



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 12 March 2014

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

Portfolio Question Time

Health and Wellbeing

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): Good afternoon, everyone. The first item of business is portfolio questions. In order to get in as many members as possible, I would prefer succinct questions with answers to match, please.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (Discussions)

1. Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. (S4O-02987)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): Ministers and Government officials regularly meet representatives of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to discuss matters of importance to local people.

Bob Doris: The cabinet secretary will be aware of my personal interest in access to new medicines, particularly for orphan and ultra-orphan conditions. I have a constituent—I will not name them in order to keep their details confidential—who is suffering from Pompe disease. Previously, they have been refused an individual patient treatment request by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. I am worried that the board may not be showing the flexibility that the cabinet secretary has called for with regard to the individual patient treatment request system ahead of the welcome reforms that the Scottish Government is implementing. Will the cabinet secretary use his good office to ensure that the board starts to use that flexibility more consistently to benefit not only everyone but the particular constituent, whose details I can provide to him after portfolio question time?

Alex Neil: The Scottish Government has made clear its expectation that boards will be more flexible in their approach to considering individual patient treatment requests for not recommended medicines. However, consultants in Scottish health boards make decisions on the appropriate treatment for their patients. The IPTR decision on Myozyme for the patient in question was made by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

I encourage Bob Doris to send me the details. I have been in touch with the health board about the

evidence given to the Beatson consultants on the issue. I emphasised the flexibility that health boards have with regard to such applications.

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con): The cabinet secretary will be aware of the speculation about conversations that he may have had with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde about the Government's response to the consultation on chronic pain and the possible use of the Glasgow homoeopathic hospital as a permanent centre for the management of chronic pain. In his usual way, will the cabinet secretary be gracious enough to share with the chamber his thinking on those matters?

Alex Neil: Ministers are considering the responses to the consultation on chronic pain. We will make an announcement fairly soon on our response to the responses.

Used Needles (Disposal)

2. Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to ensure that national health service boards have an appropriate policy to ensure the safe disposal of used needles. (S4O-02988)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): In 2010, the Scottish Government published national guidelines for services providing injecting equipment. Recommendation 16 of those guidelines specifically states that NHS boards should ensure that all services in their area have robust policies and procedures in place on the safe disposal of used injecting equipment.

Roderick Campbell: The position in Fife is mixed: some health centres and pharmacies accept sharps, while others do not. The matter has become a particular problem since landfill sites have stopped accepting specially made containers because of the risk to site operators. What further support will the Scottish Government offer to health boards to ensure that they make an appropriate policy?

Alex Neil: The Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 require all employers, including health boards, to have in place policies to ensure the safe disposal of sharps. On 2 May 2013, the Scottish Government wrote to all NHS boards to advise them that the regulations would come into force on 11 May 2013. If there is any evidence that the regulations are not being adhered to, if Rod Campbell—or anyone else for that matter—submits that to the relevant authority, we will investigate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Question 3 has been withdrawn and an explanation has been provided.

Delayed Discharge (NHS Borders)

4. John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how many bed days were lost due to delayed discharges in the NHS Borders area during the last three quarters of 2013. (S4O-02990)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): Between April and December 2013, 5,826 bed days were lost to delayed discharge in NHS Borders—a 6.5 per cent reduction from 2012.

John Lamont: The issue causes huge problems, not only for hospitals but for patients who are fit enough to leave hospital but are forced to wait before being discharged and allowed home. The figures show that the problem is far from being solved. There can be no doubt that something needs to be done to address it. What plan does the Scottish Government have to help to reduce the problem of delayed discharges in the Borders and the rest of Scotland?

Alex Neil: Perhaps the member should have waited until after I had given him the answer before writing his press release. The January census in the Borders shows that eight patients were delayed for any duration, with none delayed for more than four weeks. The Borders area is one of the top three best performing boards in the whole of Scotland in terms of delayed discharges. I am sorry to ruin the member's press release, but those are the facts of the situation.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Delayed discharge is a problem throughout the country, with 15 per cent of care home places in Edinburgh, 15 per cent in Highland and 20 per cent in Glasgow unavailable due to concerns about the level of care being provided. What is being done to address those serious concerns throughout Scotland, including in the Borders?

Alex Neil: At the last count, there were 57 homes where the Care Inspectorate has imposed some kind of moratorium because of quality issues and concerns. That has taken nearly 800 beds out of care home capacity in Scotland.

The Government and the Care Inspectorate are working with individual homes to see where quality can be improved. Although some of the homes are the subject of a closure order, most are homes that the Care Inspectorate is working with to get the quality of provision into better shape.

More generally, we have been reviewing the situation with our friends in the Convention of

Scottish Local Authorities and we hope to report fairly soon on the outcome of our discussions and our consideration of the quality of Scotland's care home provision in future.

Complementary Medicines and Therapies

5. Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on complementary medicines and therapies and on supporting national health service boards in their use. (S4O-02991)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): The Scottish Government recognises that complementary and alternative medicines—CAM—and therapies may offer relief to some people living with a wide variety of long-term conditions. Current Scottish Government policy is outlined in Health Department letter (2005)37, which was published in 2005. This guidance sets out the framework for the provision of CAM.

It is for individual NHS boards to decide what complementary and alternative medicines they make available, based on the needs of their resident populations and in line with the national guidance.

Claudia Beamish: I thank the cabinet secretary for that helpful and quite comprehensive answer. I have been approached by constituents in NHS Lothian and Borders and NHS Lanarkshire. As the cabinet secretary will know, there is a review of homoeopathy in Lanarkshire. Although some constituents expressed concerns about the scientific evidence for complementary medicines, there are long traditions of using such medicines in many countries, including here. In fact, some countries' traditions go back far longer than ours.

The evidence is before our eyes: reflexology is used for sports injuries; and many support groups use complementary therapies. In fact, I have just come from a meeting of the cross-party group on carers—which I convene, along with Joan McAlpine—where we heard about support for carers through the therapy of hand massage.

Will the cabinet secretary give us greater reassurance on the Scottish Government's commitment to supporting people in that way?

Alex Neil: The Scottish Government's views have been made very clear and are consistent with those of the previous Administration. As I said, it is up to individual health boards to decide for their area exactly what provision they are prepared to make in respect of such services. As the member will know, the medical community is somewhat divided on the issue of homoeopathy. Some take a very positive point of view and others take a very negative one. As a non-medic, I remain neutral on the issue.

National Health Service Boards (Guidance on Public Transport Provision)

6. Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance is given to NHS boards regarding the provision of adequate public transport to and from their facilities. (S4O-02992)

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): It is a matter for national health service boards to identify any issues and potential solutions in discussion with local authorities and regional transport partnerships, which have funds to support transport services to meet the assessed needs of the market in their area.

Adam Ingram: Is the minister aware of the reduction in the bus service between Ayr and Crosshouse hospitals following the ending of a subsidy from NHS Ayrshire and Arran, which helped to establish the route? The result is that making journeys from the south of the constituency to Crosshouse is somewhat challenging for patients and their families.

Despite discussions among the health board, Strathclyde partnership for transport and Stagecoach, there seems little prospect of an increase in the service in the foreseeable future. Therefore, I would be grateful if the minister would consider helping to bring together the relevant parties with a view to finding a viable solution and, if required, making funding available to ensure that patients in the south of Ayrshire are not disadvantaged in accessing the care that they need.

Michael Matheson: I am aware that initial funding was provided by NHS Ayrshire and Arran and SPT to establish transport provision on the particular route that the member referred to. The intention was that the route would become commercially viable. However, I understand that, due to low usage, it did not and Stagecoach was unable to sustain the service at the level that it had originally planned.

At the current time, where a service is not provided by the market, the local transport authority—in this instance, SPT—has the powers and the budget to provide funds to support adequate services, where it thinks that necessary. I am more than happy to meet the member to discuss the matter. However, as I am sure he will appreciate, funding provision would be an issue for the local transport authority.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): Could the minister look into the matter more widely, because I suspect that the problem exists throughout Scotland, not just in Adam Ingram's area? Certainly, it is prevalent in the Highlands and Islands. I have been involved with patient groups in Nairn, where there is no regular bus

service between the town centre and the general practitioner practice, which is based at the hospital, which means that patients cannot get back and forth. That is a big issue for elderly patients, who might not be able to walk that distance. It might be helpful if the minister could take an overall look at the issue in order to get health boards to work with their transport partnerships to ensure that people have adequate transport to hospital.

Michael Matheson: We are always prepared to consider various ways in which we can improve these issues, and it is important that health boards actively seek to forge appropriate partnerships with the right agencies, in order to overcome specific problems in their localities. NHS Highland should be looking to work with the transport authority and the local authority there to identify the best solution to overcome the type of transport problems that individual patients might be experiencing. If the member wants to raise specific examples of situations in which she feels that the board is not adequately engaging with those partners, we would be more than happy to ensure that the health board pays close attention to the issues and engages with the local transport authority in order to find a solution to the matter.

Cancer (Waiting Time Targets)

7. Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government for which cancers waiting times targets are not being met. (S4O-02993)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): The two cancer access standards are an all-Scotland standard and apply to all cancer types combined.

There is variation in the numbers and complexity of some cancer types, and there are some cases in which good clinical practice means that patients cannot or should not be pushed through a pathway to achieve a target.

The 31-day target has been achieved ever since its introduction and, for the most recent published data, the 31-day standard was exceeded at 98.1 per cent. In the most recent published quarter, 94.5 per cent of patients in Scotland were treated within the 62-day standard. A breakdown of performance by cancer type can be found in the quarterly Information Services Division statistical publications.

Hugh Henry: I am disappointed that the cabinet secretary has referred me back to the ISD publications to get the answer to the very specific question that I asked. It would be relatively simple to give us the list of the individual cancers for which the targets are not being met. I accept some of the points that the cabinet secretary makes

about the wider calculation, but it is a simple question. For each of the individual cancers where targets are not being met, will the cabinet secretary guarantee that the target will be met by the end of December 2014?

Alex Neil: The member has not understood my answer. The target is for all cancers combined; there is not a separate target for each cancer type. Indeed, I remind the member that the targets were set in 2001 by an Administration in which he was a minister. We have retained the same targets that are defined in exactly the same way as they were by the previous Administration.

E-cigarettes (Availability and Marketing)

8. John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the widening availability and increased marketing of e-cigarettes. (S4O-02994)

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): Although electronic cigarettes might have the potential to help people quit tobacco, their long-term public health effects are not known. I remain concerned that the promotion of those devices could renormalise smoking behaviour, particularly among young people.

I welcome the revised European tobacco products directive, which sets out a number of measures for the regulation of electronic cigarettes. It includes subjecting non-medical electronic cigarettes to the same advertising restrictions as tobacco products.

The Scottish Government is also committed to considering what additional measures may be required in Scotland to further protect public health, such as restricting age of sale for electronic cigarettes.

John Mason: The minister probably knows that today is national no smoking day. I note what he says about companies perhaps trying to renormalise smoking. Does he share my concern that the tobacco industry now seems to own most of the e-cigarette manufacturers and that we should be very guarded about its intentions?

Michael Matheson: I am aware that the tobacco industry has invested heavily in electronic cigarettes, and I am sure that all members will recognise that its business is to ensure that people keep buying its products, particularly cigarettes.

As I have said, properly regulated electronic cigarettes might have the potential to support people who are quitting tobacco. However, we need to take appropriate steps to ensure that those devices are not used to renormalise smoking behaviour or to promote addiction. That is especially important for young people who are not

smokers and do not therefore need devices to help them to quit smoking.

It is right that we should also stand against promotion, advertising and sponsorship deals that feed nicotine addiction, especially in the context of being attractive to young people. Those are the principles that will underpin any further work that we do in this area.

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I begin by thanking the minister for his robust stance on this issue. It is an extremely important area in which the field is moving very fast.

From the EU decisions, it appears that there will be two classifications of e-cigarette, one above and one below a certain level of content. Those that are below that level of content might have additives that are of considerable concern but will not be subject to medical devices regulation, even if that is introduced.

Will the minister consider referring to the Food Standards Agency the question of the content and safety of the e-cigarettes that are not covered by medical devices regulation? Will he also undertake to look at the possibility of carrying out research into where these things are being sold and to whom so that we can determine whether they are helping people to come off cigarettes, which is the manufacturers' stated intent, or whether they are encouraging young people in particular to take up smoking?

Michael Matheson: The member is quite right to highlight the fact that this is a fast-moving agenda and that we need to be proactive in addressing it. He is also correct to say that the EU tobacco directive highlighted a number of different issues that have to be considered. The directive somewhat superseded the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's recommendation that electronic cigarettes should be classified as a medical device.

The directive has set out the maximum level of nicotine that e-cigarettes should contain, as well as a range of other worthwhile measures that should be all taken forward, including making them child tamper proof. We will consider what further measures need to take place here in Scotland. I am anxious not to undermine the decades of good work that has been undertaken to reduce tobacco use; we do not want that to be unpicked by the tobacco industry using electronic cigarettes almost as a Trojan horse to achieve its objectives. We should consider what measures we need to put in place to ensure that there are adequate safeguards around the use of electronic cigarettes.

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con): I assure the minister that, if he progresses the

matter in a responsible, measured way, he will have our support.

I wish to concentrate on the devices themselves, most of which are manufactured in the far east. There is not the necessary public awareness of the fact that some of the devices have been said to melt and to contain formaldehyde, antifreeze and other ingredients. Will the minister ensure that the public are made aware that the issue does not just concern nicotine and that the device itself is potentially a harbinger of other serious conditions?

Michael Matheson: I agree with the points that the member has made. Part of the challenge is down to the fact that e-cigarettes are unregulated at present. The intention was for them to be regulated as a medical device. The MHRA had made recommendations about pursuing that, and those provisions were set to be introduced in 2016. However, the tobacco products directive has somewhat superseded that approach in that, under it, e-cigarettes should not be regulated on that basis and may be used as a device in their own right. However, in following that, we should adopt a range of measures to regulate the products adequately.

We believe that the approach that we are taking is measured and responsible. It is not about getting on the backs of individuals who are making use of electronic cigarettes to help reduce their tobacco use; it is about ensuring that there are adequate safeguards in place around how and where they can be used.

Consultant Recruitment (Remote Northern and Island Hospitals)

9. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing has had with national health service boards regarding recruitment of consultants for remote northern and island hospitals. (S4O-02995)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): The Scottish Government has regular discussions on a wide range of matters with all health boards, including NHS Highland, and including the issue that is raised in the question.

Rob Gibson: I thank the cabinet secretary for that short answer.

In NHS Highland, too high a proportion of mums-to-be feel that they should not have to be hospitalised in Inverness, which is 100 miles from their homes, if they are in the north of my constituency. Can the cabinet secretary help us to maintain maternity consultants at Caithness general hospital in Wick, and to find suitable

generalists, who are required to make remote and rural hospital services work?

Alex Neil: It was very sad to hear about the recent untimely death of a locum in Caithness, who was providing maternity services cover for a consultant who retired in December 2013.

I am glad to say that NHS Highland is working hard to recruit a substantive consultant to Caithness general hospital. Workforce planning and recruitment is properly a matter for NHS boards, but I assure Rob Gibson that the Scottish Government gives sustainable services high priority. We will continue to work closely with boards across Scotland to ensure that the right people are recruited in the right numbers, in the right places and at the right time. That includes in Caithness and at other rural hospitals in the Highlands and elsewhere.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The matter is an issue not just for the health service, but for the whole public service. The health service could work together with other public service departments to provide career breaks and the like for the partners of people who are being recruited. Sometimes, it is a block to people taking up jobs for which they have to move home that no career pathway is apparent for their partner. If all the public service were to come together and guarantee jobs for partners, that would make the whole situation a lot more attractive, and it would help to retain people in the areas concerned.

Alex Neil: That suggestion would require detailed consideration. To give that kind of guarantee would obviously have a huge number of consequences and implications—not least for finance.

In the meantime, we are working with boards—especially in remote and rural areas, including island communities—to fill vacancies as quickly as possible, in particular in maternity and many other essential services. We fundamentally believe that people who live in remote, rural and island communities are entitled to the same quality of care as everybody else in Scotland.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (Meetings)

10. Paul Martin (Glasgow Provan) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government when it last met representatives of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde board and what matters were discussed. (S4O-02996)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): Ministers and Government officials regularly meet representatives of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to discuss matters of importance to local people.

Paul Martin: Dental practitioners have advised me in recent discussions that there are still concerns about the levels of dental decay among children in my constituency and surrounding constituencies.

Does the minister commend, as I do, the good work of the Gladiator Programme's Gladigator project—which is based in Easterhouse in my constituency—and its creativity in how it promotes good oral health among young people? Unfortunately, the project has had its funding cut by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Will the minister agree to meet me to discuss the matter further and to look at ways in which we can ensure that that community project is supported in the good work that it has been doing since 1996?

Alex Neil: I join Paul Martin in underlining the importance of dental healthcare, and not just for dental health itself but in terms of the impact that it has on the rest of an individual's health. I will, of course, be happy to meet him to discuss the local situation in his constituency.

Independence (Cross-border Transplantation of Organs)

11. Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with NHS Blood and Transplant about cross-border transplantation of organs in an independent Scotland. (S4O-02997)

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): Government officials are in regular contact with NHS Blood and Transplant on a range of issues. The NHS in Scotland is already fully devolved, and independence will not change the way in which cross-border transplantation of organs is managed. NHS Blood and Transplant agrees with that assessment, and has confirmed in writing that it does not believe that there would be any significant change to the management of organ donation and transplantation in the event of independence.

Christian Allard: As a regular blood donor, I thank the minister for his answer. Does he agree with me that the no campaign should confirm that cross-border organ transplantations would be unaffected by a yes vote?

Michael Matheson: I do not know that I am best placed to advise project fear on how it should lead its campaign, although its attempt to raise fears around the idea that in an independent Scotland people would have difficulty accessing organs for transplantation has taken that campaign to a new low.

Christian Allard is correct, and NHS Blood and Transplant has made it clear to us that it does not believe that there would be any significant change to the management of organ donation and

transplantation in the event of Scotland becoming independent—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order, please.

Michael Matheson: Organ donation and transplant activity have always been delivered collaboratively across the UK. When Scotland becomes independent, that will continue to be the case. That position was set out clearly in the Government's white paper, "Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland".

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): Like the cabinet secretary—and, I presume, the minister—I am anxious that health does not become a political football in the chamber.

We currently enjoy a reciprocal arrangement because we are part of the United Kingdom; my family has benefited from it. However, in the event that we become independent, would Scottish patients have the same access rights to treatment in England as French patients, for example? Would that put us on a European waiting list for transplant? What changes would there be in that respect, and how much would have to be negotiated?

Michael Matheson: The arrangements for transplantation would be the same as they are at present, and the reciprocal health arrangements in the European Union would be the same as they are now, right across Europe.

Nanette Milne said that she is keen not to have the issue turned into a political football, but I recall that she was the member who raised the issue with NHS Blood and Transplant last August to ask for clarification on the arrangements.

NHS Blood and Transplant has provided clarification that independence would create no uncertainty. In fact, the Irish Government has an agreement with NHS Blood and Transplant, and other countries work together to share organs through Eurotransplant and Scandiatransplant. That is exactly what will happen when Scotland becomes independent.

Plagiocephaly

12. John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what action it has taken in the last year to assess and address the incidence of plagiocephaly. (S4O-02998)

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): The Scottish Government and NHS Scotland have not assessed the incidence of plagiocephaly in the past year, but the condition is monitored as part of the Scottish child health programme in the same way as any other condition. The majority of cases of simple postural plagiocephaly resolve themselves without the

need for any treatment. The Scottish Government provides information to all new parents that recommends supervised tummy time for all babies. For a very small number of babies, physical therapy and repositioning advice will be provided by the national health service. [Interruption.]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I ask members to ensure that their mobile phones are switched off.

John Pentland: Responses that I have obtained from health boards show gaps in their knowledge and in information provision to parents. Is it not the case that, because of the Scottish Government's disinterest and inaction, hundreds of severely affected babies every year might be missing out on the treatment that they need?

Michael Matheson: Information is provided to parents when a baby is born. Individual health boards are responsible for ensuring that that happens. It is important that boards make that information available effectively. We should keep it in mind that very few babies with the condition require any form of clinical intervention and that, for the vast majority of children, the condition resolves itself within the first five years. Where there is a requirement for specific clinical intervention, the child would be referred to a community paediatrician and, if necessary, referred on to a paediatric neurosurgeon for the issue to be considered in more detail. Only a few children require that type of clinical intervention, which the NHS provides across the country as and when necessary.

Private Healthcare (Spending on Operations and Procedures)

13. Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government how much the national health service has spent on operations and procedures in the private sector in each of the last three years. (S4O-02999)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): Although information is not held centrally specifically in relation to spend on operations and procedures, we have obtained from NHS boards the spend on the use of the private sector to deliver the acute hospital waiting time guarantee and standards in each of the last three years. The figures were £8 million, £11.6 million and £28.5 million

The increase in the use of the private sector in 2012-13 relates mainly to two boards that are currently experiencing capacity issues: NHS Grampian and NHS Lothian. As the member is aware, NHS Lothian is dealing with the challenge that capacity at Edinburgh royal infirmary is 20 per cent lower than required to meet today's needs.

That is why the board has agreed a plan that will see it invest in a multimillion pound expansion over the next year, which will reduce its requirement to use the private sector. NHS Grampian has recently agreed an £18 million investment programme, which will increase capacity by building new theatres and employing more doctors, nurses and support staff. That additional capacity will also significantly reduce the board's need for the private sector from 2014-15.

The Scottish Government policy on the use of the private sector is clear: we expect boards to build sustainable capacity in the health service, with the private sector used only in the margins.

Malcolm Chisholm: On 6 June last year, the *British Medical Journal* published a call from NHS Scotland at national level for expressions of interest from private sector healthcare providers to provide clinical services to the NHS in Scotland. What was the response to that call? More generally, what is the Scottish Government's role in planning and arranging the provision of private sector clinical services for NHS boards?

Alex Neil: Primarily, those services are organised by the boards, but that is often in consultation with us. For example, with NHS Lothian and NHS Grampian, because of the substantial investment programmes that are being put in place to meet the quality and patient safety requirements as well as the waiting time guarantee, such measures have to be agreed by the Scottish Government before they are implemented.

Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP): The cabinet secretary might be aware of the increasing number of elective surgeries, such as hip or knee replacements, that are taking place in the private sector south of the border. Is he aware of how waiting times for those surgeries compare to waiting times in Scotland, where they are carried out in the public sector?

Alex Neil: I am, indeed—the waiting times in Scotland are far superior to those in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. I am happy to place in the Scottish Parliament information centre more information on waiting times for various procedures in the Scottish health service and comparable figures for each of the other three Administrations in the United Kingdom. That just shows how we are delivering on the health service in Scotland. We have agreement among all the parties in Scotland that we will deliver the health service in the public sector and we will not privatise it by the front door or by the back door, in the way that Andy Burnham set the process alight south of the border.

Community-led Healthy Behaviour Change Projects

14. Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): To ask the Scottish Government how it supports community-led healthy behaviour change projects. (S4O-03000) [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry Ms Johnstone; could you read that again? We could not hear you.

Alison Johnstone: Certainly. To ask the Scottish Government how it supports community-led healthy behaviour change projects.

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): The Government is investing heavily in that agenda. With national outcomes for reducing premature mortality and increasing physical activity we recognise the importance of community participation and ownership. We are committed to a decisive shift to prevention linked to the desire to reform the delivery of public services across Scotland that is founded on an assets-based approach and the principle of co-production in communities.

Alison Johnstone: During the budget process we highlighted the need for a health fund that would be designed to harness the creativity and local knowledge of community groups and organisations. The climate challenge fund uses that model to promote low-carbon projects and we would like to see the same community control approach taken to address obesity and health inequality.

Does the minister agree that, although we can ask people what action they think public bodies should take, putting people and community groups in charge of at least some of the health budget will lead to more innovative and locally relevant activities?

Michael Matheson: Some activity is already taking place in different parts of the country. For example, a number of months ago I visited a project in Fife, which is being supported by Inspire Scotland, NHS Fife and other partners, that is very much about providing resource to a local community so that it can identify the key issues that it wishes to address and build on local assets effectively. We want to see that type of approach across the country.

We are working with third sector organisations such as Inspire Scotland and others to build on that type of assets-based approach, to empower local communities to use their assets to help their health and wellbeing. We will continue to take that approach.

I am aware that Alison Johnstone and her colleagues discussed this issue with John Swinney during the budget process. She will be

aware that Mr Swinney highlighted the financial limitations in which any new fund would have to operate. However, if she has specific ideas that she believes could be scaled up to a national level to better drive forward this agenda, I am more than happy to engage with her and look at the examples of what could be achieved.

National Health Service (Staffing)

15. Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how many whole-time equivalent staff are employed by the national health service. (S4O-03001)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): There are 135,016.3 whole-time equivalent people employed by the NHS in Scotland. That figure excludes general practitioners and general dentists and their staff and is greater than it was when this Government came to power by 7,954.4: an increase of more than 6 per cent.

Jim Eadie: Although it is to be welcomed that there are more NHS staff than ever before, will the cabinet secretary confirm that the staff who work in the NHS must be able to report and feed back any issues that impact on patient safety in a culture that is free from fear, intimidation or bullying? Will he confirm that the NHS confidential alert line will continue and when the Government will publish the findings of its evaluation?

Alex Neil: Staff must not only be able to report and feed back any issues, but should as a matter of duty report any malpractice or patient safety issues that they identify in their working environment, and they should be able to do so without fear or favour. I am considering carefully whether to extend the NHS Scotland national confidential alert line beyond the pilot phase and I hope to make an announcement on that soon. Jim Eadie will have noticed that a few days ago I announced that there will be no more confidentiality clauses in severance agreements between the NHS and its employees: a measure that I am sure is welcome throughout the chamber.

Hospital Mortality and Readmission Rates

16. Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government whether there is a difference in mortality and readmission rates in hospitals at the weekend compared to weekdays. (S4O-03002)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): A recent study of the mortality data provided by national health service boards to the information services division of NHS National Services Scotland in response to a freedom of information request suggested no

evidence of significant differences between the mortality rates in hospitals in Scotland at the weekend and those on weekdays.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Briefly, please, Mr Macintosh.

Ken Macintosh: I thank the cabinet secretary for his reply, although I have to say that I am surprised and disappointed that he is not aware of the number of studies that have been carried out over many years and in many countries and which reveal worryingly high death rates in hospitals at weekends.

Is the cabinet secretary aware of the very upsetting case—I have written to him about it—of a constituent dying of cancer, who, when admitted to hospital over a weekend, was subject to very poor levels of care and treatment, despite making his palliative care wishes well known in advance? Does the cabinet secretary agree that if we are to prevent such upsetting cases the staffing levels in our NHS hospitals will need to be substantially increased at weekends and on public holidays?

Alex Neil: First, I make it clear that our sympathies lie with anyone who finds themselves in the situation that Ken Macintosh's constituent and their family found themselves in. However, we cannot generalise from a particular case that there is a systemic problem at weekends with mortality rates in Scottish hospitals.

I am very familiar with the international figures, but I am also familiar with the fact that the Scottish health service is the safest in the world as a result of the patient safety programme. Indeed, the programme is probably a major contributing factor to why the mortality rate at weekends is no higher than it is during the week. Perhaps we should be emphasising the safety of patients in the health service in Scotland instead of trying to scaremonger on the basis of what happened in one case.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes portfolio questions.

Air Quality

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-09294, in the name of Claire Baker, on air quality in Scotland. I ask all members who wish to participate in the debate to press their request-to-speak button. I must indicate at the outset that this afternoon's debates are tight for time.

14:42

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):

Poor air quality is a daily experience for too many people in Scotland. Those who live, work or go to school or nursery in streets with high levels of air pollution will feel an impact on their health, and that impact will be all the greater for those with on-going medical conditions.

Our air quality breaches legally binding European air quality limits for nitrogen dioxide and tougher Scottish air quality standards. For the people who live in affected communities, the situation is unacceptable. However, the fact is that, in many ways, modern air pollution is invisible.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change might stress the fact that emissions have fallen significantly since 1990 but he knows as well as I do that that is mainly due to the closure of steel plants. Our society has changed from one in which the air was polluted by heavy industry or the burning of domestic fossil fuels—and it is clear that improvements have been made in those areas through tighter regulations and new technologies—to one in which urban air pollution is like passive smoking. Such pollution is invisible and is having an impact on the most vulnerable.

This morning, the Scottish air quality website, which reports on air quality monitoring sites, reported elevated air pollution levels at three locations across Scotland: Falkirk Banknock; Edinburgh's Salamander Street; and Dumbarton Road in Glasgow. The official classification of air pollution levels at those sites is moderate but the levels of PM10, which are small particles, have been recorded at more than 50 micrograms per m³. If that average stays above 50 for the rest of the day, it will be a breach of the daily average limit, and only seven breaches of that limit are allowed each year.

As a result, while we discuss the issue in the chamber, poor air quality is having an impact on people's health. There is evidence that it reduces life expectancy, and links with cancer are being investigated. Poor air quality particularly affects those with respiratory and cardiovascular conditions and has a more significant impact on children. Moreover, those who sit bumper to

bumper in cars should know that these pollutants can seep into their cars and make the air inside more polluted than that outside.

I know that many members across the chamber are concerned about this issue, because they frequently question the Government about it.

I acknowledge the work that Friends of the Earth is doing to raise awareness of the damage that is being done by poor air quality in urban areas and to help to push that issue up the political agenda.

Although particles and pollution travel, the majority of poor urban air quality is caused by road traffic. Addressing poor air quality needs political will, commitment and, crucially, resources—not just financial resources, but capacity in the Government and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency to drive that forward and make progress.

I am not suggesting that meeting the European Union targets or the Scottish standards is easy—although it is becoming difficult to find an environment target that the Government is meeting. However, the European Commission has launched legal proceedings against the United Kingdom because of a lack of progress in cutting nitrogen dioxide levels. Glasgow is cited as a city of particular concern. Other European countries are failing to meet the target, but the lack of a convincing strategy from the UK, to which Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland contribute, has raised concern. Furthermore, the tougher Scottish standards, which were enabled by the Environment Act 1995, have never been met. The 2005 nitrogen target and the 2010 small particles target were missed. Therefore, there is not a lot of confidence around that those targets will be met under the current plans.

We need, of course, greater investment in and a focus on modal shift to make walking, cycling and public transport options more attractive for people. The Government has a target of increasing cycle journeys to 10 per cent of all journeys by 2020 and improving air quality as part of making them more attractive. There are on-going concerns that the active travel budget is not funded at a level to make those aims achievable. We need to see more integrated transport options.

Our bus network has huge potential to deliver more in that area. Passenger cars produce nearly 60 per cent of all the CO₂ emissions from road transport across the UK, compared with the 5 per cent from buses. In a city centre, a journey by bus can result in half the CO₂ emissions per passenger of those from a journey by car. Buses are often seen as the problem, but they should be seen as part of the solution. They need to be reliable, quick and pleasant, but they are often snared up in city traffic. More needs to be done to avoid congestion

and to invest in bus stop infrastructure and real-time information.

Measures such as the green bus fund and the bus investment fund are welcome, but cuts to the bus operators grant make progress more difficult, as they are resulting in fewer routes and are restricting people's options.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): I highlight the change in the focus of the bus operators grant to avoid bus operators having an incentive to burn fuel. I hope that Claire Baker welcomes that, as it will contribute to better air quality by reducing the opportunities for buses to simply sit and burn fuel.

Claire Baker: The experience in communities is that what has happened is leading to fewer routes and higher fares. That is working against the policy that encourages people into buses, and buses are still the poor neighbours of trains in respect of public subsidy, although they have more passengers.

This is also about car management. The report on proposals and policies 2 does not have a target to reduce car use or journeys. The not far? leave the car campaign is fine as far as it goes, but it will not achieve the step change that is needed. We need to engage the public, which is another reason why the Friends of the Earth campaign is so welcome. Some of the options out there might not be popular, but there are many that are carrots instead of sticks.

Urban air pollution needs to be tackled in partnership with local authorities, which have responsibility for monitoring air quality, declaring problems and producing air quality action plans. Currently, there are 35 air quality action plans in Scotland, but they are failing to deliver the reductions. I know that the Government is reviewing the local air quality action plans, and I am pleased that one of the outcomes is expected to be the increased monitoring of fine particles. I hope that the outcomes will include a plan to introduce a Scottish standard for those.

We also need to consider whether the appropriate obligations are on local authorities, but we need to be honest about the difficulties that they face in achieving the targets. Although they have the statutory responsibility to manage air quality, the statutory obligation for meeting the air quality target is on the Scottish Government. Local authorities often work in historic environments that were not designed for modern travel or population numbers; they work on short electoral cycles, which can make some of the more unpopular decisions and options difficult to deliver; and we cannot forget that they are working under significant financial pressures.

We must ask whether the Government gives enough direction and levers to local authorities to deliver. The minister will point to welcome projects and pilots, but in replies to recent parliamentary questions the Scottish Government has confirmed that improving air quality is not an expectation of the single outcome agreements with local authorities or community planning partners.

In addition, the Government has not included the need to meet air quality objectives in the second Scottish planning policy or the third national planning framework. We need to ask whether existing tools are being used effectively. For example, I walked from the station this morning past hotels outside which coaches were sitting with their engines idling; and I live opposite a primary school where cars will often sit with their engines running for 15 minutes until the school closes. There is a power that local authorities can apply to use to fine vehicles that are idling, but I understand that only six authorities so far have applied to use that power.

RPP2 is the underpinning strategic document, but it is not a particularly convincing set of proposals for action in this area. For Scotland to meet its annual emissions targets, it needs the EU to set the target at 30 per cent and all the policies and proposals to be introduced. There is an overreliance in RPP2 on proposals, and the concern that failure to meet early targets makes them harder to deliver in later years is justified.

There are opportunities to strengthen the policy direction to give more tools to partners to make a difference, and we should take them. The proposed low emissions strategy must be the focus for renewed emphasis. It must be robust and provide a clear timetable for action. We need to have the ambition to no longer have a need for air quality management areas. The Government has announced the strategy, but we have little information on what it will include and whether it will be consulted on. Given the weakness of RPP2 on transport and the lack of focus on air quality in the planning policy, the strategy must give added impetus to delivery in those areas.

I welcome the amendments from other members, but I do not fully understand the need for the Conservatives' amendment to take out from my motion reference to the European Commission's legal action, which is a statement of fact. However, as I have outlined, I agree with the amendment's analysis of RPP2.

Although I am sympathetic to the Greens' amendment and support calls for more investment in low emission travel, I am cautious about the amendment's proposed mechanism of proportionality and the consequences that it might have for big infrastructure projects. Such consequences might be the intention of the

Greens, but there are concerns around what that would mean for a big rail transport project, for example, and the potential for big projects on either side of the debate to skew how proportionality would work. However, I look forward to Patrick Harvie's contribution to the debate.

The Government's amendment asks me to put faith in a strategy that I have not yet seen, so I will listen to what the minister says further on that.

Air pollution remains Scotland's greatest environmental health threat. It affects people and communities every day across Scotland, contributing to and causing poor health and impacting most on the young and the vulnerable. However, it is a problem with a solution that is in our power, and we should work together and be bold enough to tackle it.

I move,

That the Parliament is concerned with the level of air pollution identified by the 2013 air quality monitoring results, which show that a high number of areas are in breach of air quality safety standards; believes that air pollution is an aggravator of respiratory conditions, is linked to other serious health conditions and is understood to be a contributory factor in over 1,500 deaths in Scotland annually; highlights the European Commission's launch of legal proceedings against the UK due to failure to cut excessive levels of nitrogen dioxide; regrets that, in addition to failing to meet the EU standards on nitrogen dioxide, Scotland has also failed to meet Scottish standards on nitrogen dioxide and small particles (PM10); calls on the Scottish Government to increase the monitoring of fine particles (PM2.5) and to introduce a Scottish standard for these; believes that it is vital for the Scottish Government to work closely with local authorities as well as delivery partners to ensure that the necessary action is taken to tackle air pollution in Scotland; notes the Scottish Government's plan to bring forward a national low-emissions strategy, but believes that, given the scale of the challenge that the country faces, this strategy must be robust, include a clear timetable for action and ensure that national planning guidance and transport policy play a full part in delivery to ensure that air quality targets are met.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Paul Wheelhouse to speak to and move amendment S4M-09294.3. You have a maximum of seven minutes, minister.

14:52

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): Thank you, Presiding Officer.

Air quality in Scotland is generally good, but there are areas where it is of poor quality and affects the health of some individuals. Policies introduced over recent years to reduce emissions from transport and industry have allowed us to make real progress in driving down pollution levels. The Scottish Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing that situation.

We have come a long way since the smogs of the 1950s. To be fair to Claire Baker, I acknowledge that a lot of that has been down to de-industrialisation. Overall, the air that we breathe today is cleaner than at any time since the industrial revolution. We have achieved cleaner air by regulating industrial emissions, progressively tightening vehicle emissions and fuel standards, and controlling smoke. We continue to make progress in improving Scotland's air quality. Emissions data released last year show that between 1990 and 2011 nitrogen dioxide decreased by 65 per cent, particulates by 58 per cent and sulphur dioxide by 79 per cent. Further decreases are predicted up to 2030 compared with 2010 levels: nitrogen oxides are expected to decline by a further 45 per cent, particulates by 5 per cent and sulphur dioxide by 40 per cent.

Despite very real achievements, we must acknowledge that areas of poorer air quality remain in some of our local areas. Clearly, much more remains to be done if we are to maintain momentum and deliver benefits. Air pollution disproportionately affects the health of the most vulnerable members of society—the very young, the elderly and those with existing cardiovascular and respiratory conditions—and can affect their quality of life. People rightly expect to be able to breathe clean air, and we are determined to reduce emissions still further by working closely with Transport Scotland, local authorities, SEPA, Health Protection Scotland and others.

The Scottish Government demonstrates its commitment to delivering clean air for a good quality of life in the air quality strategy, which sets out the policy framework for air quality in Scotland, with objectives for a number of pollutants of concern for human health.

It sets out the clear links between poor air quality and public health. I understand that current levels of air pollution shorten life expectancy by an average of seven to eight months, at an annual cost to society that is measured in billions of pounds. Across the UK, air pollution causes up to 24,000 deaths per year, which is nine times more than traffic fatalities, so it is clearly a significant problem.

We can all play a part in helping to deliver cleaner air to ensure a less polluted environment both now and for future generations, whether we do that as businesses or as individuals. In that context, it is vital that we communicate our message that personal behavioural choices play a key role in improving local environmental quality. Individual actions make a difference, and we all have a duty to ensure that we get that message across in a way that is relevant to people's lives.

Much more is being done by the Scottish Government and our partners that benefits air

quality. For instance, Transport Scotland initiatives such as the green bus fund, which Claire Baker mentioned, and the plug-in vehicles road map not only contribute to our work to tackle greenhouse gas emissions, but also help to reduce air pollution. That is an excellent example of how we are co-ordinating our policies to deliver win-win outcomes for both air quality and climate change. In addition, we recently provided SEPA with £200,000 to fund the work of the urban air quality group, which is a partnership that aims to support and assist efforts throughout Scotland to improve urban air quality.

Of the various pollutants for which objectives have been set, particulate matter can be singled out for special attention. Particulate pollution has well-documented short and long-term effects on human health. Indeed, it is not currently possible to discern a threshold concentration below which this pollutant has no effects on human health. Both short and long-term exposure to ambient levels of particulate matter are consistently associated with respiratory and cardiovascular illness and mortality, as well as other ill-health effects.

We have responded by adopting the most challenging air quality objectives in the UK. Objectives have been in place for particles of 10 microns or less in diameter, commonly referred to as PM10. However, recent reviews by the World Health Organization and others have suggested that exposure to a finer fraction of particles—PM2.5—gives a stronger association with the observed ill-health effects. We therefore set provisional objectives for PM2.5 in the 2007 air quality strategy review. In many urban areas of Scotland, reductions in ambient particle concentrations are required to achieve those ambitious objectives.

Local authorities have a vital role to play in helping us to secure further improvements to air quality, not only in respect of the idling buses that Claire Baker mentioned, which we need to control, but in respect of air quality management areas. A number of local authorities have designated such areas and prepared associated air quality action plans in order to work towards achieving reductions.

Last year, we consulted on proposals to overhaul and revamp the local air quality management system. The proposals attracted widespread support, and I believe that, once they are implemented, they will enable local authorities to deliver on their air quality responsibilities even more effectively. Among the key proposals that we are developing for further consultation are to incorporate the provisional PM2.5 objectives into regulations, placing a legal obligation on local authorities to monitor this important pollutant; to streamline the reporting process to free up time

and resources for implementing actions; to maintain the Scottish air quality monitoring network at its current level; to place greater emphasis on action plan delivery through updated and more focused guidance; and to develop a clear message on the health impacts of poor air quality as the centrepiece of a national co-ordinated campaign.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): Will the minister clarify the timescales for the project, please?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Minister, you are approaching your final minute.

Paul Wheelhouse: We hope to have that by the end of the calendar year. I will provide more information to the member.

We are developing a national low emissions strategy, which will draw together the wide range of policies and initiatives that are being taken forward by the Scottish Government and others. It will highlight and strengthen the links between air quality and other elements of the Government's work on climate change, transport, renewable energy, health and planning, and it will set out the contribution that reduced air pollution can make to sustainable economic growth and quality of life in our towns and cities.

Alongside our domestic air quality targets, we have national responsibilities. The UK, along with other EU member states, has to comply with air quality limit values that are set in European legislation, and failure to achieve those by the required dates could lead to infraction and heavy fines. Indeed, in the past few weeks, the European Commission has written to the UK Government indicating that it intends to commence infraction proceedings in respect of failure to comply with nitrogen dioxide limit values in 15 zones in England plus the Glasgow urban area. We are working closely with the UK Government to prepare a response to the Commission that demonstrates how we intend to secure full compliance as soon as possible.

We cannot afford to be complacent, as there are still many air pollution issues to be addressed. Work must continue to ensure that the achievements of recent years are not just maintained but improved upon, and that our evidence base is of the best possible quality. In that way, we hope to ensure a cleaner, greener Scotland for everyone.

I move amendment S4M-09294.3, to leave out from "is concerned" to end and insert:

"notes the 2013 air quality monitoring results and that, while improvements in air quality have been made over recent years, a number of hot spot areas still exist, which have impacts on the quality of life and health and wellbeing of impacted communities and individuals, particularly those

with pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular conditions; recognises the work that has been led by the Scottish Government, local authorities and others to improve air quality and protect the quality of life of individuals and communities; recognises, however, that more needs to be done, and welcomes initiatives such as the Low Emission Strategy that will deliver further progress."

14:59

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this debate on air quality. It is useful that Labour is using its debating time to highlight this important issue.

Claire Baker set out effectively the Scottish Government's failures to meet EU air quality standards. We recognise that, overall, significant reductions have been made in air pollutants from the 1990 baselines, but it is a concern to all of us in the Parliament that unacceptably high levels of air pollution—especially from nitrogen dioxide, which causes increased ground-level ozone and particulate matter—were measured in 2013 in some of the busiest commuter and shopping streets in Scotland, such as Byres Road and Hope Street in Glasgow and Queensferry Road in Edinburgh. As has been pointed out, some of the high levels of air pollution break targets that were set in the 1990s and which were to be met by 2005 under the Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2000.

All of us know that nitrogen oxides in our environment cause acid rain, which damages plant and animal life in forests, lochs and rivers and harms buildings and historical sites. High levels of nitrogen oxides can cause eutrophication, which threatens biodiversity through the excessive growth of plant algae. Planting more trees in urban areas can help to mitigate levels of some air pollutants and we support that.

As the Labour motion makes clear, poor air quality has a potentially severe impact on human health. It has been suggested that air pollution is a factor in more than 1,500 deaths in Scotland each year, which must be a major concern. At high concentrations, nitrogen dioxide and particulates can cause inflammation of the airways and affect lung capacity. Some studies suggest that long-term exposure to fine particulate matter may be associated with increased rates of chronic bronchitis. As a sufferer of respiratory problems, I am conscious of the effect of poor air quality. To put it simply, it can be much harder for many Scots to breathe in congested city streets.

The presence and concentration of pollutants in our air are very affected by the prevailing climatic conditions. I commend the efforts of the Met Office in Scotland, which is working with community health partnerships and doctors to support people

in self-managing some long-term conditions that are known to be impacted by weather conditions. The Met Office's healthy outlook service helps those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Research that was recently published in the *BMJ* suggested that exposure to fine particles in the air increases the risk of heart attacks and unstable angina, as well as having an impact on those who suffer from respiratory illnesses such as asthma and COPD.

My amendment refers to the Scottish Government's failures to meet overall emissions targets. Meeting those targets, tackling climate change and improving air quality are all interconnected and shared aims. Progress in each area will mean corresponding progress elsewhere. It is important that Scotland meets and is seen to meet air quality targets as we seek to persuade other nations of the need to take action. It is ironic that Scotland—a country that is renowned worldwide for its beautiful mountain scenery and clean environment—should be plagued by bad air quality in specific areas. We have the great advantage of masses of space for our population, so we should be ahead of the game and not languishing behind on the targets.

Paul Wheelhouse: Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie McGrigor: Am I allowed to give way, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): Yes.

Paul Wheelhouse: Jamie McGrigor says that the Scottish Government is lagging behind and failing to meet its targets. Will he comment on the fact that 15 areas in England are failing to meet the standard? We in Scotland have tougher climate change legislation and tighter targets than his party's Government in London has.

Jamie McGrigor: I take that point. How long have I got, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You have 45 seconds.

Jamie McGrigor: Local authorities appear to be somewhat uncertain and confused about what they are meant to do to achieve EU air quality values. It is easy to diagnose the problems but difficult to know what measures to take to solve them. That uncertainty must be cleared up and local authorities' role must be made clearer. They should play a key role in ensuring that air quality action plans have a much more significant impact on problems.

We welcome today's focus on air quality and we urge ministers to work closely with our local authorities and all other stakeholders to implement

practical measures to tackle the most alarming occurrences of poor air quality in Scotland.

I move amendment S4M-09294.1, to leave out from "highlights" to end and insert:

"regrets that, despite repeatedly missing its own statutory emissions reduction targets, the Scottish Government has failed to produce a draft Report on Policies and Proposals 2 that is fit for purpose; recognises that, if it continues on this path, Scotland will fail to reduce carbon emissions by 42% by 2020, and calls on the Scottish Government to work closely with local authorities to ensure that action is taken to tackle air pollution in Scotland and to ensure that policy coherence is implemented across all Scottish Government directorates."

15:05

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I welcome the Labour Party's choice of topic in bringing a motion on air quality to the Parliament today.

The minister started by saying that air quality in Scotland is generally good. The minister said that people rightly expect to be able to breathe clean air. The minister said that we cannot afford to be complacent, and talked about the effects of air pollution on the health of vulnerable members of society. The minister talked about the role of local authorities in declaring air quality management areas and drawing up action plans.

The minister, when she made those comments, was responding on behalf of the Scottish Executive, as it was then. Can members guess where I am going with this? I am talking about my first members' business debate, way back in 2005. All those comments appeared, many of them verbatim, in today's speech from the current minister in the current Scottish Government. Air pollution is a longstanding issue. Everyone agrees that we must do more to tackle it and that we cannot afford to be complacent, yet we change very little.

There were striking similarities between the two speeches, but there were also some differences. When she responded to the debate in 2005, Rhona Brankin at least had a bit more to say about transport. She recognised that road transport is the primary cause of the problem, particularly in the hotspots, such as in Glasgow, which I represent, where Hope Street has a chronic problem of poor air quality—by many measures, it is the worst area in Scotland in that regard.

However, although Rhona Brankin mentioned the unique situation of Glasgow having the M8 running through the city centre, two or three minutes later in her speech she talked up the idea of building another motorway through Glasgow, although that would bring even more of the problem to our city. I am sad to say that the

current Scottish Government was only too pleased to complete the M74 northern extension.

Since then, what progress has there been? I have the traffic stats for Glasgow with me. Since the beginning of the century there have been only two years in which there was a reduction in all motor vehicle traffic or in car traffic. If we are acknowledging that road transport is the cause of the problem, let us do something about the cause rather than write more and more frustrating air quality action plans, while making the problem worse not better.

The statistics for the whole of Scotland are similar. Although in 2012 there was a very marginal decrease in road traffic levels in the UK, Scotland achieved a marginal increase—and it is many years since arguments about road traffic reduction targets and demand management on our roads have been fashionable.

The situation in relation to NO₂ and PM10s is particularly chronic in Glasgow, but the problem is by no means limited to Glasgow; it is a national issue. In East Lothian, my colleagues in the local Scottish Green Party branch have been campaigning on high street air pollution. They used freedom of information requests, which resulted in the revelation that the local council had been sitting on a report on the issues for a year. Since the report's release, there has at least been the declaration of a management area and there have been the beginnings of a recognition that action is needed.

The minister today mentioned planning. I regret that there is only a fleeting mention in the national planning framework of the need to use the planning system to protect the quality of our air. The SNP's manifesto commitment, which was similar to the wording at the end of my amendment, talked about increasing the proportion of transport spend that goes on low-carbon, active and sustainable transport. I wonder whether the minister can respond on behalf of his colleague the transport minister and say whether he will turn up to this year's pedal on Parliament event to discuss that with the people who have been campaigning most vociferously for it.

I move amendment S4M-09294.2, to insert at end:

“; recognises that traffic is the leading cause of urban air pollution and therefore the need to reduce road traffic levels, and commits to a year-on-year increase in the proportion of the transport infrastructure budget spent on low-emission travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport”.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate. We are extraordinarily tight for time. Members have up to four minutes, please.

15:10

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): The word “noxious” long predates the identification of NO_x—nitrogen oxides—but is as fitting a word as any to describe them and their health effects on the people who have to breathe them in alongside particulate matter, especially the very young, the very old and those with existing respiratory conditions. I declare an interest as an asthmatic with two decades of prescriptions behind me who walks to work every day through an air quality management area. That gives me the advantage that, walking through some of Scotland's most polluted streets in my constituency, I feel the pain of those who are affected—quite literally. As citizens of a modern, democratic nation, we should be able to expect the air that we breathe to sustain us rather than harm us.

Following the expansion last year of the part of central Edinburgh that is officially classified as polluted, I wrote to Lesley Hinds, the portfolio holder for transport and the environment at the City of Edinburgh Council and a Labour councillor, urging her and her officials to consider establishing a low emission zone in central Edinburgh. In particular, I was concerned about buses, having found figures that showed that, although some operators such as Lothian Buses had been exemplary in their roll-out of new vehicles, others had not kept up. I was inspired by examples from Norwich, Oxford and London, where local authorities have imposed minimum standards on all buses that enter the city centre. Since then, FirstBus has stepped up with a 425-unit order and Lothian Buses, which was enthusiastic in its response, has continued to be an enthusiastic customer of the Scottish Government's green bus fund and the previous emissions reduction grant scheme.

The volume of heavy goods vehicles in the city centre has been reduced by the business improvement district's collectivisation of commercial waste, and the City of Edinburgh Council has an enviable cross-party consensus on the need to invest more in cycling and walking routes, which other authorities should look to as an example. Successive council administrations of various colours have also used the limited lever of residents parking permit charges to incentivise lower emission vehicles.

For me, the lesson from the Edinburgh experience is clear: if there is to be change, it must be driven locally. The Scottish Government has an important role in providing support and in wielding the big stick of targets within the legal framework, demanding the action plans of which a welcome overhaul is in progress. However, municipalities must be on side, as we cannot nationalise the day-to-day management of every

pavement, bus lane and high street in the land—nor should we, even if we could. We, in this place, could not set stronger fuel standards or further vehicle excise duty incentives.

Claire Baker: Will the member take an intervention?

Marco Biagi: I am sorry, but I have only four minutes.

Nor could we, should we wish to, take the more radical steps that Sweden proposes to remove fossil fuels from transport entirely by 2030. I am not sure how that proposal interacts with Patrick Harvie's point about removing cars—surely non-emitting vehicles would not be as much of a problem.

Let us make no mistake—significant progress has been made. A fortnight ago, in an answer to a parliamentary question that I lodged, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change stated that, bar one stretch of intercity road, urban air quality in Scotland would reach European standards by 2015. That is considerably ahead of cities in the rest of the UK, where those standards will not be met until 2020 or, in the case of London, 2025. Indeed, it is much ahead of the rest of Europe, too.

However, the fact that Europe's performance is six out of 10 and England's performance is seven out of 10 does not mean that we should rest on our laurels if our performance is eight or nine out of 10. My constituents and the visitors to Princes Street, George Street, the west end, the Grassmarket, Gorgie Road and Dalry Road need the standard to reach 10 out of 10. I hope that, with the continuing offers of help and support from the Scottish Government and the substantive low emissions strategy, the City of Edinburgh Council treats the issue with the seriousness that it deserves. Councillor Hinds described my LEZ proposal as an "interesting proposal". I hope that it will soon be a reality.

15:14

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Lab): Every day, on the streets of towns and cities across Scotland, we are exposed to pollutants that can and do damage public health. From Glasgow to Edinburgh, from Aberdeen to Dundee, in my constituency and across Scotland, air pollution is a serious and growing problem that impacts on every one of us every day.

As other members have mentioned, it is an absolute scandal that every year in Scotland at least 1,500 people die prematurely because of this silent and invisible killer. Across the UK, the figure is 29,000 a year and rising. It is a huge concern that parts of my constituency have the highest air pollution levels in Fife. For example, the nitrogen

dioxide and PM10 levels are so high in Appin Crescent, which is near the centre of Dunfermline, that the area is subject to an air quality action plan. There is absolutely no doubt—anyone who has been stuck in a traffic jam on Halbeath Road could tell members this—that excessive road traffic and congestion in the area is to blame.

As Claire Baker mentioned, air pollution is a danger to public health and the wider environment. Short-term exposure has been linked to an increase in hospital admissions, with tens of thousands of people across Scotland suffering respiratory symptoms on days when particle levels are high. However, it is the impact of long-term exposure that is most alarming.

In 2013, the World Health Organization's cancer agency classified the cocktail of air pollution that we are exposed to every day as carcinogenic to humans and named it as the world's leading cause of cancer deaths. Recently, a European study found that long-term exposure to small and fine particles increases the risk of coronary events, including heart attacks and unstable angina, with the link seen at exposure levels that are below Scottish air pollution standards—and we are not even meeting those standards.

Those frightening findings are undermining public health and communities. They are undermining social justice, too, because it is society's most vulnerable—the sick, the young and the elderly—who are most at risk from exposure to dangerous air pollution levels and who are most likely to suffer health consequences as a result of our failure to act.

After smoking, the biggest public health risk that we face is from the very air that we breathe. The World Health Organization sets guidelines and limits for different air pollutants that Scotland should have achieved almost a decade ago. However, those legal limits are failing to be upheld in many communities. As a result, tens of thousands of people have paid the ultimate price.

The Scottish Government has been in power for seven years. While I recognise that some action is being taken, the reality is that we are failing to meet the standards that we have set ourselves and the lower standards that are set by the European Union.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Cara Hilton: I am sorry, but I do not have time.

The national low emissions strategy is a positive step forward, but we need more than a vision. We also need a clear timetable for action and concrete measures to ensure that air quality standards are met to ensure that everyone breathes clean air. As Patrick Harvie said, we need to ensure that we not

only have cleaner private vehicles on the road, but fewer private vehicles on the road and to make active travel a more realistic option.

We all have a responsibility to act to ensure that people get a better quality of life and that our children, grandchildren and future generations have a better quality of life, too.

The Friends of the Earth briefing for MSPs said:

"Air pollution remains Scotland's greatest environmental health threat."

It is right. The Scottish Government and local authorities can and must do more; individually, we all can and must do more. I look forward to hearing from the minister about how he plans to ensure that the air that we breathe is safe. It is simply unacceptable that 1,500 people are dying every year because of air pollution. We need urgent action to tackle the hidden danger all around us. It is putting thousands of lives at risk. We need action, not words.

15:18

Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP): The Environment Act 1995 required local authorities to assess air quality in their area and, where that exceeds air quality standards, to declare an air quality management area and prepare air quality action plans to tackle the problem.

Edinburgh has five air quality management areas. Over the past two decades, the council has introduced a number of initiatives to encourage people out of their cars. That includes greenways for public transport, park-and-ride sites located around the city boundary, and the city car club. Those initiatives have encouraged people out of their cars and, in 2011, 30 per cent of the population used either the bus or the train, 25 per cent walked and 7 per cent cycled.

Across Scotland, since the 1990s, there has been a significant reduction in pollution emissions, with decreases of 65 per cent in nitrogen oxides, 58 per cent in particulates and 79 per cent in sulphur dioxide.

In Edinburgh, until recently we had seen improvements in air quality. Between 2008 and 2010, the annual mean concentration of nitrogen oxide in St John's Road fell by a third. However, we are starting to see a deterioration in air quality along the four main arterial routes into the city from the west as a result of an increase in the volume of traffic. Nitrogen oxide levels in St John's Road increased by 23 per cent over the two-year period to 2012, with Queensferry Road breaching the limit by nearly 13 per cent in 2013. At the Gorgie Road end, the A71 has seen annual mean

concentration levels of nitrogen oxide increase close to the EU limit.

In my constituency, the A70 at Currie is the only main arterial route in the west of the city to have very low levels of nitrogen oxide. However, that is hardly surprising when we realise that the monitoring station is not at the Lanark Road but is located beyond a housing estate, behind the main building of the high school. Further along the A70, at Slateford Road, there are signs that the annual levels may be being exceeded, which suggests that the monitoring station at Currie should probably be relocated closer to the main road.

That increasing air quality problem in the west of the city will only get worse as we see an increasing number of proposals for housing developments, whether it is Edinburgh's garden district, or new homes surrounding Ratho village and in the Edinburgh Western constituency of Colin Keir. New developments are also being built in West Lothian. All those additional homes, which run into many thousands, are commutable into Edinburgh, which will result in a deterioration in the quality of life for people who live along the main routes into Edinburgh.

The planning system must treat air quality as a material planning consideration:

"The planning system plays a key role in protecting and improving the environment. Land use planning and development control can become an effective tool to improve air quality by first locating developments in such a way as to reduce emissions overall, and secondly reducing the direct impacts of those developments. Although the presence of an AQMA makes consideration of the air quality impacts of a proposed development more important, there is still a need to regard air quality as a material factor in determining planning applications in any location. This is particularly important where the proposed development is not physically within the AQMA, but could have adverse impacts on air quality within it, or where air quality in that given area is close to exceeding guideline objectives itself."

I welcome the fact that the Scottish Government is reviewing and overhauling the local air quality management system. In order for any new system to be effective, we need not only to reduce emissions from traffic but to ensure that planning decisions do not add to the problem.

15:23

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): I thank Claire Baker and the Labour Party for bringing to the chamber a debate on air quality. I broadly agree with the tenor of the remarks made by the front benchers on the challenge that we face. However, it strikes me that it is one thing to announce more strategies and yet more action plans and all the rest of it, but this is a classic case of acting local while thinking global.

My reading of air management plans and strategies is that they have simply not worked. Maybe the minister should just start with a blank piece of paper and accept that the targets—whether they were set at European, UK or Scottish levels—have not been met. I noticed that the minister did not pick that up in his speech; perhaps he will do so when he winds up. He should perhaps admit where we are and then suggest that, rather than all these things that have not worked in the past, we would be better to consider a new approach. I agree with Patrick Harvie, although he should probably be grateful that it is Paul Wheelhouse on the front bench and not Fergus Ewing—I recall the days when Fergus Ewing was doing these debates for the SNP and there was a slightly different approach from the one that Mr Wheelhouse identified in his remarks.

Patrick Harvie was right about transport. I suspect that that was the point that the minister was implying in his remarks. As some members have said, dealing with transport and the issues that come from transport is fundamental in tackling the issue of air quality. In that sense, the easiest way to start is in public sector leadership. For example, how many ministerial cars are hybrid? How many ministerial cars are still run on a simple combustion engine—as, in fairness, they were in my day?

I hope that the minister has made a big inroad into that issue and that he would want to say to the chamber that every car that will sweep ministers home from work will run on some kind of hybrid engine. I hope that he will set a target for all our health boards, councils and public agencies to move over a period of time towards a position in which none of their vehicles is running on old diesel or petrol engines and all of them are, instead, hybrid vehicles. That would show some clear leadership from the public sector. This is one of the few areas where the public sector—national Government or local government—can set a strong target for change, and I suspect that the minister would have our clear support if he were to do that. I would certainly be happy to make that case in my part of the world, although I accept that it does not have the kind of air-quality problems that have been described by members from Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The argument is about transport emissions. I agree with the analysis about industrialisation and the move away from the emission-producing plants of yesteryear; they are exactly that—in the past. Therefore, when one assesses why Scotland is missing the climate change targets that are in the Labour motion and some of the amendments, one must agree that the issue comes down to transport, fundamentally.

We talk the talk around demand management. Some of us who have been around for a while will remember the debate about whether there should be a tolling regime in this capital city in order to pay for public transport. That was thrown out by all parties—they all ducked it. We should all hold up our hands and admit that we all ducked it.

Patrick Harvie: Not quite all.

Tavish Scott: Okay, the Greens did not duck it, but everyone else did. Similarly, the proposal about workplace parking in Glasgow some years ago was ducked, too. None of us has a particularly good record on this. It will be a genuinely brave minister—and not one who is in post in the run-up to a referendum—who brings forward a package of transport measures that contains demand management in a form that does not amount to merely talking about it but sets out what would happen in every city in Scotland. Maybe once we get past the referendum, we can do what we need to do in relation to this matter rather than just talking about it.

15:27

Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in the debate and for the fact that some of the previous speeches, particularly those of Tavish Scott and Patrick Harvie, lead me in a direction that I am happy to follow.

We can simply accept that the smog and the industrial pollution of the past are, as Tavish Scott has just put it, in the past. However, it is demonstrably the case that most of the pollution that we are talking about now comes from vehicles. I commend to members some of the graphs that are available, which indicate quite clearly the rise in the daytime, which tends to be slightly worse in the morning than the evening, because the rush hour is a little bit more constrained then, but also the substantial fall at the weekend. That indicates quite clearly what we are dealing with.

However, I make the point, which I do not think has yet been made in the debate, that most of the issue is to do with the times when vehicles are stationary, not when they are running. I accept that Patrick Harvie has a point that, when there is a motorway running through a city, there are a lot of vehicles moving, and that does not help. We have to accept that. However, in our major cities, it is not the vehicles that are passing by that are doing most of the damage; it is the vehicles that are stopped and then have to accelerate. There is a solution to that, which I would like to put briefly to the chamber.

Tavish Scott talked about tolling, as if that were the only way of preventing vehicles from being

stationary in a city. However, there are two things that can be done. The first is to insist that we have modern control of our engines so that they automatically switch off when we stop and they are not on when we are sitting there. I think that that is going to come to us, so we probably have to do very little to make it happen. The second thing is that we can manage traffic. We can stop vehicles from getting into our city centres by putting traffic lights in the way that stop them until the road ahead of them is clear enough for them to get through to where they are going.

Recently, I had the experience of trying to move through Union Street in Aberdeen at about 4.30 on a Friday afternoon. Anyone who has tried that will know that it is quite impossible. The traffic moves 100 yards and then it stops. There are plenty of traffic lights. If the traffic management system meant that I could not get into a space unless I could get out of it, I would not have to sit there stationary. It would make no difference to the time that I take to get through the city, but it would make a considerable difference to the time that I am in the city on Union Street, or on Hope Street, or on any other street that we care to mention. I suggest very simply to members that that can be done with traffic lights and clever traffic management.

Patrick Harvie: I suggest very simply to Mr Don that his proposal is about moving air pollution from one place to another, not reducing the amount of it, which can be done only by running internal combustion engines less.

Nigel Don: I entirely accept that there is an element of that, but if vehicles are in an area that is constrained by high buildings and low wind speeds, moving the air pollution is not such a bad idea to some extent. We are talking ultimately about concentrations. Also, if a driver knows that another route will be better, they will go that way.

All the other comments that have been made about public transport are entirely appropriate, but I simply have not had time to address them and the Presiding Officer is not going to give me time.

15:31

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): The Environment Act 1995, which I well remember speaking to, created an obligation on each local authority to declare local air quality management areas where it found that area pollution was higher than standards, and to come up with a local air quality action plan to reduce pollution levels to within the standards.

Nineteen years later, 13 local authorities in Scotland have had to declare air quality management areas, and as Claire Baker emphasised in her speech, there has been

widespread failure to reduce pollution to the levels required by the local air quality action plans. Since 1995, we have also gained European obligations that are embodied in European directives and we are not meeting those targets either.

This is a serious health issue. Friends of the Earth has estimated that there are 1,500 deaths a year because of air pollution, but many others are suffering from poorer respiratory and cardiovascular health because of it. The main offenders are nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter called PM10, and fine particulate matter called PM2.5. It is a matter of concern that only six sites for the fine particulate matter are being monitored in Scotland, so there must be a big increase in the monitoring of fine particulate matter. Scottish standards must also be established for that, which would be best based on the WHO standard.

The other particulates—PM10 and nitrogen dioxide—are monitored. I am concerned about those generally and at a constituency level because Great Junction Street in my constituency has been an air quality management area for some time. I know that Salamander Street was also high on the list for PM10 a couple of years ago. As Claire Baker emphasised, this very day it is exceeding the standard levels for PM10. That is clearly a matter of concern to most members at the national and constituency level.

We need a lower emissions strategy, and I am glad that the Government is going to have one. Of course, it will not work unless it is joined up with other policy areas. In that strategy, we need a clear timetable for action, we need to quantify the measures that are needed to deliver clean air, we need to give guidance to local authorities, and perhaps there should even be a legal requirement for local authorities, as Friends of the Earth has suggested. Perhaps it is most important of all that we join up that policy with other policy areas, particularly transport and planning.

Many members have observed today and previously how RPP2 emphasises proposals and not policies in several crucial areas, particularly transport. Transport really has to be at the heart of action on this matter.

Prioritising active travel—walking and cycling—has to be our number 1 transport requirement. That is not going to suit everybody, of course, and we have to be realistic about it. When it comes to faster modes of travel, I would say: cars bad, buses much better and—with due respect to some SNP members—trams best of all. That is where the main thrust of the policies has to be, and that is the responsibility of national Government, crucially, as well as of local government.

This is an important matter, and I am glad that Claire Baker introduced it today. I strongly support the motion in her name.

15:35

Patrick Harvie: I began earlier this afternoon by talking about some of the ambition that had been expressed back in 2005, when the then Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development, Rhona Brankin, responded to a members' business debate. I can only reflect that, if that ambition had been realised, my daily experience, whether as a pedestrian, a cyclist or a bus user in Glasgow, would already be very different. That ambition was not realised.

I do not know whether my cynicism is because of the mood that I am in today, because I have been here 10 years or because I was always like this, but it seems pretty clear that, unless there is transformational change in our transport policy, we will be here in another decade, looking back at the speeches from today and the fine ambition expressed and wondering why it was not realised. We will have the same regret on that day—or some other group of MSPs will—as I do today.

I made this argument on demand reduction during that debate in 2005. I said that the improvements that there had been in air quality had been “driven by technology”, which was welcome, but

“improvements in technology ... will be overtaken by increasing traffic levels.”—[*Official Report*, 3 November 2005; c 20407.]

I know that some people suggest that developed countries are now reaching what we call peak car. It is not clear to me whether that is true, although it might be. Even if it is, however, how long do we want to live with this astonishingly high level of road traffic demand? Unless we change that, there is not going to be some magical reduction in problems with air quality.

I recognise that, as Tavish Scott says, the argument on demand reduction can be presented in an unpopular way. I make the case that it can be presented in a popular way as well. Demand reduction is not about supply reduction; it is about reducing people's reliance and reducing the living patterns that lock people into a high demand to spend their time and money travelling about. A low transport demand policy would be so much cheaper—for individuals, businesses and government. It is about reducing dependence.

We need to reach the point on transport policy that we have reached on energy in the home or waste management. We do not discuss those subjects without thinking about demand reduction—reducing the amount of the problem that we have to deal with, the amount of the

problem that we have to pay for and the social and environmental consequences. We need to get to that point with transport if we want to address our problems with air quality.

The Scottish Government seems to remain reliant on what is still a hypothetical shift towards electric transport to achieve low emissions. We do not have that fundamental desire to reduce road traffic levels and increase walking, cycling and public transport as an alternative to what is currently on the roads.

As regards the increased ambition for the future, particularly on PM2.5s, let us recognise that, as the Friends of the Earth briefing reminds us, we are not yet even reaching the existing Scottish targets, let alone the European ones. If we are going to improve on those targets, let us improve the delivery at the same time.

I will not be supporting the Government or Conservative amendments, because of the amount that they delete from the motion. I welcome the Conservatives' emphasis on climate change. I do not disagree with much of their text, although I wonder whether somebody failed to spot that this is a debate about local air pollution, not climate change.

15:39

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): Well, Presiding Officer, I definitely spotted that the debate was about local air quality and not climate change. Some members in the chamber today—even Patrick Harvie—have emphasised the long term, and spoken about climate change commitments and the hope that meeting those targets might improve air quality. However, I will talk about some of the short-term measures—which the Government may already be taking—that will, or could if they are adjusted, improve air quality in some of the worst-affected areas in Scotland.

As we have heard, oxides of sulphur and nitrogen and particulates are the problem. They are often associated with diesel engines, and we must therefore consider how we support the transport of goods and services as well as people around our communities and through our towns. The development of the trunk road network in recent years has led to the building of many more bypasses and other roads, which have taken large numbers of HGVs out of our town centres. Many regional towns that happened to have trunk routes going through them have found that their circumstances have improved significantly. The Government already has in place a programme for the A96, but rather more could be done for some of the communities along the A75 that are still

blighted by HGVs, which is an area that needs further consideration.

However, it is in town centres that we still experience the worst pollution and see the worst impact on pedestrians and cyclists who happen to be exposed to emissions. Again, the Government has gone so far along the way by improving the problems that are associated with buses in particular. The changes to the bus service operators grant mean that fuel efficiency is now a key objective of the scheme, so vehicles with improved fuel efficiency will begin to appear on our roads.

To improve the situation still further, the green bus fund has supported the introduction of hybrid buses, which have a significant impact in our town centres, and particularly in the worst-polluted areas of our cities where they can run largely on electricity, thereby allowing the dispersal of the pollutants that are currently causing problems.

We are moving forward, but we must be more ambitious. The Government's total investment in supporting bus transport is increasingly concentrated on the concessionary travel scheme. Regardless of what else we might say about that scheme, I do not see that it contains any element that is designed to reduce emissions. I therefore ask the minister to lobby his colleagues to look for ways to ensure that Government investment in bus transport has an impact on emissions across the board in future years. Alternative fuels would make a difference if we could go down that road; I will not rehearse the argument that was made last week that using gas instead of diesel would clean up emissions.

One key transport area that we have to address concerns the priorities for pedestrians and cyclists in our cities. Too often, pedestrians and cyclists are mixed with other road traffic and may be competing with buses and HGVs, which exposes them directly to exhaust fumes. In the long term, we need to examine the investment that the Government has already made to see whether we can do more to separate pedestrians and cyclists from the emissions-producing vehicles.

15:44

Paul Wheelhouse: I welcomed the debate when I spoke earlier; it has for the most part been constructive and members have acknowledged the importance of collective action to address air quality problems where they exist.

There has in the past few decades been a clear and sustained reduction in levels of the air pollutants that are of most concern to the environment. I take the points that members have made about some of the causes, but we should recognise that the reduction is, broadly speaking,

good news for Scotland, and I hope that members see some positives in the action—to which Alex Johnstone referred—that has been taken to date.

I will spend most of my speech referring to points that have been raised in the debate. I do not often find myself saying this, but I think that Tavish Scott was right that action is most effective at local level—that is absolutely true. The Scottish Government has a strong record of leadership and playing a supporting role. Although there has been criticism about a perceived lack of progress, it is worth remembering that an action plan is now in place for all the air-quality management areas. To a degree, progress depends on the effectiveness of the delivery at local level. I take that on board, but my point is that there is leadership from the top. We are putting in place action plans for all the AQMAs and we have had some successes, in terms of areas coming off the list.

For example, progress is being made in Pathhead in Midlothian, which is an area that many members will have travelled through. That area is interesting not just because of the improvement in performance, but because of the cause of the air-quality issue, which is down to the use of coal by people who have no access to gas on the grid. Because of the action that Midlothian Council has taken, there is a realistic prospect that the AQMA will be revoked in the near future.

I point out for Cara Hilton, Claire Baker and other members from Fife that Fife Council is making excellent progress on the implementation of its action plan in Cupar. The AQMA is not yet ready to be revoked, but we are pleased with the progress and falling pollution levels. That gives us hope that the process is working and that an area such as Cupar can be freed from being under the designation in the near future.

Tavish Scott mentioned electric and hybrid vehicles, in which I know he takes a close personal interest. We are investing £14 million in electric vehicles over the next two years, so there is some investment going in. We have an imperative to try to move the Scottish Government's fleet to EVs and hybrids, but it is not an easy process. One key consideration is evaluation of which models are the best and most effective and provide good value for the taxpayer. However, I give the member a commitment that we are trying to do that. I do not know whether there are electric vehicle charging points in Shetland, but I recently visited the Western Isles and saw one in Castlebay on Barra and one in Stornoway. I know that council employees there actively use such vehicles to get from one end of the island group to the other, and I commend the council for that. That is great progress.

Marco Biagi raised a number of good points about things that are not under our control, such

as vehicle emissions standards. Progress is being made at European level, but it is slower than we would like. It is worth recognising that, although there has been massive growth in traffic, which is the point that Patrick Harvie picked up on, some of that has been offset by improving emissions standards in vehicles. We hope that that will continue. Although I am in sympathy with and support the principle behind the Green amendment, I cannot support it in practice, because of its wording. I highlight that we want to reduce vehicle emissions and not necessarily traffic levels. If we can reduce emission levels—which is probably what Patrick Harvie is aiming for—we will, I hope, be on the same page.

I take Marco Biagi's point that we need to aim for 10 out of 10 rather than nine or eight out of 10. That is an important point.

Malcolm Chisholm referred to actions that we could take. I remind members that, as I said in my opening remarks, the key proposals that we are developing for further consultation include incorporating provisional PM2.5 objectives into regulations and placing a legal obligation on local authorities to monitor that important pollutant. I hope that that addresses one of the points that Malcolm Chisholm raised.

In saying that all local authorities with air-quality hotspots have action plans, I have addressed one of Claire Baker's points. I take her point, but we are demonstrating co-ordinated action between national and local government. We are supporting local authorities, in Fife and elsewhere, that are doing good work to try to tackle the problem.

Claudia Beamish: Will the minister take an intervention?

Paul Wheelhouse: I am running out of time—I have only half a minute left, I am afraid.

Gordon MacDonald made good points on behalf of his constituents and Colin Keir's constituents in Edinburgh Western. I have said in answer to parliamentary questions from Gordon MacDonald that air quality should be a consideration in the planning process, just as noise and other potential nuisance factors are. I hope that local authorities take those matters into account in preparing their local development plans and that they take detailed evidence on major proposals. I will not comment on the specific examples that Gordon MacDonald gave—I think that he will understand why—but air quality is an important consideration.

Air quality is important to supporting a good quality of life and to supporting individuals' and communities' health and wellbeing. We have made good progress. I have listened to the points that members have raised and the genuine concerns that we need to do more. If members have positive proposals about other actions that

they think we should take, I will happily listen to them and see what we can do together and in a consensual way. Success will be achieved only through partnership, which means partnership between central and local government and between the parties in the Parliament, so that we can depoliticise what is an important issue for the health and wellbeing of our communities. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting action at local and national levels and I welcome the support of others as we try to achieve on-going success.

15:50

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I am pleased to be able to speak on the extremely important issue of air quality, in support of Claire Baker's motion.

Although Scotland is not blighted by levels of pollution seen in parts of the world that have heavy industry, Friends of the Earth says:

"Air pollution remains Scotland's greatest environmental health threat."

Our air quality remains below the standards set by the Scottish Government and the EU and, in certain urban areas in Scotland, many of which make up the most deprived parts of the country, air quality has been below the legal standards for many years.

According to Friends of the Earth, and as we have heard from members, fine particles are

"responsible for an equivalent of over 1,500 deaths each year".

Those deaths and other health impacts are not just the result of directly breathing polluted air. Friends of the Earth suggests that the food chain can be affected as well.

Levels of air pollution in certain hotspots are over the safe thresholds set by the World Health Organization. To tackle that very serious issue, the Scottish Government must ensure that the low emissions strategy is a firm overarching policy, linked to other policy planning areas such as transport and energy. Friends of the Earth recommended setting deadlines to meet the air quality standards and I ask the Scottish Government to consider that seriously. It needs to implement targets that are carefully monitored, in the same way as those set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee has been looking at national planning framework 3 and has requested that air quality issues are included in the Government's final NPF3 statement. I hope that the minister will consider that.

We have heard about RPP2 and colleagues have discussed the weakness of the emission standards in relation to the fact that after 2020 RPP2 is only about proposals rather than policies. I hope that the minister will take that into account when looking at the correlation between climate change targets and emissions targets.

Members will remember that the ex-First Minister Jack McConnell had a particular focus on environmental justice in his time in office. At the 2002 earth summit in Johannesburg he discussed the responsibility of developed nations such as ours in relation to the global challenge of climate change. I bring that up in this debate about air pollution in Scotland because in Scotland itself environmental justice—along with social justice—must be seen in the local sense in relation to air pollution. Deprived communities should not bear the brunt of air pollution. As we have heard this afternoon, many communities are affected and that is a cause for concern. It is the responsibility of all of us here to implement policies to alleviate the impact of air pollution.

Cara Hilton raised grave concerns about parts of her Dunfermline constituency and highlighted serious health issues and Marco Biagi rightly stressed the noxious nature of poor air. He argued that local authorities must take responsibility and I hope that he agrees that they must have the Scottish Government's robust support and guidance. Malcolm Chisholm stressed the need for guidance from the Scottish Government. Along with partners such as local authorities, the Scottish Government needs to promote policies that will work towards a low-carbon economy. A range of public bodies, organisations and companies throughout the country have already taken measures, but there needs to be coherence, which is the Scottish Government's responsibility.

We have heard about Lothian Buses and hybrid vehicles. The Scottish Transport Emissions Partnership made the good point that, rather than being a source of emissions to be cut down, one bus can replace 76 cars on the road. In addition, the lower speed of buses means lower emissions. Although the Scottish Government's green bus fund is welcome, we must also cut car use and reduce demand. The many good examples of car clubs in not only big cities but towns such as Dumfries and Dunbar help to cut emissions, as do walking buses for children travelling to school.

As some members have mentioned, active travel provides an even better solution. Although I am pleased that Stop Climate Chaos Scotland's calls for an increase in the active travel budget have been met by the Scottish Government, I feel that, as Alex Johnstone made clear in his speech, more needs to be done in that respect.

As a country we should be promoting local food chains and cutting down emissions from transport. The choices that individuals and households make can collectively make a difference and, indeed, the Scottish Government's awareness-raising campaigns on behaviour or culture change are key to this issue. As Patrick Harvie said, we must reduce demand.

If the Scottish Government is unable to take the air pollution strategy forward in a coherent way, we might, as Patrick Harvie suggested, find ourselves having the same debate in another decade's time. We owe it to Scotland's communities to ensure that that does not happen. I take the minister's point that this is the responsibility of us all, but I simply note that he is in Government at the moment and that, although we will work with him, the air pollution strategy is, in the end, the Government's responsibility. We certainly look forward to hearing more about timescales and other detail about taking this issue forward for all our communities.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on air quality in Scotland.

Women

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):

The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-09293, in the name of Johann Lamont, on women in Scotland.

I invite Johann Lamont to speak to and move the motion. As we are very tight for time, we will be grateful if everyone can stick to the advised time. Ms Lamont, you have 10 minutes.

15:56

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab):

I hope that, if I do not use my full 10 minutes, other people will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to what I think is an important debate.

It is a great privilege to open this debate on behalf of the Scottish Labour Party. We chose the subject because we wanted to afford everyone in the chamber the opportunity to mark international women's day and to reflect on women's progress and achievements and the challenges that women still face in Scotland, throughout the United Kingdom and across the world.

I congratulate all those in the Scottish Women's Convention who were in the chamber on Saturday, who organised events across the country to mark international women's day and who took the opportunity to come together to acknowledge the difference between our lives as women now and the lives of our mothers and how much more needs to be done if our daughters in the generations beyond are to have equality, freedom from violence and the right to achieve their potential. I know that there were very interesting events right across Scotland.

We are, of course, happy to accept the Scottish Government's amendment, and we join others in sending our sympathies and condolences to the family of Ailsa McKay, who has been taken from us all too soon. She was a woman of great wisdom who challenged us and who could think outside the box in a way that we all so desperately need. We know that, with other women, Ailsa was a driving force in insisting that we needed to understand budgets and the economy properly, to confront the way in which the impact on women of specific choices was being ignored and to insist that we address the decisions that had compounded the problems faced by women.

In a recent speech, Ailsa McKay said:

"Women stand up and say this discipline"

of economics

"is failing us. We are dismissed as only women and we don't understand the numbers. I'm an economist who doesn't do numbers which, again, makes me quite a lone ranger in my own discipline. Not because I can't do

numbers, but because I refuse to do numbers, because I think we've got the underlying philosophy wrong to start with. So before we start counting things we need to work out what it is that we're trying to count, what we value and what we should value, so the numbers come after that."

Those are such wise words about how we should take forward our politics and debates in this chamber.

Of course, those comments reflect on an issue that we all wrestle with. As we know, budgets reflect our priorities more than our words of concern ever will, and the abiding conundrum is whether we value what women do less because it is women who do it or whether society does not value women properly because of the things they do. That issue goes to the very heart of the kind of world that we want to live in.

In reflecting on that, we need to challenge ourselves so that we have a full understanding of women's lives and the pressures on them in tackling the inequality that they face. I am proud of the Labour Party's record in tackling those issues and on the things that we addressed when we were in government at the United Kingdom, Scottish and local government levels, but we do not pretend that the matter is entirely for the province of one party; it must concern us all.

International women's day is a day of greatly ambivalent feelings for me—I am sure that others share these feelings. It affords the opportunity to celebrate the progress that we have made, but it is also a time to reflect on the burdens that are still placed on women here and abroad. Women still disproportionately represent low-paid workers and carers who take the burden of the real pressures in our communities. They still face violence and intimidation in their own homes, and we know that, no matter how clever our girls are and how overachieving they are in the classroom, they are not represented in equal numbers in the boardroom, where the big decisions are made.

We also know that, across the world, women are denied economic opportunities. Girls are denied the simple right to an education. The testimony of Malala Yousafzai stands as a great inspiration to us all. Girls are denied the education and opportunity to achieve their potential. In some parts of the world, rape is still a weapon of war, and the riskiest thing that someone can be is a woman. In those circumstances, there is an ambivalence that should drive our ambitions forward.

However, there is, of course, progress to be celebrated and there are women to be praised, such as Ailsa McKay, who is an inspiration to all, and those who established Glasgow Women's Aid 40 years ago. They identified need and found solutions, and over the intervening period they have insisted that society listen to the scourge that

is domestic violence and listen to them on the solutions that would address that.

There are women who have redefined politics and reshaped the world as a consequence, and there are women who inspire because of their courage and humility and who give voice to suffering and solutions to those who are in pain. There are women who have held families or communities together, and women who, as we speak, are driving community activity, running housing associations, taking on the activity where work needs to be done and staffing food banks and places where people are in pain.

We celebrate, too, the women who demanded equal representation, which created places such as the Parliament where women can stand as equals and speak out for their communities. We understand that, at every step, those women faced resistance and the need to persuade, organise and change minds, or change the structures where they could not change minds. That is the message: we must persuade, but we must also put in place measures that ensure that women come through.

It is interesting that, in the independence debate, I, like others, am often asked why women are less likely to support independence. I confess that I do not know the answer to that question, but I shall resist any notion that it is to do with some deficit in women—that somehow women are less bold or radical—or, on the other side, that that reaffirms a stereotypical view that women are more concerned about their family than others, more concerned about budgets than men are, and more risk averse. We should hold to none of those explanations of how women vote in a world in which we believe that women can achieve their full potential.

There will be another time to debate the independence question, but I think that we can agree in this debate that the huge issues that women face here and abroad are deeper than any constitutional arrangement issues and that they must be addressed with political will, regardless of what the constitutional settlement might be. I know that not one step on the road to greater equality for women was ever handed over without a battle, so whatever the constitutional settlement is in September it will not mean that women's lives will be better, as the argument for that must always be made in its own context.

We celebrate and reflect, but we also resolve to continue to highlight inequality and demand change. One of the key features of progress for women has been the connection between ambition and practical delivery. For some of us, there can be a dialogue of despair when the challenge that women face is identified, but we have to be determined to change. In the past, our

systems were not overwhelmed when they faced the challenges that women's lives were. We must build on that and have the confidence that it is possible to make a difference if we connect aspiration with practical delivery.

The fact that women are disproportionately low paid led to a debate and argument that created the national minimum wage. Understanding the direct experience of violence against women and the underlying cause of the abuse of power led to the creation of Women's Aid, Rape Crisis centres and the zero tolerance campaign and to demands for change in the justice system, which brought about hope for women. All that was created not by the state but by women coming together.

I believe that our job as politicians is to give a voice and support to organisations that will address women's needs, whether it is underrepresentation in the Parliament and winning the argument for positive action or the right for women to work and the consequent need for childcare to support women into work. However, we must also be acutely aware that it is not enough to provide childcare if women cannot access it. I think that that is the debate that we are having now around pre-school, after-school and holiday-time childcare. The situation in which the state provides childcare that women in work cannot access must be addressed. We do not even have to go as far as the question of job segregation, the issue of parenting and the role of men in the lives of their children, which I would argue has been transformed in my lifetime.

We now also have to test policy and its consequences. It is not enough to say that we care; we must address the policy options that we have. I was disappointed this morning to learn that in committee we had voted down the possibility of using the living wage through our procurement process to ensure that people—

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

Johann Lamont: I have very little time.

That possibility was voted down, although we know that 64 per cent of those earning less than the living wage are women. When we make a decision to invest in full-time college places, we must understand the consequences being borne by women who need part-time places because of their caring responsibilities and their ability to learn. Cuts in local government and public services mean that women workers are stretched and the gaps that come in the provision are filled by women. The solutions for those situations are not for one party, but we have at least to acknowledge the challenge that they present and resolve to do more.

We should draw on the strength and abilities of women not through manifesto offers but by developing policy with women. We need to take bold and positive action measures not to do women a favour but to tilt back to level the playing field that disproportionately benefits men at present.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): I am afraid that you really must close.

Johann Lamont: We must always be alive to the impact on women's lives of decisions that are made, because ultimately, in freeing women, we create a society that is better and fairer for our daughters and our sons.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the significant contribution that women make to Scotland's economy and society and across its public and private spheres; notes the political, social and economic advancement of women in Scotland that has taken place over the last century, but believes that women still encounter barriers into education, employment and representation in public life that need to be addressed; commends the Scottish Women's Convention on organising the conference, What Women Want, What Women Need, to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2014, and believes that the Parliament and the Scottish Government have a pivotal role in fighting for and creating equality for women in 21st century Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that we are very tight for time. I call Angela Constance to speak to and move amendment S4M-09293.1, in the name of Shona Robison. Minister, you have a maximum of seven minutes.

16:07

The Minister for Youth Employment (Angela Constance): Thank you, Presiding Officer.

I start my contribution to the debate by paying tribute to the feminist economist Ailsa McKay, whom we lost last week. Ailsa was a friend and adviser to both ministers and officials in the Scottish Government and was highly respected internationally as well as here in Scotland. She was truly passionate about the work that she did and she was highly regarded by all of us as an absolute expert on equality matters, particularly in relation to gender. As a member of both the strategic group on women and work and the equality budget advisory group, she did not hesitate to remind us of the commitment to equality that we have made as a Government. It is now incumbent on us all to continue with the work that she believed in so very strongly.

As Johann Lamont said, international women's day is not only an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and contributions of women but a stark reminder of the challenges that women continue to face at home and abroad. The

challenges are many and varied, and they include violence against women. This Government, like previous Administrations, views violence against women as both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. We are internationally respected for our understanding of violence against women and our approach and work in the area. It is important that Parliament knows that the new violence against women strategy is currently in development and is due to be published in June.

According to last month's labour market statistics there are now more women in Scotland in work than at any time since the current records began in 1992. Women's access to employment opportunities is important not just because of the impact on their personal circumstances and choices but because of the effect on the country's future growth.

Of course, there is still much to do to improve the plight of women in work and to get more women into work. I was struck by a conversation that I had last week with some young mums when I visited One Parent Families Scotland at a project in Motherwell. They said that they are still routinely asked at job interviews whether they have children and whether they have childcare arrangements. That is utterly unacceptable.

That is why the recommendations that were made at the women's employment summit are important, and we continue to progress the work with the oversight of an expert group that I chair. An update on the work was jointly published last week by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Trades Union Congress, and I urge members to have a look at it.

One area that the summit looked at closely is women and enterprise. In Scotland, only 21 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises are led solely by women. Figures show that, if women in Scotland started businesses at the same rate as men, we could see economic growth at 5.3 per cent. That would be a huge increase, which confirms how important the work is. Additional support and investment was announced last week with the publication of the women in enterprise framework, which is very much about reducing the gap in enterprise.

We are delivering more modern apprenticeship opportunities than ever before, and women now make up 43 per cent of new starts, but we recognise that more has to be done to ensure that the modern apprenticeship programme is properly balanced and accurately reflects Scottish society. We want to see more men in childcare and more women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics related frameworks. This week is make young people your business week, with the theme of information and communications

technology and digital technologies, and a focus of the campaign is to attract more women, including young women, into the STEM sectors. That is important because tackling occupational segregation is key to tackling the gap in pay.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): Will the minister take an intervention?

Angela Constance: I will take one brief intervention.

Jenny Marra: Will the minister take the opportunity that this debate affords to look at the fact that there are 80,000 fewer women in our colleges than in 2007? Will she commit to reviewing that and seeing whether there can be more part-time places or whether she can do anything else to get more women back into college?

Angela Constance: The cabinet secretary announced only recently more funding for more part-time courses, childcare and places for women. However, it is important to remember that women are not in the minority in our college sector. The majority of college students are women. In the context of college reforms, it is important to have the right balance. If we are serious about tackling occupational segregation, we need to get more women into full-time courses for recognised qualifications that are more economically relevant and which will lead to employment. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order, please.

Angela Constance: That, of course, has to be balanced—it is helpful if members listen to all of the answer—with the needs of women who are at different points in their lives and who need access to different sorts of learning and different sorts of courses to enable them on their journey back into education and back into work. It is important to remember that the majority of college places are indeed part time.

In the time that I have left, I want to focus on public life, because we also know that there is much more that we can do to encourage women to feel equipped to participate in wider public life. In our equality outcome, we aim for public boards to be more diverse and to broadly reflect the general population by 2017, and we are taking opportunities within current powers to start to make a difference.

There would be further opportunities if equalities legislation was our responsibility. My colleague Shona Robison, the Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport, who has responsibility for equalities, wrote to Jo Swinson MP in October last year to propose that Holyrood be given legislative powers over women's representation. Jo Swinson responded, inviting the Scottish Government to put

forward its detailed proposals for how it would use those powers to improve women's representation, and we will be pleased to do so.

Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab): Will the minister take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The minister is closing.

Angela Constance: We will now consult on women's representation and the use of quotas to ensure that, if a decision is made to take mandatory steps to achieve gender balance, the legislation will be as effective as possible.

I do not have time to talk about childcare—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am afraid that you must close.

Angela Constance: However, I will say that, for the first time ever, we have a plan to achieve universal childcare in this country. As an employment minister, I know how important it is to have control not only of education but of our economic levers if we are to make Scotland a more equal place.

I move amendment S4M-09293.1, to insert at end:

“and notes the valuable contribution of role models such as the late Professor Ailsa McKay, feminist economist and inspirational champion of women's equality.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I notify members that I think that we will lose a member from the debate.

I call Mary Scanlon, who has five minutes.

16:15

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):

I thank the Labour Party for using its time to talk about the role of women in Scotland. I associate the Conservatives with everything that has been said about Ailsa McKay and I commend Johann Lamont for a passionate and well-considered speech.

When we debated women and work in December, I cited statistics about gender equality among members of the Parliament. Given that this is my last week as a Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body member, I will pay tribute to the drive for greater gender balance among security officers in the Parliament. That role has traditionally been highly male dominated. It is easy for us as parliamentarians to preach to others, but we have led by example in achieving a much-improved gender balance among security officers.

On the day when the Parliament opened in May 1999, 16 per cent of security officers were women. Now, 15 years later, 41 per cent are female. In 1999, there was one female manager in security.

Now, three out of eight are female and our head of security is female. I thank all the security staff—male and female—for their thoroughly professional approach to security, which we can easily take for granted.

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con): Hear, hear.

Mary Scanlon: Thank you.

I turn to statistics about gender equality in education. As Jenny Marra said, in the academic year 2005-06, there were 257,000 female enrolments in colleges but, seven years later, that figure stood at 155,000. That means that there has been a reduction of 39.5 per cent in the number of full-time, part-time and short-duration courses that women undertake. It is telling that that downward trend began in 2007-08, and the figures have fallen without fail every year since. The reductions have affected women of all ages, but those between 25 and 59 have been hit particularly hard. In comparison with 2007, 47 per cent—or 50,000—fewer female adult learners are in further education, whereas the male figure has fallen by half as much—from 65,000 to 41,000.

Given those figures, I find it hard to take the Scottish Government seriously when it talks of harnessing independence to boost female employment rates in this country to Swedish levels, mainly because it focuses almost exclusively on one side of the coin—childcare—when, in reality, another equally important problem must be addressed, which is the number of women who are without formal qualifications.

As has been said, two of the 12 new regional college board chairs are female and 31 per cent of university board members are women. However, we have first-class female college principals in the further education sector—Paul Little, who is the City of Glasgow College's principal, is one of the few male principals.

As I have only five minutes, I will move on quickly. The Royal Society of Edinburgh has found that 27 per cent of female STEM graduates secure a permanent position in their area of study, in comparison with 52 per cent of males. That means that, of the 56,000 female STEM graduates in Scotland, just over 15,000 continue to work in the sector after university. Skills Development Scotland has revealed that, in the first three quarters of last year, 79—or 5 per cent—of the 1,665 new engineering starts were female. Depressingly, the figures for engineering can be exchanged with those for construction, transport and other sectors.

I firmly believe that education is one of the front lines. I am pleased to report that we have made progress in recent years, but there is no doubt that we still have a lot to do. If we are to achieve our

ultimate aim of ensuring equality of opportunity for all Scotland's children, we must start with greater access to education.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We are very tight for time. Speeches of no more than four minutes, please.

16:20

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): Many members who are here supported the motion that I lodged last week, which pays tribute to the late Professor Ailsa McKay. As professor of economics at Glasgow Caledonian University, Ailsa was a founding member of the Scottish women's budget group and the European gender budgeting network. She was also a member of the International Association for Feminist Economics.

Ailsa's commitment to promoting a new Government policy approach to gender equality has played a major part in where we are now—quite literally: this horseshoe-shaped chamber was proposed by women because it was thought that it would promote a less adversarial style than the face-to-face, confrontational style of the House of Commons. A crèche, family-friendly working hours and encouragement for more women to stand for election as MSPs are positive actions towards better gender balance.

As a feminist and an economist, one of Ailsa's drivers was the concept that women are not some kind of add-on that we can pour into the mix and stir to get a result. Women approach and use resources in fundamentally different ways from men. As Ailsa put it, the Scottish women's budget group

"continually pointed out how the different needs and resources available to men and women will affect the way they access everything from jobs, to public services such as housing, transport, education and training. By taking account of these differences, policy-makers can ensure better policy targeting, more effective delivery and greater equality."

We have talked a lot about oil revenues today. In Norway, the economic contribution of women is far greater than the contribution from oil resources, which is an amazing statistic.

Childcare in the UK is expensive. According to a recent report by the Family and Childcare Trust, the cost works out at about £7,500 a year. That covers a two-year-old at nursery for 25 hours a week and a five-year-old in an after-school club. The figure is slightly more than the cost of the average mortgage, which, according to official statistics, is £7,207 a year. The report's authors said:

"the current childcare system is not working for anyone."

However, other countries seem able to provide excellent facilities. Sweden is often upheld as a great example, but how can it afford to provide such facilities? The answer is not difficult. The Swedes can afford to do that because the return on the investment is far more women in work, which generates more wealth and taxes and thus pays for better public services such as childcare.

This Scottish Government's way forward, in tackling gender inequality and maximising the contribution of this nation's incredibly talented, ambitious and able women, is to put women at the centre. That is where the Government's commitment to transformational childcare came from—real women in real families, with a real desire to give their children the best possible chance.

We will kid no one if we do not pay further tribute to Ailsa McKay, who pushed that agenda, providing information to the Scottish Government and arguing that we can grow the country's economy only by giving the women of this country the best possible opportunities.

If women join the workforce at a similar rate to Sweden's rate and pay tax into the system, tax revenues can be boosted by £700 million a year in an independent Scotland. There will be another 35,000 jobs in childcare as a result. By the end of the first session of an independent Scottish Parliament, every three and four-year-old and vulnerable two-year-old will be entitled to 1,140 hours of childcare a year—the equivalent of 30 hours a week in term time.

Let us create the best possible tribute to Professor Ailsa McKay. Let us have the best possible childcare in our independent Scotland. We cannot do that now, because Westminster would deny us access to the revenues collected from the economic boost that such an approach would give us. In an independent Scotland, we can, we should and we must do it.

16:24

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): I, too, pay tribute to Ailsa McKay. I knew her when she was an adviser to the Equal Opportunities Committee, of which I was a member, and we were working on gender budgeting. She made an enormous contribution to work in that area and to feminist economics in general. We should all pay tribute to her work for Scotland in general, and for the Scottish Parliament in particular.

Today, as Johann Lamont emphasised, we are celebrating the progress that has been made while recognising that there is still a great deal more to do. Johann Lamont also emphasised the importance of women coming together to lead

action in the area, and that is what has happened over the past three or four decades, with significant results. For example, I am aware of the importance of groups such as the Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust, Rape Crisis Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid in the progress that has been made on highlighting the problem of violence against women and the need to take action against it. In my constituency, many years ago, I saw the importance of women coming together in the greater Pilton childcare action group. That group of women taught me most of what I know about the importance of childcare.

Now we have new campaigns from a younger generation of feminists, including the everyday sexism project and the no more page 3 campaign, which are beginning to have a significant influence. The role of men is to listen to those women, to learn from them and to support the necessary action. As a Labour MSP and as an MP before that, I am lucky to have known several Labour women who have been part of the various movements, including Harriet Harman when I was at Westminster and Johann Lamont in my early years in the Scottish Parliament. We now have a younger generation of feminists such as Kez Dugdale and Jenny Marra who are leading the charge. I have learned from those people and hope that I can go on supporting them on the issues that they have highlighted.

I also have a personal impetus that reinforces my determination to take action on gender inequality. I now have two young granddaughters and I do not want them to grow up in a world in which gender inequality persists, in which they are subjected to the misogyny of lad culture, in which they may have to face the horrors of violence against women and in which they are likely to face the economic disadvantage that women in general—although not all women—face relative to men.

Just this week, a European Union report on violence against women came out that gives the horrific figure of 44 per cent of women in the UK saying that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence after the age of 15. We repeatedly see reports that cite similar figures. The EU report also states that, across Europe, one in 20 women has been raped. Prevention is, therefore, important in the violence agenda and I welcome the we can stop it campaign from the police that starts this week.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You are in your final minute.

Malcolm Chisholm: The wider issues of socialisation and stereotyping in the bringing up of young children are absolutely central to the issue. A small but significant example of that is given in the motion that Kezia Dugdale lodged this week,

which is entitled “Ban ‘Bossy’”. That is one example of the socialisation of girls discouraging them from taking leadership roles.

Women’s economic disadvantage is also central to the issue. Those who have championed the cause of action on violence against women have placed such violence in the context of the wider inequalities in society, which include—crucially—women’s economic disadvantage. In general, women earn 15 per cent less than men, and the majority—although not all—of those who are in low-paid work are women. Many women do not work at all because of the lack of childcare—I am glad that we are all beginning to talk more about childcare in the Parliament—and women’s personal pensions are only 62 per cent of men’s. That economic disadvantage, as well as issues to do with the socialisation of men in particular, must be urgently addressed.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Unfortunately, as everyone has gone over time, it is unlikely that I will be able to call everyone who wants to speak in the debate unless the next three members take a bit less time.

16:28

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): I, too, pay tribute to Professor Ailsa McKay for her work in the promotion of women’s issues, and I regret her all-too-early passing. Her wise counsel will be sorely missed by many.

Johann Lamont mentioned, as does the motion, the conference that was organised by the Scottish Women’s Convention to mark international women’s day. That was just one of many events that have taken place around the country. On Friday, I had the good fortune to attend the conference that was organised by the University of Aberdeen, which was entitled “Inspiring Women: It’s a (Wo)man’s World”. The event was hosted by Vice Principal Professor Neva Haites, who is responsible for equality and diversity at the university. The university has the goal of being a beacon for gender equality, and judging by the line-up of speakers on Friday it is taking that seriously. The day was just the beginning of a series of projects to promote women and their successes.

One of the principal speakers at the conference was Anne Glover. Formerly of this parish as the chief scientific adviser to the Scottish Government, she is now the chief scientific adviser to the President of the European Commission. She put in context the change that has already occurred. In her view, there has not been enough change, and the rate of change is far too slow. She said that, among other things, we had to identify what

women-friendly workplaces should look like, so that organisations know what they should be striving for.

It is interesting that Professor Glover works for the European Commission. On 28 February, the Commission marked European equal pay day, which highlights the 59 days that women in Europe work for free—to put that another way, the average difference in hourly earnings between men and women stands at around 16 per cent.

I am glad that the Commission is looking at options for action at a European level to improve pay transparency in order to tackle the pay gap and put into practice the principle of equal pay. As Christina McKelvie mentioned, the oil and gas industry should take note, because traditionally it has been notorious for its pay gap between men and women. To be fair to the industry, it is beginning to take note that it must do better at attracting young women as well as men into the sector. Two speakers at the conference, who are high-flyers in BP, said that that engagement must begin pre-14 years old, and that parents have a role to play in encouraging their daughters to aim higher.

Also at the conference was the honourable Gail Prudenti, an alumnus of the University of Aberdeen. She is the chief administrative judge for the New York state unified court system and is responsible for a budget of more than \$2 billion, 3,600 judges and 15,000 other staff. I have a copy of her pamphlet from the conference, in which she stresses the importance of mentoring in helping women to progress in their careers.

A lot of very good work is going on in the field of promoting equality. That work is paying dividends, with more women in employment, and the work that the Scottish Government, businesses and the trade unions are carrying out together is helping that along. I am sure that, with better childcare, the situation will be even better. We should also acknowledge the funding from the Scottish Government that helps women in other countries into work and to run their own businesses.

I thought that the debate might be consensual. The Labour Party should stop playing politics with procurement. At the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee today, the Deputy First Minister offered to enter into dialogue with the Opposition on the living wage, despite the European Commission’s advice. The Labour Party refused that offer, as its vote showed.

16:32

Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab): I associate myself with the sentiments that have been expressed since news reached us about the sad death of Professor Ailsa McKay.

She was an adviser to the Equal Opportunities Committee—just one of the roles to which she contributed her thoughts on and analysis of the position of women in Scotland. Her contributions will be missed across the chamber.

We recently marked international women's day, which was an opportunity to celebrate the social, political and economic achievements of women, and to reflect on how far we have come and how much further we have to go.

However, for all the progress that we have made as a society, gender inequality persists. We still have a pay gap in this country; women in full-time work earn 13 per cent less than men, and the figure for women in part-time work is that they earn 32 per cent less than men. We also see that the labour market is heavily gendered, with a disproportionate number of women in low-paid sectors.

It is more than 100 years since the first international women's day. Back in 1911, when it was first recognised, a million people rallied across Europe to demand votes for women, for the right for women to stand for public office and for equal pay. The best way to honour the legacy of the generations who came before us and who campaigned so that women could sit in Parliaments like this as equals is to challenge the inequalities that we face, and to craft a fairer future for generations to come by creating more and better jobs, having fair pay, ensuring women's representation where decisions are made in government, business and across society, and securing equality of opportunity for women, for all and forever.

The decisions that we take in this Parliament affect women's lives, and the votes of undecided women will be critical in deciding the result of this year's referendum. Women tell us that they want facts and that they want reasoned arguments before they make up their minds. We owe it to women—indeed, we owe it to everyone—to conduct the debate in a way that meets their best expectations. That is why I will turn to childcare.

The Scottish National Party white paper says:

"Under the Westminster system, families in Scotland have waited too long for the provision of adequate and fair childcare".

Under this Government, families in Scotland have waited too long for the provision of adequate and fair childcare. It is only now meeting the pledges that were made in 2007. Pressure from Scottish Labour showed that the Government could start to deliver the white paper commitments with the powers that this Parliament already has. For the best part of seven years, however, it simply decided not to do that.

The white paper also set out why the Government believes that only with the powers of independence could it capture tax income from a rise in female participation in the workforce due to its childcare policy, which it placed at £700 million. However, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has expressed doubt about that figure. Now Tom Gordon from *The Herald* has published a letter from the Scottish Government confirming that there has been no economic modelling to support the claims in the white paper. Scotland's women and Scotland's families deserve better.

On international women's day, we all reflect on how empowerment of women has helped to shape the Scotland that we live in today. What happens in this year's referendum will shape the Scotland of the future. We owe women a good, reasoned and factual debate. That is why we have to interrogate the unproven assertions in the white paper, but it is also why, between now and September, I will be making the clear, positive and rational case for devolution: the best of both worlds, pooling resources while sharing power, home rule without separation, and a stronger Scotland in a lasting partnership with our friends and neighbours throughout the United Kingdom.

We do not agree on everything throughout the chamber, but let us at least agree to give women the principled and good-quality debate that they deserve.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I apologise to Christian Allard because I am unable to call him.

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): Can I confirm that I have four minutes, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You do, indeed, have four minutes.

16:36

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): Anyone who visits my parliamentary office in this building will see in prominent display what I believe is one of the most powerful messages about women. It is a poster from Close the Gap, which shows a scowling young girl sitting beside a smiling young boy. The caption reads:

"Prepare your daughter for working life. Give her less pocket money than your son."

Unfortunately, that is very true for women in Scotland. It is shocking that more than 40 years since the Equal Pay Act 1970, women are still paid less on average than their male counterparts. A recent report from the UK's Office for National Statistics in December 2013 makes for alarming reading. According to the ONS, in 2012 the gender pay gap in the UK widened from 9.5 per cent to 10 per cent for full-time workers. For part-time

employees, it is even wider and grew from 19.6 per cent to 19.7 per cent. Those figures are truly shocking. The pay gap is just one example, among many others including women's representation in politics and the STEM professions, and the number of women in senior positions in the workplace, that demonstrate that we are a long way from achieving gender equality. The problem affects women at every level in every sector. Our professions, scientists, technologists—women in every sphere of employment in Scotland—have the potential to be subject to that blatant discrimination.

Kezia Dugdale: Will Clare Adamson give way?

Clare Adamson: I am sorry, but I do not have time.

Encouraged by Professor Anne Glover, who is now chief scientific adviser to the European Commission, the Royal Society of Edinburgh established a working group that was chaired by the eminent astrophysicist Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell. The Royal Society of Edinburgh's 2012 paper, "Tapping all our Talents", is a cohesive and comprehensive strategy that is aimed at increasing both the proportion of women in the workplace who are qualified in STEM subjects, and the number who rise to senior positions in universities, research institutes, government, business and industry.

The report states:

"Women who do remain in the STEM workforce are still segregated by occupation (horizontal segregation) and grade (vertical segregation). These forms of segregation significantly impact on both a woman's ability to achieve her potential and her earning capacity. The number of women who advance to the most senior positions in STEM remains proportionately much smaller than that of their male counterparts."

It is an excellent report that acknowledges that there must be significant cultural change in order to tackle the problem. In its many recommendations, it calls on the Scottish Government, business and our education establishments to address the issues around gender inequality and the pay gap. That is important; if we do not get that right, the consequences are clear for all to see.

Last week, South Lanarkshire Council agreed a settlement on its equal pay claims for 3,000 individuals, many of whom are women. The failure to implement the Equal Pay Act 1970 has led to women being denied the proper wage for the work that they have been undertaking. Twenty years in the making, this problem will now result in an average pay-out of something in the region of £25,000. That is a life-changing amount of money for many people, but it should have been life changing for those women over the years of their working lives, and I am sorry that those who have

died in the interim will not benefit from the settlement. Failure to act has stored up a problem for the Labour council, which will now have to find £75 million—money that should already have been paid to those dedicated employees in the intervening years at much less potential detriment to front-line services in the South Lanarkshire area.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am afraid that you need to close.

Clare Adamson: There is no doubt that women have the most to gain from independence.

16:41

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con): I, too, thank Johann Lamont for bringing this debate to the chamber and for making a thoughtful and reflective speech that set the mood and the tone of the debate. Her remarks were sometimes sombre, but they were also full of hope, and were redolent of opportunity. She rightly referred to the challenges of which we are all aware. She made a profound observation when she said that the challenges that women face today in Scotland

"are deeper than any constitutional arrangement".

I agree, and to pretend things are otherwise is trite.

Angela Constance also made a positive comment when she referred to international women's day as "an opportunity". She was right; we only have to consider how that initiative has proceeded over the years to realise just how rich the opportunities are. However, she also rightly pointed out that it is

"a stark reminder of the challenges"

that we face. Encouragingly, she referred to there being more women in work in Scotland than has been the case for a long time, and I think that we all take pleasure from that. I can mischievously point out that that has all been possible within the partnership of the UK. She also rightly referred to the employment summit for women, which was a positive affair, and to the issue of women in enterprise, which is a subject that is dear to my heart. I think that this Parliament has quite a good track record of highlighting the need to get more women into business, and we have had some positive events in this Parliament to celebrate that.

Malcolm Chisholm made a thoughtful contribution. Of course, Malcolm enjoys a fine reputation among women. I do not have to say that; I think that he knows it for himself and is a kind of honorary sister in his own right. I totally agree with the concerns that he continues to express about violence against women. He also mentioned page 3. I sympathise with his views on that matter and note that Jackie Baillie has raised

the issue for debate in Parliament. His reference to the telling statistic about 44 per cent of women in the UK having suffered violence is a chilling reminder of just how stark the challenges are.

My colleague Mary Scanlon made some interesting points; for example, she referred to the improvement in the gender balance of the security officers in Parliament, which I did not know about. To go from 16 per cent to 41 per cent is a matter for congratulation. She also pointed out the problems for female adult learners in college education, which is a serious issue. In that arena, women are proportionally doing worse than men. We cannot disregard that, and the Scottish Government needs to take note of it. She also told us that 5 per cent of new engineering starts are female.

If I may beat a little drum of my own, in education we still need to reassure girls that they can choose careers that are not bound by stereotypical shapes, traditional choices or customs. We need to do more about that.

Childcare is important; Margaret McCulloch and Christina McKelvie referred to it. However, I should say that, without the opportunity of education, childcare is of limited benefit. We cannot provide one and not the other.

Finally, I will articulate a view of my own. I will probably get strung up by David Cameron and Ruth Davidson for saying this, so I emphasise that it is an entirely personal view. On the commercial front, where we have boards of directors in our corporate governance entities, I would have a mandatory boardroom place for a workforce representative, I would make it a term appointment, and I would alternate it between male and female. That would be a major step forward.

My party supports the motion and the amendment.

16:45

The Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport (Shona Robison): I add my comments to those that have been made about Ailsa McKay. She is a great loss to Scotland. Our sympathies are with her family.

In the main, the speeches have been constructive and thoughtful. Johann Lamont set the tone for the debate in a refreshing speech that looked back on the important gains that have been made. We might not talk often enough about the gains that women have fought hard for, and from which we all benefit in Parliament and out in society. Johann Lamont also laid out some of the continuing challenges that are faced by women,

and which we need to debate and find ways of addressing.

We are definitely on a journey and we still have a long way to go. A number of members have made the point about the pressure from women's organisations and groups, and from individuals from outside Parliament being important in continually pushing us to do more and better. The violence against women strategy is part of that work and is being influenced by the organisations that campaign day in and day out to reduce violence against women. The fact that we have a gendered approach to violence against women is testament to the work of a lot of women's organisations that was started under the previous Administration, and which this Administration has been able to carry on. I look forward to the new violence against women strategy that will come out in a few weeks.

I turn to some of the other comments that have been made in the debate. Christina McKelvie outlined very well the benefits of childcare and the economic case for expanding the number of women in the workplace. As ever, Malcolm Chisholm made a very good speech and talked about the recent EU report on gender violence, which shows us that the statistics are still horrific. That is why we need to redouble our efforts to tackle violence in our society, starting with trying to change some of the underlying attitudes of the next generation that can lead to violence against women and girls.

Maureen Watt rightly paid tribute to Anne Glover's role at the European Commission and mentioned that the Commission is considering action at Europe level to narrow the pay gap. It is worth noting that, in Scotland, we are in a slightly better position on the pay gap than the rest of the United Kingdom. However, we should not be complacent: we too have a long way to go.

A number of members extolled the virtues of ensuring that we open up opportunities to girls and women in certain areas of employment. Angela Constance spoke about that in her opening speech.

Kezia Dugdale: Will the minister accept that there has been a significant reduction in the number of part-time places at colleges and that it has had a disproportionate impact on women? Yes or no?

Shona Robison: There is, in fact, a majority of women in full-time student places: recent figures show that 52 per cent of full-time students aged 16 to 24 are female. An element of additional money is going into colleges, which I believe will be very helpful in increasing places for women and men. I hope that that is something that Kezia Dugdale will welcome.

I will say a little bit about the progress that we are making on the consultation that has been launched to improve the position of women in public life. We have fairly wide support for it from across the chamber; I had thought that Annabel Goldie was going to talk about that. I am sure that I heard her previously making supportive comments in respect of positions for women in public life. Unfortunately, the appropriate powers are reserved to Westminster—although in her reply to me, Jo Swinson opened the door to the Scottish Government's coming forward with concrete proposals about ensuring that progress is made not just on public boards but, potentially, on corporate boards and in the third sector. Next month, we will launch a consultation to consider whether there is support for a 40 per cent minimum for women on public boards. We will take the temperature of boards elsewhere.

I hope that that will have support from members across the Parliament, and I will certainly be garnering that support. It will be important, when we go back to the UK Government, that we have that support from across all the parties. I look forward to receiving it.

16:51

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): I support the Government's amendment as well as our motion. I also associate myself with the comments that have been made regarding the late Ailsa McKay and her contribution to Parliament and Scottish public life.

The Labour Party has a long and very proud tradition of advancing the role of women in our communities. It was our minister, Barbara Castle, who recognised that child benefit was better placed in the purses of women than in the pockets of men. It was she who pioneered the Equal Pay Act 1970, which was one of the most important pieces of progressive legislation for the economy and for women in the 20th century. It is now 44 years since the Equal Pay Act but, despite our progress, we still live in a country where even the most fundamental rights of women, such as the right to a fair wage, are not yet realised.

As we made our way to work this morning, thousands of other women across our country also made their way to work in jobs that pay them 17 per cent less than their male colleagues are paid—a point that was well made by Clare Adamson.

Through countless studies and evidence to Parliament, we know that as well as earning less, women are more likely to work part-time in temporary jobs, or on zero-hours contracts that are completely unsuited to their needs and

responsibilities, including their caring responsibilities.

Such is the scale of female underemployment, which has been continually highlighted in Government statistics over the past few years, that the gap between women's part-time hourly rate and men's equivalent full-time hourly rate is more than a third. Because of that, the gender gap in pensions has now grown to more than £1,000 a year—the widest it has been in decades.

We cannot rely on the 1970 act alone to solve that. We must innovate and find new creative ways to make improvements across all our Parliaments and in our communities. In the coming months, we will be considering how to reform public sector procurement. I believe that we need to take action through our laws to eradicate the barriers that so clearly keep women from meaningful and gainful employment. We are clear that a contract of employment should give a woman the opportunity to plan and to save, and that it should provide peace of mind, rather than leaving her unsure whether she can feed the family from one week to the next.

Zero-hours contracts are particularly pernicious, and they affect women especially. The issue of zero-hours contracts takes me back. My great-great-grandfather was a jute mill worker in Dundee and every day ran from mill to mill in the morning looking for a shift. He was on a zero-hours contract, alongside the thousands and thousands of female mill workers in Dundee. Those contracts were not good enough for my great-great-grandfather or for the female mill workers in Dundee, and they are not good enough for women throughout Scotland today.

That is why Scottish Labour, through the amendments that my colleague Mary Fee has lodged, will insist that the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill bans Government services from being contracted to companies that use exploitative zero-hours contracts. It is the Government's responsibility to set an example and to place itself proudly in the vanguard of fairer employment rules.

However, we must be more ambitious still. We know that when women are adequately represented at the top of a company, the pay and conditions of all women in that company improve. Scottish Labour voted in the European Parliament for gender quotas on the boards of big business in order to tackle the in-built discrimination of an appointments system that is a false meritocracy that keeps women from achieving their potential, regardless of their capabilities.

I have lodged several amendments in Parliament to three separate pieces of legislation to try to implement gender quotas on the boards of

our public bodies. Unfortunately those amendments were defeated, but I am pleased to hear the Government say today that it will finally consider a consultation on the subject. I look forward to its subsequent legislative proposal.

Shona Robison: The consultation will provide evidence to the UK Government, which has made it clear that it is where the reserved power lies. We know, of course, that Jenny Marra accepts what the UK Government says about constitutional matters.

Jenny Marra: The minister knows that I do not accept that she has tested the power of this Parliament and of the devolution settlement, which she knows is fluid, to see whether powers are vested here. I see that the minister is shaking her head. The devolution settlement is fluid and has been shown to be so previously. If the minister—and the Government, as I have said in Parliament before—were serious about putting gender quotas on public boards, she would bring a bill before Parliament that would go before the Lord Advocate and we would see whether the power is vested in this institution.

I remind the Government of the powers that it has at present. It has the power of policy at its fingertips, so it is a crying shame that when, last Tuesday, the Scottish Government announced 11 new regional chairs of college boards throughout Scotland, only two of those new chairs were women. The Government has the power of policy through the public appointments process, so it should put its money where its mouth is and start to advocate equality through the policy process. We have had a good debate today. Last week's announcement on college boards shows that the debate is still necessary and timely.

We will continue to fight in the chamber for women's equality.

Business Motion

16:58

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-09298, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 18 March 2014

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Local Government and Regeneration Committee Debate: Draft Third National Planning Framework

followed by Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Debate: Reappointment of a Member of the Standards Commission for Scotland

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 19 March 2014

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions

Culture and External Affairs;

Infrastructure, Investment and Cities

2.40 pm Election to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

followed by Scottish Government Business: European Youth Guarantee

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 20 March 2014

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.30 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Stage 3 Proceedings: Bankruptcy and Debt Advice (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 25 March 2014

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 26 March 2014

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Education and Lifelong Learning

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 27 March 2014

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.30 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
Question Time

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of a Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S4M-09299, on the designation of a lead committee.

16:59

The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Joe FitzPatrick): Presiding Officer, the Parliamentary Bureau is suggesting that the Education and Culture Committee should be the designated lead committee on the Historic Environment Scotland Bill.

The Presiding Officer: I thank you for that, and for the few seconds that it used up.

Joe FitzPatrick: I am sorry—I forgot to actually move the motion.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Education and Culture Committee be designated as the lead committee for consideration of the Historic Environment Scotland Bill at stage 1.—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

The Presiding Officer: I am even more grateful, minister.

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

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are up to seven questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, in relation to the debate on air quality in Scotland, if the amendment in the name of Paul Wheelhouse is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Jamie McGrigor falls.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-09294.3, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, which seeks to amend motion S4M-09294, in the name of Claire Baker, on air quality in Scotland, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)

McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)

Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 65, Against 57, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The amendment in the name of Jamie McGrigor therefore falls.

The next question is, that amendment S4M-09294.2, in the name of Patrick Harvie, which seeks to amend motion S4M-09294, in the name of Claire Baker, on air quality in Scotland, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)

Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 8, Against 114, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-09294, in the name of Claire Baker, on air quality in Scotland, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)

White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Culture Committee be designated as the lead committee for consideration of the Historic Environment Scotland Bill at stage 1.

Against

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 114, Against 8, Abstentions 0.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament notes the 2013 air quality monitoring results and that, while improvements in air quality have been made over recent years, a number of hot spot areas still exist, which have impacts on the quality of life and health and wellbeing of impacted communities and individuals, particularly those with pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular conditions; recognises the work that has been led by the Scottish Government, local authorities and others to improve air quality and protect the quality of life of individuals and communities; recognises, however, that more needs to be done, and welcomes initiatives such as the Low Emission Strategy that will deliver further progress.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-09293.1, in the name of Shona Robison, which seeks to amend motion S4M-09293, in the name of Johann Lamont, on women in Scotland, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-09293, in the name of Johann Lamont, on women in Scotland, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament recognises the significant contribution that women make to Scotland's economy and society and across its public and private spheres; notes the political, social and economic advancement of women in Scotland that has taken place over the last century, but believes that women still encounter barriers into education, employment and representation in public life that need to be addressed; commends the Scottish Women's Convention on organising the conference, What Women Want, What Women Need, to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2014; believes that the Parliament and the Scottish Government have a pivotal role in fighting for and creating equality for women in 21st century Scotland, and notes the valuable contribution of role models such as the late Professor Ailsa McKay, feminist economist and inspirational champion of women's equality.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-09299, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Education and

Commonwealth Week 2014

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):

The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-09204, in the name of Margaret Mitchell, on celebrating Commonwealth week. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament recognises what it considers the valuable role of the Commonwealth in strengthening relationships between nations across the world and the continued contribution of Scotland and its people to this; supports the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and welcomes the news that the Parliament will host the inaugural conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from the British Islands and Mediterranean Region; commends the efforts of the people and organisations in Central Scotland and across the country who are involved in delivering the 2014 Commonwealth Games; believes that Scotland shares many significant links with the Commonwealth, and commends the theme of Commonwealth Week 2014, which is Team Commonwealth.

17:05

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):

It is a particular pleasure for me, on behalf of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Scotland branch, to sponsor this Scottish Parliament debate celebrating Commonwealth week 2014. Since the CPA Scotland branch was established in May 2000, it has embraced the mission of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which has involved working enthusiastically with our friends across the Commonwealth, strengthening parliamentary democracy and promoting good governance.

During the past 14 years, the Scottish Parliament has received hundreds of visits from parliamentarians and officials from legislatures around the Commonwealth, who are all keen to share knowledge and experience and learn about the processes and procedures in this Parliament. As part of the CPA Scotland branch's contribution to Commonwealth week, we are hosting in the Scottish Parliament the inaugural conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. The conference will explore the experiences of female parliamentarians and the representation of women in politics in the region. Patricia Ferguson may speak more about the conference later.

The CPA Scotland branch has also sponsored two members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, Eilidh Collins and David Stewart, to attend Commonwealth day events that will take place in London, and both MSYPs will take part in a Commonwealth debate organised by CPA headquarters.

This year of course sees the Commonwealth games coming to Glasgow and Scots from all walks of life have been inspired to become involved in the event in numerous ways. Thousands volunteered to help at the games, including even members of the CPA Scotland branch.

The Commonwealth games have provided Glasgow and the whole of Scotland with a unique opportunity to deliver lasting change in terms of physical activity, participation in sport, and health and wellbeing. That is indeed an important legacy. For schoolchildren there will opportunities to learn about the Commonwealth, about values and about other countries and their cultures.

Scotland has many historic links with other Commonwealth countries. Hardly a family in Scotland has no ties to the millions who make up the Scots diaspora throughout the Commonwealth. Scots emigrants worked as engineers, doctors, teachers and missionaries in many countries of the Commonwealth. Their contributions helped to develop and shape those countries in the past 200 to 300 years. Agnes Macphail was the first woman to sit in the Canadian House of Commons. Sir John Macdonald was the first Prime Minister of Canada and was central to bringing about the confederation of Canada in 1867. Lachlan Macquarie is hailed as the founding father of Australia. Thomas Douglas, who was born in Falkirk, is considered the greatest Canadian by Canadians. He was Premier of Saskatchewan and developed the Canadian medicare system.

It is almost 10 years since the CPA Scotland branch began to explore the possibility of linking the people of Scotland with Malawi. Scotland's links with Malawi are well documented and the CPA Scotland branch has sustained and developed those links by establishing an interns programme for officials from the National Assembly of Malawi and completing two technical assistance programmes with the National Assembly, designed to strengthen parliamentary democracy.

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): Does the member agree that it is important to maintain the links with Malawi and that it is better for the country and the Parliament to concentrate their great efforts on a few countries rather than spreading things more widely?

Margaret Mitchell: It is important not only to continue our links with Malawi but to look at the whole Commonwealth. The Scotland branch can be a force for good in encouraging good practice and governance throughout the Commonwealth. I think that we very much need to strike a balance.

Perhaps the best way I can sum up and acknowledge the evolution of the Commonwealth and its continuing relevance is to read out the following message from the Queen as head of the Commonwealth. She said:

"In July this year, the opening of the 20th Commonwealth Games will be marked by the arrival in Glasgow of the baton that started its journey from Buckingham Palace five months ago.

Many of us are following closely the news of the baton relay as it passes through the 70 countries and territories whose teams will gather for the Games. The images bring vividly to life what we mean by the Commonwealth family: it is wonderful to see the warmth, shared endeavour and goodwill as the baton is passed through the hands of many thousands of people.

Affinities of history and inheritance from the past are strong, yet we are bound together by a sense that the Commonwealth is a powerful influence of good for the future. People of all ages from different cultures are weaving an ever-growing network of links which connect us in our diversity and our common purpose. It is this unity that is expressed in this year's theme: 'Team Commonwealth'.

While national teams will be concentrating on the competition in August, Team Commonwealth will have a longer focus, working together to achieve a more enduring success.

Experiences of life differ widely throughout the Commonwealth, and we each make contributions from sometimes very different viewpoints. But we are committed to the same goals. Together we offer each other encouragement and draw strength from this mutual support.

The understanding that we belong together, and are able, through teamwork, to achieve far more than we could do alone, has always been at the heart of our approach. For all of us this is now captured in the Commonwealth Charter which sets out the values and principles which guide and motivate us.

This year, more children and young people are participating in Commonwealth Day celebrations. Advances in technology enable us to reach a greater number of young people in schools, on-line using the 'Commonwealth Class' initiative, and through events in local communities where the Commonwealth flag is being raised.

I am delighted that in this, the year of 'Team Commonwealth', we will be working to build a brighter, united future in which every one of us can play a part and share in its rewards."

17:13

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I thank Margaret Mitchell for her opening speech.

It is apt that in the year that Scotland plays host to the Commonwealth games in Glasgow the theme of this year's Commonwealth week is, as Margaret Mitchell has already pointed out, team Commonwealth. I only hope that when we welcome competitors and visitors from across the Commonwealth and beyond to the games the sun is shining as brightly as it has today—and as it will, I hope, for the rest of the week.

As part of this Commonwealth year, there will be a celebration of friendship, and motivation to achieve the goals and values that the members of the Commonwealth share. However, when I read the impassioned speech that Malala Yousafzai gave on Monday, I was reminded of the work that we still have to do to achieve those goals and to promote values such as equality. As many of us know, from the age of 11, Malala spoke openly of her views on promoting education for girls, provoking the fury of those who opposed her goals. Despite that, she stood by her beliefs and, as a result, suffered horrific consequences. On the morning of Tuesday 9 October 2012, masked gunmen boarded her school bus as it was travelling to school, asked for her by name and then shot her in the head.

Remarkably, and thankfully, Malala Yousafzai survived that horrendous ordeal and has gone on to become a global campaigner for equality in education for girls. She has been the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel peace prize—and the first girl to be nominated for it—and has become a hugely influential figure, advocating girls' rights not only in Pakistan but across the globe. In her speech on Monday, she said:

"In many parts of the world—including within the Commonwealth—access to education is denied to children and girls are the most affected ... We need to ... invest more on education to build up a bright future and protect children suffering from terrorism, child labour, child trafficking and gender abuse such as female genital mutilation".

Malala reminded us that the future success of the Commonwealth depends on the next generation, but she reminded me of so much more. She reminded me of what we can achieve if we have the courage to follow our convictions, regardless of the obstacles that are put in our way, and of the inspiration that people such as her can provide for others who are striving to achieve their goals.

It has been said that, this weekend, the Scottish Parliament will have the honour of hosting the British Islands and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians inaugural conference, which will be a great opportunity to work towards the ideals that underpin team Commonwealth. I know that we will all go away from that with actions to make a difference in each of our countries. That clearly demonstrates the enduring strengths of the Commonwealth of working together effectively and really changing the world from the ground up.

That is what Commonwealth week means. It is not only about gaining an understanding of our differences, the ideals that bind us, and the aspirations that drive us; ultimately, it is about what we can take away from one another that will make a practical and tangible difference to girls,

boys, women or men. Each country must, of course, take away what it believes is best for it—the ideals and values that best represent it. That is another strength of the Commonwealth. We may all be different and have different views on how to take our country forward, but we share certain universal values that, together, we help to promote. We gain strength from our diversity, and we respect and support one another in the choices that we believe will benefit our countries. Should Scotland become an independent country, we will continue to share those values and work together with our Commonwealth partners in the United Kingdom and beyond with the respect and understanding that we would hope to receive from them.

As this year's theme says, it is a time to celebrate friendship and shared values. It is in everyone's interests to work together to promote those shared values rather than seek to promote differences.

In conclusion, although I have taken the opportunity to highlight Malala Yousafzai's words and sentiments, it is important to remember that inequality and lack of opportunity in the Commonwealth and beyond recognise no gender, race or location, and that we must all continually strive to eliminate them.

17:17

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): I congratulate Margaret Mitchell on securing the debate and enabling the Parliament to mark and celebrate Commonwealth week. I thank the staff of the Parliament's UK and international relations office for all their hard work throughout the year in supporting the CPA branch executive and keeping its members on the right track. I also thank them, on behalf of all members of the Parliament, for organising travel and other arrangements in the efficient, helpful and professional way that we have come to expect and which we now, I am afraid, sometimes take for granted.

As we have heard, the year ahead is an exciting one for all Commonwealth citizens, but particularly for those of us in Scotland as we prepare for the 20th Commonwealth games. For Glaswegians, it affords a unique opportunity to welcome our friends from around the world to the games, which begin in just 133 days. I believe that Glasgow will demonstrate its support for and belief in the Commonwealth in a tangible way during the games. As a Clydesider volunteer at the games, I hope to do my bit to make our visitors' experience good.

If 133 days away seems to be a little bit far off, we have, as we have heard, an opportunity in just

two days' time to work with women colleagues from the British Islands and Mediterranean Region as we come together in our first-ever conference. We hope to discuss issues to do with the representation of women and women's challenges and opportunities in politics, and to look at the experience of women in using new media and of being the focus of media attention. I am sure that we will be mindful of the example of the extraordinary way in which Julia Gillard was treated by the media and fellow politicians.

One of our guests at the conference this weekend will be the honourable Lindiwe Maseko, who is the speaker of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature in South Africa. It will be particularly interesting to hear from her about how equality and human rights are enshrined in the South African constitution and what that means in practice for individual South Africans in their everyday lives.

The adoption of the Commonwealth charter is an important staging post for us all. It sets out very clearly the values and aspirations that should unite the Commonwealth—democracy, human rights and the rule of law—and recognises the commitment to the development of free and democratic societies, and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth family.

In any family there will be disagreements and different ways of approaching issues, but an honest approach should be welcomed. That is why I believe that it is important that we tell our brothers and sisters in Uganda, Nigeria and other Commonwealth nations that their legislation on homosexuality is abhorrent to us. However, that is not enough, because we must demonstrate by example and experience that diversity can enhance communities and make them more dynamic. After all, if someone is prevented from being who they really are, how can they contribute fully to society?

If we are to criticise our friends, however, we must also be willing to look at our own actions. In this case, we must consider whether we in the UK have the right policies in place to support asylum seekers who flee their own country because they fear prosecution or persecution as a result of their sexuality. I have heard some extremely worrying stories of people being subjected to degrading questioning by border officials. That must not be allowed to continue.

The Commonwealth charter is a strong and powerful document, but across the Commonwealth we must begin to talk about how we can realise its values rather than simply aspire to them.

17:21

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): I, too, thank Margaret Mitchell for bringing the debate to the Parliament and for her remarks about the context of the CPA branch's work and the work that continues around that whole agenda. Patricia Ferguson remarked on the IRO staff and what they do to support the Parliament in its work.

Patricia Ferguson also mentioned gay rights in some African states. It has always struck me, as a member of our CPA branch and our Parliament, that one of the more challenging aspects of our work is meeting colleagues from Parliaments in countries where some of the principles and themes in the Commonwealth charter, which Patricia Ferguson rightly mentioned, are talked about but, my gosh, are not observed. One of the harder pitches that we make in life is to address that in a very frank way with colleagues in those international settings. I know that Patricia Ferguson is doing that work through the part of the CPA family that she is now heavily involved in.

I will make a couple of remarks that follow on from Sandra White's observations about young people and the role that they will play in this year of all years. On Monday, the Commonwealth flag flew over the town hall in Lerwick—or, at least, it was pulled up the flagpole. No doubt that happened at many flagpoles on Monday, including in Glasgow, as I saw on the television that night. However, the other thing that happened on Monday that was just as important as a flag being pulled up a pole was that Baltasound junior high school in Unst, which is the most northerly part of the UK, took part in the Commonwealth class's world's biggest assembly, which took place right across the Commonwealth. It is a collaboration between the BBC, the British Council and the Commonwealth Secretariat to bring together schools and young people right across the globe. The children of Baltasound started their school day, as did other children across the world's time zones, looking at what brings us together and celebrating the values and connections of the Commonwealth's diverse global family.

I live in a part of the world that is always very outward looking, which is one of the joys about Shetland as a community. However, it is important that we keep those values moving through the next generation. If something very strong comes out of the Commonwealth games, I suspect that it will not be who does and does not win gold medals, but rather that the next generation reflect on and are aware of the big wide world out there and what they can do in global terms to help people less fortunate than they are.

We will have the Commonwealth baton relay in July and Commonwealth day in Shetland's schools, which will be opened by youth

ambassadors. I think that one of the best parts of the programme that is taking place around the Commonwealth and around the Commonwealth games is the youth legacy ambassador work that is going on right across Scotland. It is certainly very positive in Shetland. A number of the ambassadors came down this weekend to take part in workshops and other events that took place in Glasgow over the past few days. I understand that that was a useful experience for all, and more of it is to come.

On the Commonwealth games themselves, I understand that all local authorities have second teams to support, and Shetland has been given Jersey and Brunei. The latter is a long distance away. We are pretty familiar with Jersey—we regularly beat it in the island games football, so we are happy to support it—but we know less about Brunei, although I understand that we are about to export Shetland ponies to Brunei, knitted or otherwise. Many good connections will come out of that initiative as well. It is admirable that, during the Commonwealth games, different parts of Scotland will lead out the teams as they take part in the opening ceremony. Some very excited youngsters will be taking part in that.

The final point that I will make is about a sports conference that will take place in Shetland in April. That, again, will bring all the partners together around the Commonwealth games, and it will send a positive and inspiring message to young people. Sport and the Commonwealth are being brought together in a way that can only be good for the long-term future of not just my part of Scotland but the whole Commonwealth.

17:26

The Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport (Shona Robison): I begin by thanking Margaret Mitchell for bringing this timely debate to the Parliament and thanking the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and all the people who make it happen for their on-going work. A lot has been happening on Commonwealth day and in Commonwealth week. Last night, I had the pleasure of representing the Scottish Government at the Royal Commonwealth Association dinner, and today I had the great pleasure of being at Hampden to see it unveiled as the new athletics stadium. It is amazing. If members get a chance, they should go and have a look.

The theme of this year's Commonwealth week is team Commonwealth, which is apt as we build towards the games this summer. The whole of Scotland is looking forward to 11 fantastic days of sport. As well as the excitement of the sport, there will be opportunities to strengthen our economic, educational and cultural ties with our friends from the nations and territories of the Commonwealth.

Since we won the bid to host the games back in 2007, we and our games partners have been working tirelessly to stage a world-class games that the Commonwealth will be proud of and, importantly, to encourage others to bid to host the games, because we want them to go to parts of the Commonwealth that they have not yet been to.

We are ready. With 133 days to go, I am delighted to say that preparations are on time, on track and on budget. We are proud to host the games and we are of course an enthusiastic participant in the Commonwealth. The games bring together people from many different cultures and traditions. We want the games to be a celebration of the unique power of sport, which can bring people together from all corners of the Commonwealth.

The Queen's baton relay has already visited 45 of the 70 Commonwealth nations and territories, and it will tour around Scotland for 40 days immediately before the games. The baton's journey has demonstrated the positivity that the games can bring, with so many different events happening in communities across the Commonwealth. It has been great to see Mark Beaumont capturing some of those moments as he travelled with the baton. It has been touched and held by tens of thousands of children and young people across the Commonwealth, which is a special thing in itself. It is currently enjoying the sunshine in Trinidad and Tobago—of course, we have been enjoying the sunshine as well, which I am sure will continue right the way through to July.

I want to say something about the legacy from the games. They will be athlete centred, quite rightly, but without a doubt they will also be a powerful catalyst for economic growth, for education and for inspiring our young people. We are determined to leave a legacy behind that will continue for many years to come. We have already seen some of the economic benefits, with the construction and refurbishment of venues, the support of jobs and the £60 million contribution to Scotland's economic growth over the past few years. About 30,000 jobs have been supported, and Scottish companies have benefited from the games contracts.

The Commonwealth is hugely important to Scotland's economy. We start from a position of relative strength, as the value of our exports to the Commonwealth—excluding the UK—stands at £1.8 billion, so the market is big. That is why we will host the Commonwealth games business conference, which will take place in Glasgow on the eve of the games and will build on the Commonwealth business forum, which has been held this week. The conference will focus on new opportunities for collaboration between

Governments and businesses across the Commonwealth.

Scotland has a long tradition of being a nation that is interested in people beyond our shores. We want the legacy of the Glasgow games to extend across the Commonwealth. Members have mentioned some of the fantastic programmes that are being run. Tavish Scott was right to highlight the youth legacy ambassador programme, which is a success. Our official education programme—game on Scotland—is encouraging children and young people to think beyond Scotland, to see Scotland's place in the world, to recognise the differences in cultures and traditions across the Commonwealth and to make links and, I hope, long-lasting relationships and friendships across the Commonwealth. We are also investing in the 33Fifty Commonwealth youth leadership programme, under which 100 18 to 25-year-olds will come together to learn from each other and to develop the skills and experience that they need to lead change in their countries.

As Patricia Ferguson, Tavish Scott and others suggested, the games will be a platform to showcase all that is good about the Commonwealth games values of humanity, equality and destiny, which are universal and are cherished in Scotland and across the Commonwealth. The Scottish Government expects all participating nations to reflect on those essential values as they prepare to compete in Glasgow. No one from any part of the Commonwealth who visits Scotland will be in any doubt about our values as a welcoming, open and tolerant society. In that respect, the games will be a force for good. We are looking at ways of leaving a legacy on the human rights agenda that is not just about the games in Glasgow but which perhaps produces something that we can pass on to future hosts about changing attitudes to reduce prejudice, discrimination and injustice anywhere that they exist in the Commonwealth.

Sandra White mentioned Malala Yousafzai who, as a young person facing up to discrimination, is a powerful and inspiring role model. If we can play our part when we host the games by looking a bit more widely than just at sport, if we can leave a legacy that benefits those across the Commonwealth who do not have the equality and rights that we sometimes take for granted and if we can nudge things a little further along the road on their journey to better equality and human rights, we will have done something important. I look forward to the games coming and to everybody's participation in them, in one way or another.

Meeting closed at 17:33.

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e-format first available
ISBN 978-1-78392-936-8

Revised e-format available
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