of today's base layers. However, a positive legacy will involve encouraging Scots to give sport a second chance.

The fact that access to sport and physical activity is recognised in many international conventions as a fundamental human right tells us that it is important. Sport is well recognised as a low-cost and high-impact tool for development and a powerful agent for bringing about social change. It is a culturally accepted activity that brings people together and can unite families, communities and nations. For example, the success of the homeless world cup in increasing awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness while increasing the self-respect, life skills and dignity of those involved is well evidenced and documented.

Sport delivers many non-sporting outcomes. It could and should be more widely used as a development programme both here at home and overseas, as it can be tailored to the context in which it sits. The Spartans Football Club in my region is an example of sport helping to transform a neighbourhood. The staff understand the community they work in and the challenges the young people face. Spartans is not only about football; it is about so much more, and it stands as an example of sport being accessible and open to all, welcoming to the community and developing people at grassroots level as well as real talent.

Sport keeps us occupied. It provides an opportunity to socialise and make friends; it teaches discipline; it can increase fitness and strength, attributes that help to keep us out of the general practitioner's waiting room; and it helps us to enjoy a healthy, independent life. It can also encourage young and old to travel and broaden their horizons, and it can provide a means—or, indeed, the need—to do so for young people who might never have gone beyond their town boundary. Sport clearly demonstrates the connection between effort and outcome. What better legacy can there be?

I have previously raised the issue of sponsorship of the games, and I support Citizens Advice Scotland in its call to keep the games free from payday lending sponsorship.

Patricia Ferguson: I hope that I am not pre-empting the minister, but in the course of the debate I have found out that in an answer to a parliamentary question lodged by my colleague Kezia Dugdale the minister has indicated that the Scottish Government would not support any proposal for a payday loan company to become a games sponsor and that the games organisers have made it clear that there is no sponsorship category for payday loan companies and no intention to seek sponsorship from such companies. I think that we would all welcome that answer.

Alison Johnstone: I certainly welcome that—I am very pleased to hear it.

Although those promoting the games market a wide variety of products, it is clearly more appropriate to advertise the healthiest and most ethical products on the international stage that the games will provide. A commitment to locally produced, healthy food is also an important part of a positive legacy.

We have an opportunity to showcase the tolerance and respect that Scotland has for all peoples and our commitment to human rights. These games can be a beacon for such rights. I welcome the fact that the minister's remit includes both sport and equality, and I look forward to hearing about initiatives to highlight and promote equality during the games. I am aware that the minister has discussed pride house initiatives with my colleague, Patrick Harvie, and I would be grateful if the minister could advise us on progress on those initiatives in her closing speech.

The Government has shown its commitment by investing in community sport hubs and school facilities. The proposed community empowerment and renewal bill will bring another opportunity to look at facilities anew, as assets for communities. It is no secret that the Greens would like to see that ambition extended to enable local fans and supporters to secure ownership of their clubs.

As a practising athletics coach, I am in no doubt at all that young people want to compete; those who do not can set themselves personal targets—they can achieve so much. Again, I support Liz Smith's earlier comments in that regard.

Elite athletes do not simply appear. They are nurtured, by and large, by volunteer coaches on windswept tracks and pitches across the country, in church halls and in school halls. It is important that we do all that we can to ensure that those facilities are maintained and that we explore the best models to make that possible, involving and enabling those who use the facilities to contribute to solutions.

The provision of facilities from grassroots to elite level is essential to a meaningful legacy. It is vital to provide support for governing bodies as they seek to ensure that they have coaches in place to welcome new entrants to our sports clubs. I agree with Malcolm Chisholm's comments regarding Meadowbank sports centre. Whenever new facilities are developed, let us make sure that we have the maintenance budgets in place.

If we achieve all the goals—and it is clear that there is much support to do so—Scotland's 2014 games will be in a position to provide clear, robust evidence that a major multisport event can and should provide a wide range of socioeconomic benefits to the host city, the nation and beyond. I am confident that the 2014 Commonwealth games

in Glasgow will leave a legacy that we can all be proud of.

15:52

Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP): My colleague John Mason spoke earlier about minority sports and the legacy from the Commonwealth games for those sports. At the outset of my speech, I want to congratulate a minority sport that is not participating in the Commonwealth games—cricket. This morning, the Scottish cricket team qualified for the 2015 world cup. It is only the third time in the team's history that it has done so, so I congratulate Cricket Scotland for a tremendous achievement.

The Commonwealth games has already brought, and will continue to bring, major investment into the city of Glasgow; it will also provide a legacy further afield—it will touch all parts of Scotland. I will highlight a couple of areas regarding legacy 2014 and the work that is being done to achieve a long-lasting legacy that will touch many aspects of life in Scotland.

The first issue that needs to be cleared up is what is meant by “legacy”. Legacy 2014 is about using the unique opportunity of the Commonwealth games in Glasgow to deliver lasting change across the whole of Scotland, both in the run-up to the games and in the years beyond. The legacy ranges from business and economic opportunities to sporting and cultural opportunities. I hope to highlight just a few examples of how the legacy can help to benefit not just the people of Glasgow, but the whole of Scotland.

On the business and economic side, we have heard from other members about the investment in new facilities. Obviously, there is the potential business legacy of boosting the Scottish economy by building and maintaining the facilities. There is also the opportunity to promote a skilled Scottish workforce and to enhance their reputation both at home and abroad.

The games will also raise the profile of Scotland as a place to do business, and as a welcoming host for many events—cultural events or sporting events such as the Ryder cup. It will help to promote Scotland as a distinctive brand, and it will showcase goods and services, develop relations with international markets and improve Scotland's reputation as a good place in which to do business.

I turn to sport. A range of programmes are either in place or being developed to build a lasting legacy from the Commonwealth games. They include programmes to encourage more people to get active and improve their health, and programmes to create plans to promote sport and

exercise. There is a 10-year plan to adapt for Scotland key elements of the Toronto charter for physical activity—which makes the case for increased action on tackling physical inactivity—that links the charter directly to the Scottish Government's legacy ambitions for the games. In addition, the Scottish Government and its partners continue to spread the word about the importance of physical activity by informing people through a range of websites about how and where they can get involved.

Another legacy element of the games is provision of funding and support to local authorities and schools to help them to deliver physical education, physical activity and sport in the curriculum and in the wider community. That will help children and young people to develop the skills and confidence that they require to take part and to become more active.

Community sports hubs have been developed as homes for local clubs and sports organisations; they are based in local facilities including sports centres, community centres and schools. Sportscotland is working with all 32 local authorities across the country to ensure that at least 150 sports hubs are in place by 2016. By working together, those clubs can benefit each other via shared facilities and funding applications, thereby creating a better outcome than they would normally achieve by themselves.

Looking to the future, there is the organised workforce programme, which involves investment from sportscotland in sport governing bodies and affiliated clubs to support them as they develop, and to sustain a strong infrastructure. That work includes increasing the number and quality of sport coaches and volunteers, and it will involve additional training.

There are wider cultural aspects to the legacy programme, including the Glasgow 2014 cultural programme, which is a nationwide celebration that will play a central role in how Scotland hosts and welcomes the games. Culture 2014 is the Scotland-wide cultural countdown to the games and what comes afterwards, and festival 2014 will transform the host city from 19 July to 3 August 2014.

The minister mentioned the Queen's baton relay, and other members have mentioned the opening and closing ceremonies of the games. Those events will be used as innovative platforms for promoting and celebrating Scotland's culture, not only in Scotland, but in the Commonwealth and even more widely.

There are other initiatives to widen the cultural aspect. One example is a celebration of dance across Scotland, which involves key dance organisations and brings together professional and

amateur dancers of all ages to dance in public spaces in our towns, villages and cities, thereby ensuring that the games legacy widens its appeal.

We should also welcome the celebrate venture, which is a joint venture that involves the Big Lottery Fund, Creative Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund and sportscotland. It is a £4 million fund that will provide opportunities for community groups across the country to mark the arrival of the games by holding an array of community-focused events—including events that have a cultural focus—to celebrate the people, places and culture of the Commonwealth. The celebrate venture offers grants of up to £10,000 to sports, arts, community and heritage organisations throughout Scotland.

In music, the big big sing—which we heard about earlier—is a developing nation-wide celebration of singing that is being produced by the Glasgow UNESCO city of music initiative. It will inspire thousands of people to sign up and get singing in the lead-up to and during the games. The big big sing will provide a wide range of opportunities for participation.

In addition, there is the 2014 new music biennial, which will involve the performance of 20 brand new commissions by some of the UK's most exciting composers being performed across the UK. It will culminate with two special weekend events at London's Southbank centre and in Glasgow to coincide with the Commonwealth games, and it is also part of the culture 2014 and festival 2014 programmes.

There is no greater legacy than connecting with children. I tend not to talk about my family when I am speaking in the chamber or outside it, but my eldest daughter came home from primary school one Friday a few months ago and told me about Clyde, which her class was discussing that week, and the "Clyde's Story" video that can be seen online. I thought, "She's six and she's getting involved." She is being encouraged to learn a bit more about Scotland and the games. I thought that it was tremendous that my six-year-old came in and started telling me things. That was not the first time it has happened and I am sure that it will not be the last. However, I thought that what her primary school was doing was excellent, and it highlights where primary schools have such a tremendous opportunity, and that they are delivering on it.

I suggest that another key part of the legacy is the sportspeople in our communities. I know somebody who unfortunately missed out on the Delhi games due to having sustained an injury prior to them. It is Jane Armour from Inverclyde, who had been picked for the Scotland weightlifting team. The team for the Glasgow games has not been announced yet, but I wish Jane and the

others who want to participate every success and I hope that she manages to compete in this year's Commonwealth games.

16:00

John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw (Lab)): The Commonwealth games will begin with an event in my Motherwell and Wishaw constituency on 24 July. Before Glasgow takes over the baton, Strathclyde park will get its place in the spotlight as millions watch the triathlon, which is surely one of the most demanding events as it involves a combination of three very different and difficult sports. It starts with a 1.5km swim, followed by a 40km cycle race, and the final section is a 10km run. It is a true test of stamina and therefore a very fitting event with which to kick off the Commonwealth games.

Also on 26 July, for the first time at the Commonwealth games, there will be a mixed relay event, with teams of two men and two women undertaking individual sprint triathlons in succession. In addition, North Lanarkshire Council will host the men's and women's cycling time trial on Thursday 31 July, which will take place in the northern corridor around Stepps, Muirhead, Chryston and Auchinloch. My best wishes go to all our Scottish athletes, all the visiting athletes and to everyone who will be volunteering and supporting the games. As the triathlon is the first event

"And it's in the constituency too",

to use the words of Alan Jackson's poem on the wall outside the Parliament, I am sure that it will be watched by many millions across the Commonwealth and throughout the world.

The 2014 Commonwealth games will give us opportunities. The events that will take place in North Lanarkshire will be a great opportunity to boost the local economy during the games and will provide a superb opportunity to showcase Motherwell and Wishaw, and North Lanarkshire and to say to the world: "Here we are—a good place to visit, a good place to stay and a good place to do business." It is also an opportunity to display Scotland at its best on the international stage if we can just agree not to use it as a stage for internal politics.

There is the potential to reap social and health benefits from the games as well as economic ones. We now have stagnation and decline in sporting participation rates, but the games can and should provide a focus to reboot the improvement that we achieved in that regard in the early years of the Scottish Parliament. Sport can be a catalyst for health improvement and social change, which is particularly important in areas of high deprivation, where sporting participation is often stubbornly low. To tap and capture for the future

the enthusiasm and passion, and the full potential and success of the games, the Scottish Government—current and future—will need to deliver and guarantee concerted effort to extend sporting involvement at all levels.

The opportunities that are presented by the games have clearly been recognised by North Lanarkshire Council, which so far has invested £2.2 million across various locations, with additional confirmed funding from the Scottish Government of over £600,000. I understand that a further £103,000 of funding is under consideration. I hope that the minister will be able to confirm as soon as possible—perhaps even today—that that additional support is being made available.

North Lanarkshire is also organising a variety of activities, including cultural and sporting events. It is helping with additional volunteers and publicity and branding, getting business involved and—not least—working to maximise the legacy of the games. That legacy ranges from the global exposure that the games will bring and the experience that is gained from staging the event, to more tangible legacies, such as an improved road and footpath network, improved cabling infrastructure in Strathclyde park and the potential to re-use the barrier system in the loch there to ensure water quality in the future.

There will be television viewers around the world, and North Lanarkshire Council will also play mine host to many thousands of visitors from across the Commonwealth nations. I know that they will get a warm welcome from local people, which will, I hope, be matched by the weather.

Like my constituents, I am looking forward to the games. I suspect that we will find it difficult not to imagine that the sun will be shining. While John Mason and James Dornan might dispute who has the biggest football park, what cannot be disputed is that the first medal of the games will be awarded at Strathclyde park.

16:06

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): We have seen the very unedifying sight this afternoon of four constituency MSPs trying to get their towels down first by the pool. They need to look up and see whose constituency that pool is in, because the Royal Commonwealth pool, in Edinburgh Central, will be hosting the diving. I want to speak as a constituency MSP with an interest in that matter.

Before Mr Malik has kittens, I acknowledge that Glasgow is the heart of the games. We must recognise its spirit and its determination in relation to the objective of hosting the biggest Commonwealth games ever. If I talk about Edinburgh, it is not to steal Glasgow's thunder but

to show that the games reach across the nation—though, in the case of Edinburgh, perhaps more literally than in other cases.

As Malcolm Chisholm said, the Royal Commonwealth pool will host the diving. Scotland has hosted the games twice before—both times here in the capital. The games in 1970 were a landmark, because that was the first time that metric units were used, which caused some confusion as it was the year before decimalisation, and everything seemed to be changing. The games in 1986 were slightly more troubled, and suffered from boycotts due to South Africa's participation. I hope that the 2014 games—the third to come to Scotland—will provide a much more unifying experience.

Of course, all of that makes the Commie pool the first facility to have hosted three Commonwealth games, so its name has never been more deserved. However, just a few years ago, the future of the pool was in doubt. Refurbishment of the pool was a key commitment of the 2007 Liberal Democrat and Scottish National Party coalition in the City of Edinburgh Council, but that was, no doubt, spurred on by the Commonwealth games. The project represents an investment of £37 million, which has come mainly from the council but includes £10 million from national bodies—the Scottish Government and sportscotland.

Located against the backdrop of Holyrood park, the pool is world class not only as a facility but as an advert for the capital and the country. When the refurbishment was completed in 2012, I was privileged to be at the opening. It was obvious how important it was not only for the community in the vicinity but for people across the city. We now have a state-of-the-art 25m diving pool, a 50m eight-lane swimming pool, and a 25m teaching pool, where there had previously been much less.

The best words come from some of the stories that were told then, which were recorded by the local paper. One memory of the old pool jumps out from the pages:

“There was the icy cold blast that seemed to whip through the changing rooms, causing teeth to chatter and giving goosebumps to bare arms and legs.”

Yes, we did not have to be on those windswept pitches when we had the Commonwealth pool—the slightly tired Commonwealth pool.

That description has now given way to this:

“the familiar Commie Pool odour has vanished along with the tired changing area. In its place are roomy, family friendly changing areas, large opaque glass-fronted lockers ... working showers and free-use hairdryers”.

James Dornan: You will not need them.

Marco Biagi: I will not need them—that is true—but I will not be competing in the diving for a wide range of reasons.

If there is a cautionary tale from Edinburgh's experience, it is—I am afraid to say to anybody who is expecting an automatic medal haul—that there is no home-ground advantage. Scotland won 11 golds in Melbourne in 2006 but, sadly, only six in 1970 and three in 1986. For Scottish medals in diving, we have to go back to 1950, 1954 and 1958, when Peter Heatly won three golds, a silver and two bronzes. However, to anyone who would dismiss us as the Jamaican bobsleigh team of diving, I point out that in order to qualify for the Commonwealth games our athletes have to go through years of training, and I would challenge anyone to match that.

For any young Scotsman or Scotswoman, reaching the Commonwealth games is an accomplishment in itself. They will have to be strong because there will be a strong challenge here in Edinburgh, at the Commonwealth pool. Tom Daley, the 2012 Olympic bronze medallist, will be a well-known participant, and it is likely that we will also see Matthew Mitcham, who won Olympic gold for Australia in Beijing in 2008. He has now returned to form and is likely to participate.

As has been said, however, the Edinburgh experience is more than the Commie pool; it is also Meadowbank, which hosted both previous games. I look on Meadowbank fondly—not just because it has occasionally moonlighted as a venue for election counts that have run late into the night—I see Fiona Hyslop reliving some memories—but because it houses my local Edinburgh Leisure gym. However, what was once state of the art faces the same issues of ageing.

The Scottish Government has shown no shortage of commitment to Edinburgh—I point to the national performance centre for sport as an example of that. On the unanimous recommendation of the advisory group, Heriot-Watt University will be its host and, following £30 million of investment, it will be ready for January 2016. That is a fine investment that will offer

“world class training facilities for individual athletes and squads, high performance coaching and cutting edge sports medicine.”

The centre will specialise in football, rugby and volleyball, but will also support athletics, badminton, basketball, cricket, fencing, handball, hockey, netball, shinty and squash—it will be like an entire Commonwealth games in one building.

Legacy is about more than facilities; it is also about inspiration. I remember watching—on a black-and-white TV, believe it or not—the

marathon at the 1990 Commonwealth games in Auckland. I like to think that that inspired me, although it was another 20 years before I finally ran a marathon. I hope that active schools and the changes that have taken place since my time mean that teenagers today have a more positive experience of the kind of sports that I never took part in.

Broughton high school, in my constituency, is a community sport hub as well as a Scottish Football Association football performance school. In addition, as part of the legacy, Stockbridge primary school is taking part in the “game on” challenge by organising a sports day as a mini-Commonwealth games. That will not only help to raise activity levels, but will broaden the pupils' knowledge of the world and create the cross-cutting learning that is at the heart of curriculum for excellence.

Last but by no means least, there will be a benefit to culture and tourism. The 11 days of the games are timed well to coincide with Edinburgh's festivals—I cannot speak about Edinburgh without speaking about the festivals. Sir Jonathan Mills has said that the Commonwealth games will be one of the two inspirations for his farewell programme at the Edinburgh International Festival. The Commonwealth games was also listed as the first reason why Scotland was ranked number 3 on the Lonely Planet guide's 10 countries to visit in 2014.

I will finish with the words of Robin Worsnop, the chair of the Edinburgh tourism action group. He said:

“It's quicker to get from the centre of Edinburgh to the centre of Glasgow by rail than to take the tube from east London to west London—and much more pleasant”.

Although we might not be trying to steal the thunder from Glasgow, if, after our visitors have enjoyed the sights of Glasgow and the wonders of the games, we can steal some of them for our wonderful festivals, I am sure that they will have seen all the best that Scotland has to offer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): I almost feel inspired to go and have a run myself after that. [*Laughter.*] I call Mark McDonald.

16:15

Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP): I might pass on the run, Presiding Officer.

I hope that Hanzala Malik will forgive me, as a representative of the city of Aberdeen, for stumbling into the debate with a few things to say about the positive impact of the Commonwealth games on my city and constituency. The minister was indeed correct when she said that these are Glasgow's games, but they are also Scotland's

games, so we must ensure that people across the country have the opportunity to get involved and be enthused before, during and after the games.

In the build-up to London 2012, Aberdeen hosted the Cameroon Olympic team as part of its pre-games training camp. That created a buzz in the city for many whose only association with Cameroon in sport had been the Roger Milla shuffle at the 1990 world cup. At the same time as the athletes warmed to the city, the city warmed to the athletes. Idrissa Adam, the 100m sprinter, took part in a local event with athletes at Aberdeen sports village. The women's football team played a friendly against the Scottish women's team as part of its build-up to the games. The city was abuzz; there was a real enthusiasm among the people. I hope that, ahead of Glasgow 2014, Aberdeen City Council will again look to host a training camp for a Commonwealth team, because that would help to create a similar buzz, enthusiasm and participation.

A number of events are taking place in Aberdeen that will help to create that enthusiasm in advance of the games. I learned about an event just recently that is taking place in my constituency: the Oldmachar Commonwealth games, which are being organised by Middleton Park primary school. The games will involve the five primary schools from the Oldmachar academy associated schools group—Danestone, Middleton Park, Forehill, Glashieburn and Greenbrae—and 525 pupils across primary 4 to 7 will receive 240 quality hours of sports coaching to build skills, confidence and enthusiasm to empower them to compete in the games, which are taking place at the sports village in June. Pupils will compete across a range of events and they will have their own torch parade. On 6 February, Clyde, the Commonwealth games mascot, will launch the event at Middleton Park school. The school has received £6,624 funding from Celebrate to help it to host the games, and I look forward to that wonderful event taking place.

We are also seeing the development of sports hubs across the country. The first disability sports hub in Scotland was launched at the Aberdeen sports village. It provides support and advice for disabled individuals—people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities—and offers them, their families and friends opportunities to participate in a variety of activities that are suitable for all ages and abilities. That is a wonderful part of the legacy of sport. We should not forget that we were all inspired by the efforts of the paralympians at London 2012, and the use of the disability sports hub emphasises further that sport is for everyone and not just the able bodied. The Beacon centre in my constituency will soon be developed as a sports hub, too, and I look forward to that taking place.

The sports village is also offering a Commonwealth sports tour project. That will involve 400 pupils from primary 4 to secondary 2 taking part in a 10-week programme of one-hour sessions. It will allow our children to engage in and get a flavour of 10 different Commonwealth sports. That is good because, as other members have highlighted, the PE curriculum does not necessarily allow children to get a proper flavour of some of the sports opportunities that are available. Young people who may have an aptitude for a specific sport may find that that cannot be offered to them as part of their regular PE sessions, so such opportunities to try out different sports—sports that they might not otherwise engage in—may result in them finding a sport with which they click.

The legacy activity is also important for sustaining interest beyond the games. From a constituency perspective, I noted that Quarryhill primary school has been successful in bidding for legacy funding to develop its playground space to increase physical activity and boost active play and PE. That is welcome. Such projects will take place throughout Scotland, which emphasises the point that, although Glasgow bid for and won the games—I absolutely accept that—we want the benefits of the games to be spread throughout the country in their aftermath.

The minister mentioned street soccer. My understanding is that the sessions in Aberdeen have been extremely well attended. Street soccer, midnight football and similar events are always popular with young people. I am sure that that, too, will help to boost activity and participation.

Volunteers have also been mentioned. I chose not to volunteer for the games largely because my family does not see enough of me as it is, but I congratulate Mr Mason on being a volunteer. I am sure that he will prove to be most useful to people who visit Glasgow for the games. A friend of mine who is a medical student is going to be a volunteer doctor at the games. Not many people might have been aware that that role was offered as a volunteering opportunity. It is an excellent way to get people involved in volunteering for the games.

We should not lose sight of the fact that sporting events will take place throughout the year. In Aberdeen, there will be a Scotland v England women's rugby international and the Commonwealth water polo championships will take place at the new aquatics centre that is being developed there. A one-day cricket international, which I am sure will enthuse Liz Smith, will take place in Aberdeen. The Queen's baton relay will also visit the city.

As well as that, I was pleased to see further investment in an artificial football pitch—or multi-use pitch, as they are now known—for Dyce in my

constituency, which will be jointly funded by the Scottish Government's cashback scheme and Aberdeen City Council.

All those developments and events taking place mean that, although Aberdeen is three hours away from Glasgow—I hope that people who visit the games will also take the opportunity to come up to Aberdeen and see what we have to offer after they have been to Edinburgh—it does not feel remote from the Commonwealth games but feels part of them. We want to encourage all areas of Scotland to feel that they are a part of the Commonwealth games.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Duncan McNeil. Mr McNeil, you have a generous seven minutes.

16:22

Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): We are all agreed that we have an unprecedented opportunity, as someone said earlier, in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games and, indeed, a summer of sport with the Ryder cup and other events. It is only an opportunity and whether we take advantage of it we will know sometime in the future.

There is no doubt that those events could inspire and motivate young and old to get involved and to become more active not only over those two or three weeks but as a long-lasting legacy. If we work at it, it can be transformational. A transformation is required if we are to get people of all abilities, ages and groupings—irrespective of their background or gender—involved in sport and, of course, participating and volunteering in community sport and physical activity in the future under the banner of sport for all.

The health benefits of an active lifestyle are well known. In previous debates, the minister reminded us—I have said it before and I will say it again—of the 50 people a week in Scotland who die from inactivity and a lack of exercise. That costs the health service £94 million a year so, irrespective of the Commonwealth games and any other opportunities that we have to motivate and inspire people, we already have a big issue that needs to be addressed.

That annual cost of £94 million and the accompanying death rate are an old legacy, but if we examine some of the areas in which many organisations, whether individually or collectively, are striving to increase activity among all age groups, but particularly among young people, we find that the figures on getting children active are flatlining, that children's participation in sport has declined from its peak in 2009 and that there has been no real change in the level of adult physical activity since 2008. Therefore, the challenge is

clear. If only a small proportion of the £94 million were spent on prevention, what a difference that would make. There is no doubt that the increased participation in sport and physical activity that would result from that would make a tremendous difference to lifestyles here in Scotland.

Of course, there are other aspects to the issue, as Liz Smith and Alison Johnstone said. Having the opportunity to participate is important in many other areas apart from health. It is important for social cohesion. James Dornan gave us an example of that when he mentioned his engagement with Tom Harris. That those two can get in a room together represents progress and shows that engagement works and can bring people together, which is important for fractured communities.

It has been argued that giving people the opportunity to participate in such activity can be particularly important in tackling crime. Midnight league football and other diversionary activities steer young people away from breaking someone's hedge or being a general bother and help them to develop their self-esteem. From the point of view of the health agenda, they are even more important in enabling many young people to establish an interest in an activity that they can take through the rest of their lives. Investment in such activities is important and can be made regardless of the Commonwealth games; indeed, we need to make it anyway if we are to change the lifestyle of people in Scotland fundamentally.

On the legacy, the first thing that it is important to do is to understand clearly what we are trying to achieve. Are we trying to make the fundamental change that is necessary, or are we having activity for activity's sake? I do not mean that to be pejorative. We have heard about many events that will take place, but we cannot just have a list of one-off events, even though they are important and are complementary to the games. It is necessary to put on such events to provide the welcome that we want to provide to visitors from abroad, but they cannot be taken seriously as things that will sustain activity in the longer term, which is what the preventative agenda needs to do.

If we want the legacy of the Commonwealth games to have the widest possible benefits, we need to recognise that it is not just a case of the Government putting in money and that it is not just the health and sport portfolio that has responsibility in this area. I know that there are difficulties with doing all the things that I have outlined. It is not for the Government to do all of them, although it provides a lot of the infrastructure. SportsScotland accounts for around 10 per cent of the budget, but many opportunities are delivered by other people.

We heard in our community sport inquiry about the role of local government, and we can layer on to that the leisure trusts and the community clubs, which want to protect their integrity and their influence. Joined-up working with those clubs is needed to offer facilities. The private sector delivers a lot of activity and opportunities for individuals to participate. Lessons can be learned from all that.

The foremost point is that the legacy will be delivered by people and communities. If the Government has a role, it should be to promote and support the strategic approach. What we can do to increase volunteer numbers is important. I am afraid that, as in political parties and everywhere else in life, volunteers are harder to find and retain.

A strategic approach needs to be taken to that fundamental workforce. We need to value, nurture, support and sustain it in every possible way. We need to understand where the workforce is and who the volunteers are and we need to do workforce planning to estimate the decline in numbers and the number that we need to replace annually, never mind what we need to grow the number of volunteers.

We recognise the additional challenge. Many areas with a high rate of participation in sport have a high number of volunteers, whereas nearby neighbourhoods have insufficient volunteers. We are talking about deprived communities, which have fewer volunteers. Of course, there are poorer areas such as Port Glasgow, which has a boxing club that the minister may wish to visit. Young women are involved in that club and are leading it, which is in complete contradiction of what normally happens.

All this is possible, but we need to get more strategic about what we do.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Many thanks—that was herculean.

16:32

Cameron Buchanan (Lothian) (Con): A number of interesting speeches have been made, not least of which was that of my Conservative colleague Liz Smith, though I might show bias there. When we consider the legacy in sporting terms—I accept that the debate has demonstrated that there are broader issues—there must be a joined-up approach if we are to make a lasting difference.

The previous Scottish city to host the Commonwealth games was Edinburgh, in 1986 and in 1970, which three of us here remember. In 1986, the opening ceremony's theme was the spirit of youth—back then, I could still say what

that felt like. However, we should perhaps reflect on what the legacy of those games was, apart from Robert Maxwell.

In 2007, a proposal was made—it seems incredible now—to demolish Meadowbank stadium, which hosted the games. That was ultimately rejected after a well-organised campaign to save the facility. Thankfully, the ageing stadium now seems to have a bright future, following the City of Edinburgh Council's commitment to revamp it.

In 2007, a sporting campaign called unite the clubs was also launched. It was a grass-roots campaign that involved football, rugby and other sports clubs that regularly use sports facilities in Edinburgh, which wanted better changing and park facilities. It culminated in a march on Parliament on Valentine's day in 2007 and succeeded in forcing local politicians to look again at the provision of facilities for those clubs in the city.

I highlight those two events because it is pretty sobering to bear it in mind that, about 20 years after the Commonwealth games came to Edinburgh, the stadium that hosted them and the sports facilities in it were nearly lost, and amateur sportsmen and women were clamouring for investment in crumbling changing rooms and waterlogged pitches—we can just look at the cycle track, for example. We have come a long way since then, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that participation in competitive sport must remain a priority for this Scottish Government and its successors.

The Scottish Government's research on the potential legacy has shown that the trickle-down effect cannot be relied on and that there must be engagement with community organisations and grass-roots sports clubs to bring about real change. Again, that shows the need for a joined-up approach. Accordingly, we should be looking at what the barriers are for those who already take part in competitive sports and those who are looking to get involved. Alison Johnstone and Liz Smith identified issues such as pricing for the use of facilities and opening up existing facilities in communities—in schools, for example, which are very underused at certain times—so that they are more widely available.

To me, the operators are the critical organisations in that respect. In the Lothians, that is Edinburgh Leisure, which is an arm's-length organisation. Bodies such as Edinburgh Leisure must do more to improve access for those who wish to become involved in sports and—this is just as important—for those who already participate and volunteer in our football and rugby clubs. After all, grass-roots sport simply would not exist without those people.

The Health and Sport Committee's report on support for community sport highlighted some of the challenges that our local clubs face. In its evidence to the committee, the Scottish Sports Association explained that the average membership of our sports clubs was around 60 members, whereas in Europe the number could be anywhere between 600 and 6,000. That, in turn, means that, whereas larger clubs will have the resources for professionals, smaller clubs almost entirely depend on volunteers. As many members have mentioned, we should be focusing on those volunteers, because they are the bedrock of our clubs and they have a big role in engaging with their communities and driving up participation in competitive sport. Alison Johnstone also made that point. Competitive sport is vital. Few people think that it is not right. Children love it. Indeed, everybody likes competition, which should be essential in schools.

As the minister highlighted in her evidence to the committee, the last thing that we want is young people who have been enthused by the Commonwealth games turning up to their local sports club to find a lack of opportunities to take part or of qualified people to look after them. That is a vital issue.

A number of members, including Patricia Ferguson, highlighted the wider benefits of the Commonwealth games throughout Scotland. The important message is that they offer an opportunity and impetus for improvement across Scotland, not just in Glasgow. We have heard that from many members, and there is already clear evidence of that. The Royal Commonwealth pool in Edinburgh, which is another reminder of Scotland's previous stint at hosting the games, has been fully refurbished and has been able to attract the diving world series last year and the Commonwealth games this year. Scotland is a small country and needs only one big pool, really, and Glasgow and Edinburgh are very near. All Commonwealth games and, indeed, the Olympics need only one pool.

Businesses across Scotland will benefit from the millions of pounds' worth of contracts that are being awarded. However, the issue is measuring the real long-term benefit that such investment brings beyond the immediate spend on infrastructure and services.

The legacy evidence of previous large-scale events is mixed. It strikes me that the best opportunities for individuals and businesses are in using the experience of the games to drive up standards, and rethink and perhaps develop the services and products that they have to offer.

The future of the Commonwealth games as they are is in doubt, so we will have to do something. In 2018, Gold Coast City in Australia will host the

games. There are many notes of interest for 2022, but no real bids have been made. Should we cut down the games or simply cut them adrift? Nobody is bidding for them because of their cost and scale.

Minor sports are just as important as the blue-ribbon events, such as athletics and swimming. We have to focus on those and on the minor sports.

A number of events are piggybacking on the games, such as the Commonwealth nations bridge championship, which will take place just after them. We should bear those in mind, as well, as they will help to enhance the legacy of the games.

I support the amendment that was lodged by Liz Smith MSP.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Patricia Ferguson, who has a generous eight minutes—or perhaps nine or more.

16:38

Patricia Ferguson: Thank you, Presiding Officer. I will be guided by you on time.

The debate has been very good and wide ranging. However, I have to admit that John Mason, James Dornan, Sandra White, John Pentland, Marco Biagi and Alison Johnstone made me feel incredibly jealous because, although I am a Glaswegian and represent a Glasgow constituency, I am afraid that we will not have any events in my constituency. Somebody is responsible for that. However, all is not lost, because my constituency is clearly as enthusiastic about the games as everyone else and, although it does not cater for Commonwealth sports, I like to think that the Pinkston watersports centre in my constituency, which will open this year, will contribute to the legacy, regardless of whether it is a Commonwealth facility.

I was intrigued by James Dornan's comments about his feelings when we were all at the Old Fruitmarket. Unlike my colleague Hanzala Malik, I was there, as I was not fortunate enough to be in Sri Lanka. I shared James Dornan's sense of excitement. There was huge excitement—in fact, I remember being asked to speak on the radio and, frankly, not being able to, because I was so excited. However, I did not share Mr Dornan's sense of apprehension or anxiety about the responsibility that would be coming our way, great though it would be.

There is a simple reason for that, and I ask SNP members to hear me out before they judge me on this one. The reason is that I knew how robust the bid that had been submitted by the Labour-led Executive was. However, I also knew from conversations that had taken place that the

incoming SNP Government was just as committed and determined as we had been to take forward the bid and deliver an excellent games. I knew that there would be good co-operative working, so I did not have a feeling of anxiety. I knew that the Government, of whatever complexion, working with its partners in Glasgow City Council and the Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland, would work hard and deliver an excellent games with a legacy to go with them.

James Dornan: Will the member take an intervention?

Patricia Ferguson: I am happy to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: James Dornan, unsurprisingly.

James Dornan: I thought that I did not jump up and down at all, Presiding Officer.

I accept Patricia Ferguson's points and that the Labour-Lib Dem Executive did a lot of good work before the SNP came into power. I was the leader of the SNP group on Glasgow City Council at the time, so I recognise that a lot of great work was done by the council and by both Governments. My concern or nervousness was not so much about our ability to do it; it was based on the track record of previous attempts by other cities.

Patricia Ferguson: I understand Mr Dornan's point, and that was a justifiable feeling but, fortunately, by that point, I had been to a Commonwealth games and a Commonwealth youth games, so I had that experience to draw on and I knew from those examples that Scotland and Glasgow could do it and do it well. I think that we can agree that it was a great day and that there are a great many more to come.

I apologise to the minister if I pre-empted anything that she wanted to say in her closing speech about payday lending, but that is an issue that is close to me and my group. I am grateful to the minister for the response that she has given to Kezia Dugdale on payday lending and the games. We very much welcome that.

In my earlier speech, I mentioned the importance of securing a legacy that leads to a more sporting and active country, and I will return to that theme in closing. First, I say that Scottish Labour will support the Scottish Government motion and the Conservative amendment. I am grateful to the Conservatives for the sensitive way in which they have worded their amendment. None of us would want anything of a compulsory nature to be put in place, because competitive sport is not for everyone, albeit that many of us think that there is no reason why it should not be.

We need to begin with children in school. Indeed, we might want to look at the early years and consider what we can do to encourage all

children to be physically literate. Children have to have the basic skills of running, throwing, catching and swimming, and we need to ensure that children with a disability do not lose out. We must also consider how we can encourage young people in years 5 and 6 at secondary school to continue to take part in activity. The current physical education target does not apply to them, but those two years are the point at which young people make the transition to adulthood and possibly to further involvement in sport, or not. That is an important time, and it is an area that the active schools co-ordinators could usefully target.

We must also give children the widest possible opportunity to engage with sport, because we know that the more opportunities a young person has to try different sports, the more likely they are to find one that they will stick with. Mark McDonald was absolutely right to make that point about the project that he mentioned in his area. It is the case that the wider the spread that children get at the beginning, the more likely they are to find and choose a sport that works for them.

To make the experience of sport meaningful, it needs to be overseen and taught by people who understand the sport and can give the best possible advice and training to our upcoming athletes. Given that many of our coaches are volunteers, it would be helpful if employers looked at ways in which they can facilitate volunteering, perhaps by giving accredited coaches paid time off. The Scottish Government might even incentivise such an approach. The Scottish Sports Association has a number of excellent ideas in the area, and it practises what it preaches by allowing its staff to volunteer.

Members were right to talk about the importance of community and school facilities. Professor Leigh Robinson, from the University of Stirling, always makes the point that access to sports and other facilities in schools should be free. Sandra White made the same suggestion. I think that we would all like such facilities to be free, although it is a big financial and logistical ask. Perhaps we need to discuss the issue and see whether we can take it forward.

Marco Biagi mentioned Sir Peter Heatly's success as a diver, which was indeed tremendous. Sir Peter's record is second to none in the Commonwealth, and he has continued to be an important and extremely highly regarded ambassador for his sport, for the Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland and for the Glasgow games. It is important that people like him are recognised in debates such as this one.

An aspect of the legacy that I want to mention is the environmental impact of the facilities. The issue is important. The energy efficiency of the athletes' village will be a lasting legacy of the

games, and the village will provide good homes for people to live in, as John Mason said. The food charter that has been agreed is also important. Scotland is a fair trade nation and it is important that we maintain standards.

In my opening speech, I said that people who live in deprived communities are less likely to be involved in sport or physical activity. As the minister knows, I have long argued that the communities that are most blighted by crime, which usually also suffer from high levels of deprivation, should be given a greater share of the money that is distributed through the cashback for communities programme. Perhaps a weighting system should be applied. In my view, the social attitudes survey backs up that call. We need to do more to encourage the good ideas and projects that there are in many communities.

The digital agenda was raised at the cross-party group on sport's meeting last week, which I was unable to attend. There are valid points to be made, particularly in the context of encouraging women's sport and role models in that regard. I am always grateful to BBC Alba for its coverage of a team that I support, Glasgow City Football Club, which is a women's team. Unlike some other teams in Glasgow, the team consistently plays at European level, but I have to watch the games on BBC Alba. If any other Scottish football team was competing at European level, I suspect that the match would be shown on BBC 1.

James Dornan: Glasgow City Football Club trains in my constituency. I have been along to see the team training and I went to see them play in the quarter final of the European cup, which was a great game. I agree that representation of women's sport in the media needs to improve. Part of Scottish women in sport's role is to push for that to ensure that we achieve what the member and I are looking for.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Ferguson, you might gracefully draw to a close now.

Patricia Ferguson: I will do my best, Presiding Officer.

Mr Dornan might remember that we were both at that game and that the team plays in my constituency—I am staking a claim. We can all support the team, because it is the Glasgow team and it does very well.

Our excitement and anticipation are increasing as the games approach, which makes me wonder what it must be like for athletes at this time. They must be wondering whether their performance will win them a place in their team and how they will perform on the day. They must be conscious that they are role models for the more active Scotland that we all want to see. We might not all be able to compete for our country, but we can be inspired by

their dedication and skill—and perhaps encouraged to take up a particular sport.

I wish the athletes well in their training and preparation and I wish them well when their competition day comes around. I know that they will do their very best. I hope that the home crowds will do their job and cheer on our home athletes and the athletes who are visitors to our country.

16:49

Shona Robison: This has been a good debate, and I should say at the outset that I am happy to support both amendments. I will just go straight into responding to as many points that have been raised as possible.

I will start with Patricia Ferguson, and I confirm the position on payday lenders. Patricia Ferguson cited the parliamentary answer, but I want to be clear and put it on the record that we would not support any proposal for a payday lender to be a games sponsor. The games organisers have also made it clear that they do not seek sponsorship from any payday lender. That sends out a pretty clear message.

Patricia Ferguson also asked about transport arrangements. We have a sharp focus on transport. Park-and-ride sites are being looked at in some detail and are still under consideration. Negotiations involving Strathclyde partnership for transport and all the other stakeholders and transport providers are being held, and it is important that we have a cohesive plan. I can therefore give Patricia Ferguson some reassurance about that. Business continuity has also been factored in. As well as providing the games with a robust transport arrangement, we want to ensure that people can get to their work and go about their business.

I will make sure that information is circulated on the legacy leads initiative. I have seen some very good documents and brochures from local authorities the length and breadth of the country. They set out their fantastic legacy plans for their areas, particularly building on the Queen's baton relay.

Patricia Ferguson: I would be grateful to the minister for that information. While I was doing my own research for the debate, I found an excellent document from Dumfries and Galloway Council, and I was surprised to hear about the information that councils are providing. It seems to me that, frankly, they are selling themselves short.

Shona Robison: I agree. We can do more to make sure that everyone is aware of the information, and Parliament could be a good conduit for it. We will make sure that that happens.

Patricia Ferguson and others mentioned the issue of statistics and participation rates. It is always a challenge to secure participation, but lots of things are being done to shift the participation rates for children and adults. We have the physical activity implementation plan, and we are funding a number of programmes. For example, the walking strategy is about to be launched in the near future. All that work is trying to shift the population in a general sense.

Duncan McNeil: Does the minister agree that there are many figures and they can be interpreted in many ways? We need robust figures that we can rely on, so that we can start focusing on outcomes rather than inputs.

Shona Robison: That is a good point, and I know that the Health and Sport Committee has paid a lot of attention to that issue. That is why we got the statisticians involved in creating a baseline from which we can measure. There is a lot to measure, such as the impact of the 150 community sports hubs and how many more people they are encouraging to be active, the opening up of the school estate, and active schools. It is a question of pulling all that together into a baseline from which we can measure more coherently, rather than just conducting one survey, because self-reporting has its limitations. I very much agree with Mr McNeil.

Liz Smith made a thoughtful contribution. She talked about the sense of purpose that goes deeper than any one policy area and about trying to make a cultural change to see ourselves as an active population. The Scandinavians have been very successful at that, and better data collection also plays a part.

Liz Smith also mentioned sportscotland's audit of facilities. That is important because the focus is now on maximising the use of those facilities and making sure that we get the best out of school facilities in particular through better programming.

Liz Smith and others mentioned the digital media strategy issue that was brought up at the cross-party group on sport. I am very keen for us to push that, although I do not think that we should let the broadcasters off the hook. There are major challenges with their coverage of sport, whether it be women's sport or minority sport, and we should continue to work on that.

That is also true of not-such-minority sports. Rugby is another sport that does not get its fair share of coverage. Without a doubt, with a digital media strategy we could go beyond the traditional broadcasters and appeal to a younger audience. At the end of the day, the younger audience gets most of its sports news from digital media. Organisations such as Scottish Swimming have

been very effective at using digital media. We can support other sports to use it more effectively.

Given that Liz Smith is a big cricket fan, I should congratulate Scotland on qualifying for the International Cricket Council world cup in Australia in 2015, which will be a fantastic opportunity for the Scottish team.

James Dornan talked about what is going on in his constituency—a lot will be going on during the games. He also mentioned the Scottish women in sport group, to which I pay tribute because it is doing a lot of good work. I also established a working group, which advises the Scottish Government about women in sport and which is chaired by Sue Campbell, previously of UK Sport. I would like to see some recommendations from those groups on how we achieve a real shift in how women in sport are portrayed. I look forward to hearing more from them.

Malcolm Chisholm talked about Meadowbank. I think it is fair to say that City of Edinburgh Council is trying to get to grips with the future of Meadowbank. It has come up with a number of specific proposals, which I have had sight of.

John Mason talked about issues in his constituency. I should have congratulated him on becoming a volunteer. It is very positive that More than Gold is providing affordable accommodation for athletes' families, particularly those from poorer countries.

I turn briefly to Hanzala Malik. My mother used to say that some people could start a fight in an empty room—perhaps that is the kindest thing I could say about Hanzala Malik's contribution. At the end of the day, surely we can agree on one thing, which is that the games have been a fantastic example of people working across the political divide. We should take shared credit for that: Glasgow City Council, the Scottish Government, Commonwealth Games Scotland, sportscotland, the organising committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation should all take credit. It is the people of Glasgow and Scotland who have made and will make the games. Surely that is something we can agree on.

Hanzala Malik: All I was really trying to say is that these are Glasgow's games. I am fearful that Johnny-come-lately will rain on Glasgow's parade, which I do not want to happen. I want proper recognition of Glasgow and the commitment that it has shown to the games.

Shona Robison: The member should not say it if he does not believe it. It is not true: there are no Johnny-come-latelys. Everybody was involved in the bid at the start; the funding was from all the partners, without which it would not have happened. I do not think that Glasgow City Council would thank Mr Malik for portraying things in that

way. Perhaps he should have a word with the council.

I want to highlight some of the spend that is happening on the cultural side in Glasgow. There is over £13 million for the cultural programme, a lot of which is happening within Glasgow. Some recent announcements include the extension of the Royal concert hall for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the extension of the Theatre Royal for Scottish Opera and funding for the National Theatre of Scotland. The Glasgow Film Theatre has just received funding, and the Citizens Theatre has just received £1.5 million this week. Is that not enough to show Mr Malik the Scottish Government's commitment to the city of Glasgow? That is on top of the £352 million funding towards the Commonwealth games.

The games will benefit not just Glasgow but the whole of Scotland, as so many members have said so eloquently this afternoon. Alison Johnstone talked about the potential of pride house. I confirm that we will be supporting that and that we will be working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organisations on the detail of it.

When Stuart McMillan talked about what was happening in his area, he highlighted the role of Clyde the mascot—and we could not have a debate on the Commonwealth games without paying tribute to Clyde.

John Pentland is right to say that the triathlon will be a fantastic early event. We are making progress on that, and I can confirm that we have made some funding decisions in collaboration with North Lanarkshire Council.

I want to finish with the very enjoyable speech from Marco Biagi, who without a doubt got his towel down by the pool first when he talked about the fantastic development of the Royal Commonwealth pool and what it will provide for the diving competition. Peter Heatly is a diving legend whom I have met on a number of occasions and who is still inspiring people to this day. An important part of the games legacy is that, in the same way as there are household names such as Peter Heatly, the games will create a new generation of household names—athletes who will break on to the international stage and inspire a whole new generation to get involved in sport.

Decision Time

17:01

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-08879.2, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-08879, in the name of Shona Robison, on the Commonwealth games and its legacy across Scotland, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-08879.1, in the name of Liz Smith, which seeks to amend motion S4M-08879, in the name of Shona Robison, on the Commonwealth games and its legacy across Scotland, as amended, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S4M-08879, in the name of Shona Robison, on the Commonwealth games and its legacy across Scotland, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament notes the positive steps taken by Games partners in Scotland's final preparations to host a successful Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games; recognises the long-lasting active, social and economic legacy being delivered for the whole of Scotland by Legacy 2014 programmes; acknowledges once again the endorsement of the Commonwealth Games Federation for what Scotland has achieved; celebrates the success of both the Games ticketing programme and the launch of the Queen's Baton Relay, engendering anticipation and excitement in Scotland and the Commonwealth; welcomes the cross-party support for the delivery of a successful Games this summer; believes in the ability of sport to inspire social change and improvements to the nation's health; calls on the Scottish Government to make further efforts to improve participation in physical activity and sport for all; believes that, with the right approach, the Commonwealth Games is a chance to encourage all Scots to become more active more often, and notes the comment from sportscotland that to maximise the impact of the Games, both in 2014 and in the decades ahead, competitive sport should have an important place in all schools.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time.

Meeting closed at 17:02.

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