



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

**Thursday 10 May 2018**

**Session 5**



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**Thursday 10 May 2018**

**CONTENTS**

|  | <b>Col.</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>GENERAL QUESTION TIME</b> .....                                       | 1           |
| Family Courts.....   | 1           |
| Flexible Workforce Development Fund .....                                | 2           |
| Supervised Contact Facilities (Inspection and Regulation) .....          | 2           |
| Highlands and Islands Ferry Services .....                               | 3           |
| Policing 2026 .....  | 5           |
| Fuel Poverty (Rural Dimension) .....                                     | 6           |
| Banking (Online Services and Branch Closures) .....                      | 8           |
| <b>FIRST MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME</b> .....                              | 10          |
| Breast Cancer Treatment (Perjeta) .....                                  | 10          |
| Childcare (Glasgow City Council) .....                                   | 13          |
| Hoax 999 Calls .....   | 15          |
| Shahbaz Ali.....   | 16          |
| Crack Cocaine (Fife).....  | 16          |
| Cocaine (Glasgow) .....  | 17          |
| Bus Service Funding (Scottish Borders) .....                             | 17          |
| Brexit Deal (Referendum).....  | 18          |
| World War One Commemorations (Islay) .....                               | 19          |
| Breast Cancer Drugs (Interim Excepted Period) .....                      | 20          |
| Doctor Offers (Administrative Error) .....                               | 20          |
| BT Job Cuts .....  | 21          |
| Parcel Delivery Charges.....   | 21          |
| National Health Service (Cancelled Operations) .....                     | 23          |
| Neart na Gaoithe Project.....  | 24          |
| <b>HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS AIRPORTS (CAR PARKING CHARGES)</b> .....        | 27          |
| <i>Motion debated—[Tavish Scott].</i>                                    |             |
| Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD).....                                | 27          |
| Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con).....                       | 29          |
| Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab).....                           | 31          |
| Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD).....                                 | 32          |
| Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con).....                 | 34          |
| The Minister for Transport and the Islands (Humza Yousaf) .....          | 36          |
| <b>ENERGY EFFICIENT SCOTLAND</b> .....                                   | 40          |
| The Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy (Paul Wheelhouse) ..... | 40          |
| Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con).....                        | 47          |
| Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab) .....                                    | 51          |
| Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green) .....                       | 55          |
| Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD).....                                 | 57          |
| Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP) .....                                     | 60          |
| John Scott (Ayr) (Con) .....   | 63          |
| Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP) .....       | 66          |
| Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab) .....                             | 69          |
| Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP) .....                   | 71          |
| Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con) .....                   | 73          |
| Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP).....                 | 76          |
| Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab) .....                          | 78          |
| Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP) .....                               | 80          |
| Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con) .....                            | 82          |
| Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP) .....              | 85          |
| Mark Ruskell .....   | 87          |
| Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab).....                         | 88          |
| Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con) .....                       | 90          |
| Paul Wheelhouse.....   | 93          |



# Scottish Parliament

Thursday 10 May 2018

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

## General Question Time

### Family Courts

**1. Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the ongoing review of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, what consideration it is giving to putting a professional system, such as the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in England, in place for family courts in Scotland. (S5O-02077)

**The Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs (Annabelle Ewing):** The Scottish Government plans to launch a consultation shortly on the review of part 1 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The consultation will cover a wide range of issues relating to parental responsibilities and rights, child contact and residence, alongside a wider family justice modernisation strategy.

**Ash Denham:** The proposal that private practice solicitors who currently act as child welfare reporters will receive two days' training will not put children's welfare at the centre. Elsewhere, it is deemed that people who are qualified, skilled and caring professionals are best placed to assess our children's and families' needs. Can the minister provide assurances that that will be considered in the review?

**Annabelle Ewing:** Yes, I can. The consultation that I referred to will seek views on whether we should regulate child welfare reporters. Being a child welfare reporter is an important, difficult and challenging job. Taking that into account, regulation is required to ensure that reporters are fully trained in the task that they are asked to carry out and to ensure that the quality of reports is consistently high across the board.

**Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con):** Has a decision been taken, within the review, on the form of training that may be provided to child welfare reporters—specifically, on whether there will be training relating to parental alienation, which is happening south of the border?

**Annabelle Ewing:** The consultation that is to be launched shortly will seek views about whether we should regulate child welfare reporters, including views about on-going training requirements. I encourage all those with an interest to submit to

the consultation their views on what kind of training would be most appropriate.

### Flexible Workforce Development Fund

**2. Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the effectiveness of the flexible workforce development fund. (S5O-02078)

**The Minister for Employability and Training (Jamie Hepburn):** Although the flexible workforce development fund pilot is still in its first year of operation, the Scottish Government has commissioned an independent evaluation of the pilot thus far. The evaluation commenced in February 2018 and is due to conclude shortly.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** In this first year, provision for the fund has centred on colleges. Would the minister consider opening up the fund, or any successor programme, to other suitable providers of training and skills in future years?

**Jamie Hepburn:** That issue has been raised with me by a number of organisations. I say to Mr Halcro Johnston what I said to them. We have the pilot in place, and we are still at the pilot stage. This year, I intend that the pilot should continue to be delivered through the college sector. We will have the evaluation and will continue to learn. No assumptions about what will happen going forward have yet been made.

### Supervised Contact Facilities (Inspection and Regulation)

**3. Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how centres that provide a supervised contact facility for absent parents to spend time with their children are inspected and regulated. (S5O-02079)

**The Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs (Annabelle Ewing):** The contact centres that are managed by Relationships Scotland all follow national standards and practice procedures. Relationships Scotland has policies that cover issues such as domestic abuse, child protection, equality and diversity, confidentiality and vulnerable adults. There are also a number of independent contact centres, some of which have their own guidance on practice and procedure.

As I said in response to question 1, the Scottish Government plans to launch a consultation shortly on the review of part 1 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. That will seek views on whether we should regulate contact centres, among other topics.

**Bob Doris:** When constituents of mine had issues with a particular contact centre that was not

affiliated to Relationships Scotland, they discovered that there appears to be no regulatory body and no agreed quality standards or inspection processes in place for contact centres. That is the case despite the significant bearing that such centres can have on family relationships in the long term and on reports to courts in child custody cases. Will the minister look at regulation in that area, and will she meet me to discuss the matter further?

**Annabelle Ewing:** The forthcoming consultation will seek views on the regulation of contact centres. It will cover issues such as the setting of minimum standards for the accommodation that is used, and the laying down of training requirements, complaints procedures and inspection processes. I hope that that provides the member with some assurance on the direction of travel. Once the consultation is launched, which will be very soon, I will be happy to meet the member to discuss matters further.

**Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP):** In the light of the fundamentally new approach that was proposed in the recent legal aid review, will the minister consider putting child contact centres on a statutory funding footing through legal aid instead of their relying on voluntary efforts to provide that important service?

**Annabelle Ewing:** As I stated, the consultation will look at the regulation of child contact centres, and I imagine that we will receive views on a number of issues, including funding. As far as legal aid is concerned, I can advise the member that, in 2016-17, the Scottish Legal Aid Board sanctioned £459,583 of legal aid funding with regard to contact centre cases. I should point out that the sum that is ultimately claimed or paid may differ from the amount that was sanctioned. In addition, I point out that not all users of child contact centres are eligible for legal aid. The consultation, which will be launched very shortly indeed, will seek views on all those issues, and I encourage the member to make his views known.

### Highlands and Islands Ferry Services

**4. Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to improve ferry services in the Highlands and Islands. (S5O-02080)

**The Minister for Transport and the Islands (Humza Yousaf):** Over the past decade, the Scottish Government has invested more than £1 billion in new vessels and routes, in improved harbour infrastructure and in cheaper fares, which clearly demonstrates our commitment to the long-term prosperity of our island communities. To further strengthen our fleet, we have—as the member will know—invested in two new 100m dual-fuel ferries worth £97 million, which are

currently under construction at Ferguson Marine Engineering Ltd. We have also recently provided the money to Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd to allow it to purchase the three passenger vessels that serve the northern isles, which will guarantee the lifeline connections to and from Orkney and Shetland. We are also committed to rolling out to the northern isles the road equivalent tariff, which has already been a major success on the west coast.

**Donald Cameron:** The minister referred to the two new ferries that are on order from Ferguson Marine Engineering. Can he confirm when they will be ready for service?

**Humza Yousaf:** The timetable to which we previously publicly committed is still the timetable that we have with Ferguson. We are keeping a close eye on developments, and we and CMAL are working closely with Ferguson. It is worth saying that those ferries are the first ever liquefied natural gas dual-fuel vessels to be built in the United Kingdom; so, naturally, there are complexities with regard to the new workforce. If there are any developments in the timetable for the MV Glen Sannox and the 802, I will ensure that Parliament is updated appropriately.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** Following the undertakings that were given around the time of the budget, earlier this year, can the minister update Parliament on the discussion with Orkney Islands Council about improvements to the internal services in Orkney?

**Humza Yousaf:** The Scottish Government was delighted, in our budget discussions, to give a one-off payment in the budget to Orkney and Shetland, which was supported by both Liam McArthur and Tavish Scott—begrudgingly perhaps, but supported nonetheless.

The second part of that commitment, which is important, was that we would, through the working group, ensure that we have a long-term solution. On my recent visit to Orkney and Shetland, leaders of both councils raised that point with me, as Liam McArthur and Tavish Scott have done on previous occasions. I have agreed to travel back to Orkney and Shetland this summer to convene the working group, and I will keep both members and the Parliament updated on how those discussions go.

**John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):** The minister recently agreed to consider my proposal to involve the trade unions and Caledonian MacBrayne with CMAL in the procurement process. Can he advise members whether he has agreed to that request and what discussions—if any—he has had with the trade unions?

**Humza Yousaf:** On my visit to Orkney and Shetland a couple of weeks ago, I met the trade unions, including the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and Unite the union, and we discussed the issue to which John Finnie refers. Discussions are currently on-going.

I am open-minded about the idea, and I think that it makes perfect sense for future procurements. The next large contract that we are looking towards is, of course, the northern isles contract, and the trade unions will be very much involved in that discussion.

### **Policing 2026**

**5. Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made on delivering the policing 2026 strategy. (S5O-02081)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** Last week, the Scottish Police Authority board approved an updated policing 2026 implementation plan, covering the period to 2020. The plan sets out a number of early achievements, including improvements in custody provision, the roll-out of the service's wellbeing programme and testing of new local policing models. The Scottish Police Authority chair has also outlined her intention to establish a designated committee to oversee transformation. The Scottish Government continues to support policing 2026, delivering real-terms protection of the police resource budget and a further £31 million of reform funding this year.

**Daniel Johnson:** Last week's SPA board meeting discussed the budget for the next three years, including Police Scotland's plans for much-needed and welcome reforms, which include reductions in backfilling and investment in information technology. First, is the Government fully committed to meeting the costs of those reforms, including the indicated £206 million of capital spend on information technology over the next five years? Secondly, given that the British Transport Police integration is due to come out of the police reform budget but is explicitly not accounted for in the SPA's plans, is the cabinet secretary at all worried that the as-yet-unknown costs of the BTP integration could harm those wider and much-needed plans for reform in the police?

**Michael Matheson:** No, I am not worried. The work that Police Scotland is taking forward on its information and communication technology development is part of the work that Audit Scotland recommended to make sure that Police Scotland had a robust ICT strategy in place. I welcome the work that is being done to develop that plan. The funding that will be required is a matter to which the SPA will have to give

consideration. In any business plan, any request for funding will obviously be given due consideration. Daniel Johnson will also be aware that Police Scotland has confirmed to the SPA its intention to invest almost £5 million in core operational policing systems this year, in order to make sure that it delivers benefits to officers carrying out front-line duties in communities.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** There is a lot of private chat going on, which is making it difficult for questioners and ministers to be heard.

Gordon MacDonald has a quick supplementary.

**Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP):** Does the cabinet secretary believe that progress is being made in the management and leadership of Police Scotland?

**Michael Matheson:** I believe so. Deputy Chief Constable Livingstone is an experienced and well-respected police officer who is offering the organisation excellent leadership, supported by two deputy chief constables and nine assistant chief constables. The Scottish Police Authority has set out its plan for the recruitment of further DCCs and ACCs, and that programme has already been taken forward. The SPA intends to have a recruitment process that will see the new chief constable in post by the end of this year.

### **Fuel Poverty (Rural Dimension)**

**6. Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on there being a distinct rural dimension to fuel poverty, and whether it plans to take forward all of the recommendations of the Scottish rural fuel poverty task force. (S5O-02082)

**The Minister for Local Government and Housing (Kevin Stewart):** This Government has always prioritised tackling fuel poverty and is committed to ensuring that everyone in Scotland lives in a warm home that is affordable to heat, no matter where they live. We recognise that—  
[*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Excuse me, minister. You were turned off at source, but you are back on again. [*Laughter.*] I do not know why that happened; I am not responsible.

**Kevin Stewart:** Thank you, Presiding Officer. That is the first time that I have been turned off at source.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Could you repeat your answer?

**Kevin Stewart:** We recognise that fuel poverty in our remote rural and island communities requires particular attention, and that is why we established the Scottish rural fuel poverty task

force, which reported its findings in October 2016. We published our response to that in March 2017.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I hope that you caught all of that, Mr McArthur.

**Liam McArthur:** This exchange has taken an uncomfortable turn.

Will the minister reflect on the unwillingness so far of the Scottish Government to accept the advice of the rural fuel poverty task force, its own fuel poverty definition group, all the local authorities and housing associations in the Highlands and Islands, Citizens Advice Scotland, Shelter and a range of other organisations that we need a minimum income standard for remote and rural areas if we are to tackle fuel poverty at source in the communities that are most heavily affected by fuel poverty, such as those in Orkney?

**Kevin Stewart:** Mr McArthur takes a great interest in all this. As he knows, our delivery plans are focused on remote, rural and island areas. The per-head spend on home energy efficiency programme area-based schemes in remote, rural and island areas is £9,000, compared to £7,500 elsewhere.

Although the majority of the recommendations that were made by the task force were for the Scottish Government, a significant number were for other bodies to look at, including the United Kingdom Government, Ofgem and energy suppliers. We will continue to listen to remote, rural and island communities, and the bill and strategy that we will publish before the end of the term will be designed to focus on those who are most in need, to help them heat their homes, no matter where they live in Scotland.

**Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con):** Rural properties are rarely connected to the gas network and often rely on kerosene central heating. What plans does the Scottish Government have to ensure that rural areas can play their part in decarbonisation? Does it plan to introduce schemes to help rural residents upgrade and modernise their heating systems and boilers?

**Kevin Stewart:** We will continue to review all those issues. I am aware that households that are off mains gas have difficulties of their own. It would be helpful, of course, if the UK Government lived up to what it said it was going to do about fuel prices and put a cap on them. Perhaps Mr Chapman can talk to his colleagues at Westminster to see whether they will do that, because it would be a great relief to those who live in remote, rural and island communities.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 7 has been withdrawn.

## **Banking (Online Services and Branch Closures)**

**8. Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of recent issues regarding TSB's online banking service and further branch closures, including by Santander, whether it will carry out an assessment of their impact on businesses and people who find it difficult to access or use online or telephone banking. (S50-02084)

**The Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy (Paul Wheelhouse):** The recent information technology problems at TSB have highlighted the continuing importance of physical access to banking services. Although regulation of banks and financial services remains reserved, the Scottish Government has made clear its position that consumers across Scotland need to be able to access essential banking services in the way that best meets their needs.

Although online banking offers advantages for many customers, it is not suitable for all customers. The Financial Conduct Authority, which has responsibility for regulating the financial services sector, will investigate the TSB's systems failure and monitor the bank's resolution of the problems that are faced by its customers.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise has commissioned work to investigate the impact of branch closures on communities and businesses in the Highlands and Islands area. The Scottish Government will review the findings of that work, and of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee's on-going inquiry into banking services, and consider appropriate action to support communities.

**Christine Grahame:** I am encouraged that the Government might consider such an assessment. The minister will be aware that the RBS in Melrose has had a temporary reprieve, but only until December. I am only too aware—as he is, because Melrose is part of his region—that the many constituents and small businesses for which Melrose is renowned need an on-street bank, not an online bank. Given that we own 72.9 per cent of the RBS, does the minister not consider that that is a rotten deal for the public?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** In the interests of time, Presiding Officer, I will just say that I agree with Christine Grahame that that is a bad outcome for customers of the banks. However, we are working with the banks, and I am encouraged that they are increasing their discussions with us, in recognition of the importance of retaining some face-to-face services when it is possible to do so. I reassure Christine Grahame that we are focusing on the needs of not only the south of Scotland and



Melrose in her constituency, but the whole of Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We will have a very quick supplementary from James Kelly.

**James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab):** I reinforce the point that banks are the centrepiece of local communities. We have seen the detrimental effect of closures in Cambuslang and Rutherglen, and I urge the minister to do everything in his power to avert the closures.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I will do everything that I can to try and mitigate the impact of the closures and, if possible, prevent them.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That was even quicker than I expected. That concludes general questions.

## First Minister's Question Time

12:00

### Breast Cancer Treatment (Perjeta)

**1. Ruth Davidson (Edinburgh Central) (Con):** The First Minister and all members of the Scottish Parliament will have read further stories this week of women in Scotland dying from breast cancer and unable to receive the drug Perjeta, which is a life-extending drug that is available to patients elsewhere in the United Kingdom. There will be women this week, and in the weeks to come, who will hear the devastating news that they have HER2-positive secondary breast cancer. Because Perjeta is a first-line treatment, they need to get it quickly in order to benefit from that additional time to live. What would the First Minister advise them to do?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** There will not be a single family in Scotland that has not been touched in some way by cancer, including breast cancer. All of us know that being diagnosed with cancer is an incredibly difficult time not only for patients, but for their families and friends. One thing that is very important is that patients get speedy access to appropriate treatment, and where appropriate treatment is considered to include drugs, it will include drugs.

However, as I have said many times in Parliament, and as members across the chamber will appreciate, decisions in Scotland on approval of drugs are not taken by ministers, but are—rightly, in my view—taken independent of ministers and of Parliament by the Scottish Medicines Consortium. Those decisions are based on clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness.

With regard to the drug Perjeta that Ruth Davidson has highlighted today, national health service national procurement officials are currently engaging with the pharmaceutical company that manufactures it—Roche—to explore how it can offer the drug at a fair and transparent price. I believe that those discussions are building on discussions that took place between the company and Scottish Government officials last week. My message to the company today is to encourage it to resubmit Perjeta to the SMC at a transparent price, in order to allow the SMC to do its independent job.

It will always be a source of concern that particular drugs that patients feel will benefit them are not approved, even if just for a short time. Of course, some drugs are approved in Scotland that are not approved in other parts of the UK, and vice versa. These are always difficult issues, but perhaps because they are so difficult it is

important that we respect the independent processes that are in place.

**Ruth Davidson:** The fact is that, if women in Scotland lived just a few miles away, south of the border, they would not have to think about moving house or uprooting their family in order to have access to a medicine that will keep them alive. We know that a deal was done between the NHS in England and Wales and Perjeta's manufacturer. The First Minister told us two weeks ago, and reminded us again just a moment ago, that the drug company is in discussions with NHS Scotland. She also made the point that the Scottish Medicines Consortium makes decisions independent of Government, but can she at least say today that, if the same deal is offered to Scotland as was offered to and accepted by England and Wales, it will be accepted here?

**The First Minister:** I certainly hope that that would be the case, but that is a decision for the Scottish Medicines Consortium. I do not have access to all the details of the deal. I do not know whether it is the case with Perjeta, but such deals are often commercially confidential.

It is an important and serious issue, and Ruth Davidson's characterisation of it is not entirely fair. For example, I could point to another drug for treatment of advanced breast cancer that is available and approved in Scotland but is not currently approved in England. Other drugs fall into the same category. It is sometimes too easy to characterise such decisions as she has.

Sometimes such situations arise precisely because we have in place our own processes. England goes through a different process, through the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. We have the Scottish Medicines Consortium, and that process is widely backed by members across the chamber. Such decisions are difficult and it is right that we support the SMC in taking them. If what Ruth Davidson is encouraging Roche to do is ensure that the price that is offered to NHS Scotland is as reasonable, fair and transparent as the price that was offered elsewhere in the UK, I would certainly endorse that, and I hope that the discussions that are under way will lead to exactly that.

**Ruth Davidson:** I understand that the SMC makes its decisions independent of Government, but I also gently remind Parliament that the Government sets the framework under which those decisions are made. Because there is a cancer drugs fund in England, Perjeta has been available down south for more than four years and it has had an effect. For example, Bonnie Fox's son was just four months old when she was diagnosed with secondary breast cancer in 2015. Because she lives in London, she can receive Perjeta and is still alive to see her son's third

birthday. However, for years, women in Scotland have been missing out on that treatment. The drug has gone back and forth to the SMC for a decision three times since 2013. Can the First Minister honestly say that the system that her Government has overseen for all those years has done its best by such women?

**The First Minister:** If I was talking about a different drug that was not available in England, I guess that the same arguments could be made in reverse.

The decisions are the outcomes of independent processes. It is not about an unreasonable refusal to fund, but about making sure that the company submits a fair price. If we do not insist on companies submitting fair prices, we are able to make fewer drugs available for patients. That is why the processes are so important.

Ruth Davidson rightly said that the Government sets the framework. I am sure, therefore, that she is aware of the significant reforms that have been introduced in recent years. For example, between 2011 and 2013, the combined SMC acceptance rate for orphan and cancer medicines was just 48 per cent, but because of the reforms that we have introduced, between 2014 and 2016 SMC approval of ultra-orphan, orphan and end-of-life medicines is now 75 per cent. The reforms are therefore leading to improvements.

However, that does not remove the need for very close consideration of individual applications. I want to see as many medicines and drugs approved and available to patients as possible, but we would not be providing a good service to patients if we did not have a robust and independent process in place. It is right that we do, and all of us should support it. Of course, that responsibility is particularly important for the Scottish Government, which is we have been having the discussions that I have spoken about, and why we are encouraging Roche to resubmit at a fair and transparent price that will allow the drug to be approved.

**Ruth Davidson:** In Scotland today, women with secondary breast cancer are faced with a choice: they can move their home for a chance live longer, or they can stay put in the knowledge that that chance is denied them here. We urgently need a deal on Perjeta and we need to fix the system now.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport promised a new system of negotiating on the cost of medicines in December 2016. At the time, Mary Allison, the director for Scotland of Breast Cancer Now said that we need to

"deliver these changes quickly and effectively. There's no time to lose."

It is now May 2018, 17 months later. So what is taking the Government so long to fix the system in order to help women to access medicines such as Perjeta? Can the First Minister give the exact date when her Government will put in place the new negotiating system that she promised, so that we have greater access to treatments that let people live longer and better-quality lives?

**The First Minister:** The Montgomery review was asked by the Government and health secretary to recommend reforms, and there is an ongoing process of implementing those reforms. It is partly because of the reforms that we have implemented that the figures that I read out earlier have been achieved. Further work is being led by NHS National Services Scotland right now. It is important that we continue to reform the system, as I am sure will be the case in other parts of the UK, to ensure that it operates as well as it possibly can.

However, the important point is that no matter how good and efficient the system is, that does not remove the need for individual decisions to be taken on individual drugs. There is a process under way on Perjeta. I hope that it concludes positively and as quickly as possible, but part of the responsibility in that is the drug company's responsibility to come forward with a fair and transparent price for the drug. I hope that one thing that we can agree on today is to encourage the drug company to do exactly that.

I do not think that it is fair to characterise the process as Ruth Davidson has in part characterised it today; we could, equally, do that in reverse for other drugs not available in England. We have systems in place, but the decisions about drugs are difficult. I am sure that the health secretary will identify with what I am about to say. When I was Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, such decisions were among the most difficult decisions that confronted me. However, the most important thing for me then as a health secretary and now as First Minister is to have confidence in the processes that we have in place. I do have confidence in those processes. Of course they are always open to improvement, but we must ensure that they are independent in order to get the right and fair results for all patients across the country. That is what we are determined to do.

### **Childcare (Glasgow City Council)**

**2. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab):** How many families will be hit by the 57 per cent hike in childcare charges that is proposed by Glasgow City Council?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** The decisions that Glasgow City Council has taken—and they are decisions for Glasgow City Council—

also involved, as I am sure Richard Leonard is aware, extending beyond the national recommended provision the number of free hours for families who earn less than £30,000, as I understand it. The council has been working hard to accelerate progress towards the doubling of free provision, and it has been doing that in a way that targets those at the bottom end of the income scale. Of course, we are committed nationally in that regard, and in the past couple of weeks we agreed a deal with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on the funding of our transformation of early years education and childcare. That is something that I hope members across the chamber will welcome.

**Richard Leonard:** The question that I asked was how many families in Glasgow will be affected by the Scottish National Party's decision to hike up childcare charges. The answer, according to a freedom of information disclosure, is 5,000. We are talking about 5,000 families who are already struggling with the cost of living, such as the Spence family. Sarah Spence works for the national health service as an assistant practice manager in Anderston. It is a vital job, but she told me:

"I feel like I will be forced to give up work to look after my son, which is unfair, as I love my job in the NHS and I do not want to not work."

Today, the childcare costs for her 18-month-old son, Ollie, are £420 a month. With the proposed increase, the family will have to find another £220 a month. First Minister, how many working-class families do you know with a spare £220 a month?

**The First Minister:** In my constituency in Glasgow, many of my constituents benefit from the free childcare that Glasgow City Council makes available. As I said, Glasgow City Council has made a number of changes to its provision, including increasing the number of hours that are provided free to families, as I understand it, who earn under £30,000.

The reason why we are working so hard and investing so considerably to increase the provision of childcare is to reduce overall costs for families, not just in Glasgow but across the country. The reforms that we are in the process of implementing with local authority colleagues will save families across the country thousands of pounds a year, as well as giving young people the best start in life. That is a direction of travel that all members of the Parliament should warmly welcome.

**Richard Leonard:** First Minister, at your party's conference in Glasgow last October, you said:

"some parents still face a struggle to find and fund the childcare they need to allow them to work. We are going to change that."

How does a 57 per cent hike in childcare charges change that struggle for working families for the better? It doesn't, does it? It changes it for the worse. First Minister, this will not allow people to work; it will slam the door on work for people. Will you listen to what 5,000 families across the city of Glasgow are telling you? Will you add your voice to their demand? Will you stick to your word? Will you stand up for those families and against these outrageous increases?

**The First Minister:** It is because I believe so strongly in what I said in the speech that Richard Leonard has just quoted from that, by the end of this parliamentary session, the Government, with our partners in local authorities, will be investing almost £1 billion in total, doubling the amount of free childcare that is available to families across this country and doing something that Labour never did in all the years that it was in power. We will get on with the job of providing the money to local authorities to allow them to double their provision of free childcare—something that will be of benefit to children and families the length and breadth of this country.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** I remind members that they should always speak through the chair.

We have a constituency question from Liam Kerr.

### Hoax 999 Calls

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** On Tuesday this week, *The Press and Journal* reported that hoax calls to Aberdeen firefighters are at a five-year high. Such calls tie up vital resources and put the lives of our brave firefighters and members of the public at risk. What steps will the Government take to crack down on hoax 999 calls? Given that many of them are from those who are struggling with mental health difficulties, is this not another case where local, joined-up approaches from multiple services will succeed over top-down centralisation?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** First, my strong and unequivocal message to anybody making a hoax call to one of our emergency services is, "Don't do it," because such calls tie up resources that those in need are depending on.

On the broader part of the question about mental health, I have a great deal of sympathy with that, which is why we are investing in mental health workers in non-health settings, and particularly in criminal justice settings. That is something that I announced recently, perhaps in the same speech that Richard Leonard has just quoted from.

The provision of mental health support is an important issue, but of course not everybody who

will make a hoax call is in that position. We all have a duty to remind people of how precious our emergency services are, how reliant we all are on them at times, and how we all have a duty to treat them with the utmost respect.

### Shahbaz Ali

**Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green):** The First Minister will be aware that, last Thursday, 25-year-old Shahbaz Ali, a Syrian refugee, was stabbed six times in Edinburgh, and he is now critically ill in hospital. He was trying to protect his young female cousin when he was attacked at a hostel in the city. What support is the Scottish Government and its agencies giving to local authorities and communities in Edinburgh and across Scotland in terms of protection and reassurance following what clearly appears to have been a racially motivated criminal act?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** I thank Andy Wightman for raising the issue. I am, of course, aware of the case of Shahbaz Ali, who was attacked and seriously hurt in the early hours of Thursday morning last week. Clearly, a criminal investigation is under way into the incident and, as we are not yet aware of the full circumstances of the case, we are obviously restricted in what we can say about this specific case.

What I will say more generally, though, is that Scotland must stand united at all times against all forms of racism and all types of hate crime. We want Scotland to be—and to be seen to be—a refuge from war and persecution, and any attack on any individual or group of people living in Scotland, regardless of who they are or where they come from, should be seen as an attack on all of us.

The Scottish Government will do what we can, with the local authority in Edinburgh and other groups, to provide as much reassurance and support as possible. I am aware that there is a fundraising campaign to raise funds for this particular individual, and I am sure that many people across the country will want to support that.

### Crack Cocaine (Fife)

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Police are battling a significant rise in the amount of crack cocaine flooding the streets in my region, and particularly in Fife. Officers have found that drugs have become much more available over the past six months, promoting a fear of an epidemic. The Scottish Government's drugs strategy is clearly failing the residents of Fife. What future robust measures will be put in place to combat this issue as a matter of urgency?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** We will continue to support our police in the vital job that

they do to get drugs off our streets, and our police work hard every single day of every week in doing exactly that. We are never, and we never will be, complacent about the risk, the threat or the impact of drugs, but I would disagree with the member's reference to the Scottish Government's drugs strategy. The latest figures indicate that the number of adults who reported drug use decreased from 7.6 per cent in 2008-09 to 6 per cent in 2014-15, and the latest survey of drug-taking behaviour among young people shows that the majority of 13 and 15-year-olds have never used drugs. We have to be aware of that context while, of course, continuing to treat drug use as seriously as we do.

### **Cocaine (Glasgow)**

**Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con):** On the same topic, what is the First Minister's reaction to the news this week that, in Glasgow, cocaine can be delivered more quickly than pizza?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Obviously, I am concerned at what has been reported on cocaine use, which is something that should concern all of us. As I said in response to the previous question, we are never and we never will be complacent about this, but we must put these issues in the context that I just did, in terms of the declining use of drugs among the adult population.

We are also giving additional resources to improve the provision and quality of services for people with substance misuse issues. Although it is not exactly relevant to the cocaine issue that Adam Tomkins has raised, one of the measures that we and Glasgow City Council support—and, indeed, that the whole Parliament supported a couple of weeks ago—is a safe consumption facility in Glasgow. We need to look at different ways of dealing with the drugs issue, and we are certainly open to doing exactly that.

### **Bus Service Funding (Scottish Borders)**

**Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP):** Does the First Minister share my concern that the Tory-led Scottish Borders Council is reducing its share of funding for the bus service X101/102, withdrawing its contribution of just over £135,000 in favour of a measly £35,000, which will affect many of my constituents in places such as West Linton and Penicuik? Does the First Minister agree that that flies in the face of encouraging the use of public transport, and will she raise the matter with the Minister for Transport and the Islands?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** As I said earlier, in response to a question on another issue, those are matters for the local council. However, I can well understand that the situation that

Christine Grahame has outlined will be of concern to people in her constituency. I am sure that the transport minister would be happy to discuss that further with her, and that she will take up that opportunity.

### **Brexit Deal (Referendum)**

**3. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** I want to ask the First Minister about Brexit. The Conservative United Kingdom Government's Foreign Secretary says that his Prime Minister's plan is crazy. Labour members of Parliament are in open revolt. Two years on from the referendum on leaving the European Union, Brexit is a shambles and is damaging the country. The First Minister's trusted former adviser Noel Dolan says that it is time for her to back a referendum on the Brexit deal. He is right, is he not?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** First, I will take the opportunity to tease Noel Dolan mercilessly—in many years of being my adviser and helping me with First Minister's questions while I have been in opposition and in government, he managed to avoid being the story, and then, not long after his retirement, he managed to do the opposite.

However, on the serious issue, in all sincerity I will say that it is not the Scottish National Party that will be a block if there is to be a second referendum on the EU issue. If there should be any prospect of that, it will not be the SNP that Willie Rennie will need to convince but one of the main parties at Westminster. Given that, at the moment, we cannot seem to convince even the Labour Opposition at Westminster of the case for the single market, I am not sure that there are many grounds for optimism. However, I suggest to Willie Rennie that his target on this issue is the wrong one.

I will make a second, and quite important, point. I understand that the motivation for people who argue for having another EU referendum is that they hope that the result would be different from the result last time. However, that is not really relevant in Scotland because, in the EU referendum, Scotland voted to remain. The problem is that our remain vote has been completely ignored. What guarantee can Willie Rennie give people in Scotland that, if that were to be the outcome again, our remain vote would not be ignored all over again, in exactly the same way?

**Willie Rennie:** The problem for the First Minister is that time is running out. We could be leaving the EU within months. She has told us before that she is sympathetic to the idea of there being another referendum on the Brexit deal. However, if she is so sympathetic, why does she not just pick it up? Noel Dolan was not alone in

speaking up for a Brexit deal referendum. Another former adviser—Kevin Pringle—agreed. They are two of the great thinkers in the SNP. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** First Minister. Oh, I am sorry—I thought that you were finished, Mr Rennie. Please carry on.

**Willie Rennie:** Keith Brown has a degree of sympathy for the idea, and Ian Blackford is open to looking at it as well. *[Interruption.]* With the backing of so many people in her party, and given the damage that Brexit is doing to the country, is the First Minister prepared finally to make a decision to put her Government behind a public vote to back a referendum on the Brexit deal?

**The First Minister:** First—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry, I thought that Willie Rennie had not finished—I was enjoying that so much.

I thank Willie Rennie for his warm words of praise for many of my SNP colleagues. I remind him that all those great thinkers—I agree that they are all great thinkers—support Scottish independence. I hope that they will persuade Willie Rennie on that issue.

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** Not all of Scotland wants independence.

**The First Minister:** I will concentrate on Willie Rennie for the moment.

In all seriousness, the SNP is not a block to that referendum, but, equally, the SNP is not capable of bringing about a second referendum on the EU position. Willie Rennie would be better spending his time trying to persuade Labour of his position, and I hope that, together, we can all spend our time trying to persuade Labour of the case for the single market and the customs union. I agree with Willie Rennie's characterisation of Brexit—it is a complete and utter shambles. I hope that common sense will break out in a number of ways, but Willie Rennie would be better spending his time trying to persuade those who could make a bigger difference on the matter. I will leave the great thinkers of my party to persuade him on a host of other things, too.

#### **World War One Commemorations (Islay)**

**Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con):** One hundred years ago, the people of Islay witnessed the tragedies of the sinking of HMS Otranto and SS Tuscania off the coast of Islay, which resulted in a huge loss of American servicemen who were en route to support the allied forces effort in Europe in world war one.

Will the First Minister join me in thanking the people of Islay and the world war one commemoration committee of Islay for the very moving service of commemoration at the war memorial in Port Ellen and the other

commemorative events that were held on Friday last week in the presence of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Vice Admiral Timothy Laurence, senior representatives from the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments and senior diplomats from the United States of America, France and Germany?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Yes, I will. I was very sorry personally not to be able to be in Islay on Friday last week, as I had to attend the funeral of a personal friend in Glasgow.

The service and commemorations were tremendous. I thank the world war one commemoration committee not only for its work on the Islay commemorations, but for all the work that it has been doing to commemorate the battles and key events of world war one. The commemorations were an opportunity to pay tribute to the spirit and generosity of the people of Islay, and to the American servicemen who benefited from that generosity. I thoroughly endorse all the comments that Maurice Corry made.

#### **Breast Cancer Drugs (Interim Excepted Period)**

**Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab):** I listened carefully to the exchanges between the First Minister and Ruth Davidson on the breast cancer drug, Perjeta. As we know, one of the recommendations that Labour members won from the Montgomery review of the Scottish Medicines Consortium was for there to be an interim excepted period, in order to allow for life-prolonging medicines to be made available while the SMC and the medicines company negotiated a price. Why has that recommendation not been implemented? Surely that is the answer, so that these life-prolonging drugs can be given to breast cancer patients.

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** Drugs can already be made available on an exceptional basis through individual patient treatment processes, which is an important part of the process that is in place. As I have said, we are introducing on an on-going basis the recommendations of the Montgomery review. Some recommendations require very careful consideration, and I hope that Anas Sarwar and others will accept the need for that. We will continue to take forward such reforms to ensure that patients get the fair access to drugs and medicines that we all want to see.

#### **Doctor Offers (Administrative Error)**

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD):** On Tuesday, a young doctor in my constituency contacted me to say that 10 days ago, after a gruelling recruitment process, she had been awarded a place to become a consultant in

her desired field of medicine. On Friday, a week after making plans with her partner to move house, she received the devastating news that, due to an administrative error, all offers were being withdrawn. Overall in Scotland, that error has affected more than 100 doctors, some of whom have bought houses and resigned positions on the strength of their offers. Does the First Minister support calls for an inquiry into the matter? Will her Government consider offering some form of compensation to doctors in Scotland who have been financially disadvantaged by the mistake?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** As Alex Cole-Hamilton is no doubt aware, the issue that has arisen is United Kingdom-wide and is affecting doctors in not just Scotland, but other parts of the UK. We are of course paying very close attention to it and will consider the particular points that Alex Cole-Hamilton made. If the doctor in his constituency wishes it, I am sure that the health secretary would be happy to correspond with them directly to see what advice and help can be offered. I will ask the health secretary to correspond more generally with Alex Cole-Hamilton about the action that the Scottish Government will look to take to make sure that the situation is rectified and cannot happen again in the future.

### BT Job Cuts

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** This morning, BT announced that it will cut thousands of back-office and middle-management jobs, while creating additional jobs to support network deployment and customer service. Can the First Minister advise members of the implications of that decision for Scotland?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** I am aware of the announcement that was made by BT this morning. As yet, we have had no indication from BT of exactly how that will affect its Scottish operations. We will seek further information from BT over the next couple of days and, in an appropriate way, we will share that with members who have an interest.

Obviously, this is a concerning time for the company's employees who might be affected by the decision, and Scottish Government officials have already contacted BT Scotland to offer guidance and see whether we can provide any assistance. As we receive further information, we will share it with the Parliament.

### Parcel Delivery Charges

4. **Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Government will provide an update on progress towards tackling excessive parcel delivery

surcharges affecting parts of Scotland. (S5F-02329)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** I recognise the long-standing concerns about parcel deliveries to our rural areas, and I very much appreciate the work that has been undertaken by Richard Lochhead and organisations such as Citizens Advice Scotland and Highland Council. This Government has worked with them and with others on the issue, including on the development of a statement of principles for fair delivery charges, which was subsequently adopted by the United Kingdom Government.

On 27 June, the business minister will host a meeting with parcel delivery companies, retailers, consumer groups and others to discuss what further action we can take. I assure Richard Lochhead that we will continue to do everything that we can, but I remind members that the regulation of prices for parcel deliveries is reserved to Westminster. It is time that the UK Government also took serious action to address the issue.

**Richard Lochhead:** I thank the First Minister for the news about the ministerial meeting that will take place.

I continue to be inundated with cases of unjustifiable and excessive parcel delivery surcharges that have been imposed on homes and businesses in Moray and throughout Scotland by some companies, although other companies deliver free or for a modest charge.

It is not just a rural issue. For instance, the major online retailer Wayfair Ltd imposes surcharges for the delivery of some items to Falkirk, Greenock, Dundee, Paisley and other places but offers free delivery to places such as Penzance, in the south of England. It is welcome that online platforms such as eBay and Amazon, which I have met, recognise that there is a problem and want to help us to sort it out, and it is welcome that the Advertising Standards Authority is now dealing with companies that promise free delivery to the UK mainland but exclude parts of mainland Scotland.

Is the First Minister aware that many retailers continue to apply an additional charge after transactions, which is illegal, and that other companies simply refuse to deliver to parts of Scotland?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** Hurry up, Mr Lochhead.

**Richard Lochhead:** Given that the case for regulation, which the First Minister mentioned, is getting stronger and stronger, will she personally intervene and take the matter up with the UK

Government so that we can scrap the £36 million surcharge on Scotland?

**The First Minister:** I thank Richard Lochhead, who has done absolutely sterling work on the issue. He has raised awareness at a Government level and has contributed to some of the actions that are now being taken to address it.

The issue mainly affects rural areas, but we have just had a timely reminder from Richard Lochhead that it is not only rural areas in Scotland that are affected by the imposition of unfair and excessive delivery charges. The practice has to end, and we, in the Scottish Government, are determined that we will play our part in ensuring that that happens.

I assure Richard Lochhead that we will again take the matter up with the UK Government, because meaningful change will happen only if the Government that holds the main levers and responsibilities takes a far more active role. We have made many representations in the past, and we will continue to do so. The UK Government should insist that all consumers—whether they are based in rural communities or in major cities—receive fair, transparent and timely delivery of their parcels. People everywhere in Scotland have a right to expect that.

**Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):** Legal parcels are being delivered by companies to households all over Scotland containing illegal drugs, including street Valium selling at 20p a tablet. What powers does the First Minister have at her disposal to stop the legal delivery of illegal substances?

**The First Minister:** That is an important issue. The member is raising the issue of illegal substances, but there are often issues with the delivery of other goods that can be damaging or that can be used in a damaging way.

I will ensure that a letter goes to the member, setting out exactly what powers the Scottish Government has and where we may need to look to the UK Government—again—to take action. For example, consideration is currently being given to proposed legislation to deal with the issue of knives, and that includes parcel deliveries. If it is acceptable to the member, I will ensure that that information is provided to her. We are doing everything that we can to address what I recognise is a serious issue.

#### **National Health Service (Cancelled Operations)**

**5. Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con):** To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government will take to reduce the number of cancelled NHS operations. (S5F-02315)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** We continue to support health boards to keep all cancellations to a minimum through better scheduling and planning of elective care. In 2017-18, 830 operations were carried out each day on average, which compares with around 22 operations cancelled for capacity or non-clinical reasons. NHS Scotland staff numbers under this Government are at a record high, and we have committed to an additional 2,600 nursing and midwifery training places as well as additional medical training places over this parliamentary session.

**Rachael Hamilton:** This year, NHS Borders has consistently had the highest or second-highest rate of cancelled operations due to capacity or non-clinical reasons. After one of my constituents had her operation cancelled, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport wrote to me, calling it

“highly regrettable and totally unacceptable”.

My constituent’s operation was cancelled again, however, and the cabinet secretary wrote again—again saying that it was unacceptable. When will the First Minister realise that we need action and that simply repeating bland statements of regret and saying that it should not happen is just not good enough?

**The First Minister:** I would never diminish the importance of any patient having their operation cancelled for a non-clinical reason, but it is important to point out—as I did in my original answer—that that will concern a very small percentage of the total number of operations that take place each and every day in our health service.

We are working with health boards to reduce the number of cancellations and to reduce waits, and we will continue to do so. The elective access collaborative programme and the modern out-patient programme, which is being developed, are about improving the position, and we will continue to work on them.

In March, there was an increase in the number of cancelled operations that was particularly down to the very adverse weather that we faced. In many health boards, more than half of all cancellations for non-clinical reasons were down to the weather.

We will remain focused on ensuring that the number of operations that are cancelled for reasons that are not clinical is kept to an absolute minimum.

#### **Neart na Gaoithe Project**

**6. Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the First Minister what impact the



EDF Energy announcement on the acquisition of the Neart na Gaoithe project will have on renewables jobs and the supply chain in Scotland. (S5F-02328)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** We welcome the purchase of the Neart na Gaoithe project by EDF Energy Renewables. Let me give some context to the matter. In August 2017, the Fraser of Allander institute estimated that the project would contribute 0.6 per cent of gross domestic product—about £827 million—to the Scottish economy over its lifetime. The institute also predicted that the project would create thousands of jobs during the construction phase and more than 230 operations and maintenance jobs over the 25-year lifetime of the wind farm.

As I think I mentioned in the chamber last week, I met the chief executive officers of EDF Energy and EDF Energy Renewables last Thursday afternoon, and they committed to meeting the Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy as soon as possible to discuss their plans for the project. I raised the matter with them then, and the next meeting will provide a further opportunity to seek assurances on how the Scottish supply chain will benefit from the acquisition.

**Lewis Macdonald:** I share the First Minister's welcome for the project and I look forward to hearing more from the Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy in due course. Does the First Minister also agree that support for training will be vital if workers such as those in BiFab are to take full advantage of such opportunities? If so, what training support will her Government's agencies provide to ensure a future for the yards in Methil and Stornoway as well as the yard in Burntisland?

**The First Minister:** Yes, I believe that training is important for the future of the industry, and our agencies Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Enterprise already focus very much on that. Indeed, one of the particular things that we focused on during the oil and gas downturn was a training initiative, which I think Lewis Macdonald welcomed at the time, that helped people working in that sector to retrain for other sectors including the renewable energy sector.

Lewis Macdonald mentioned BiFab. Although there are no guarantees, this is one of the projects that give grounds for optimism for the future of companies such as BiFab. As members know, we are focused on doing everything that we can to support BiFab. When the acquisition by DF Barnes was announced, it was made very clear that it was not a magic solution and that hard times still lay ahead. The yard has to win contracts. However, the acquisition means that BiFab has not closed, and we now need to support it to win contracts from projects such as Neart na Gaoithe to ensure

that it has the bright future that all of us want to see.

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** In July 2016, Brian Wilson, the former Labour energy minister, told the BBC:

“offshore wind in Scotland is pretty much dead”.

Does the First Minister share my view that Brian Wilson has been proved wrong—again—and will she join me in calling for everyone who wants to see the creation of valuable jobs in Scottish engineering and everyone who wants to fight climate change to get behind the development of all the offshore wind farms in the Forth and Tay, given the enormous potential that they have in both regards?

**The First Minister:** I agree very strongly with that suggestion. We have seen massive reductions in the cost of offshore wind in recent times, and there is huge potential for Scotland in that area. The Forth and Tay projects have a combined economic value in excess of £6 billion, which in turn presents real opportunities for the Scottish supply chain. Although the placing of contracts is always a commercial decision for developers, collectively, our aim is to secure as much work as possible for Scotland. We will combine our efforts and those of our enterprise and skills agencies to help to achieve that. Offshore wind is undoubtedly a massive opportunity for Scotland, and many of those who predicted otherwise have been proved very wrong.

## Highlands and Islands Airports (Car Parking Charges)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-11968, in the name of Tavish Scott, on Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd's car parking charges. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament notes the reported widespread public concern in response to the recent decision by Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL) to impose car parking charges at Sumburgh, Kirkwall and Stornoway airports; understands that this decision was taken without any prior consultation with airport users, the local authorities or the airport consultative committees, despite HIAL's Strategic Plan promising "effective collaboration with airport users and stakeholders"; believes that this decision will overwhelmingly affect island residents who use the airports as part of a lifeline service for accessing the mainland and who already face what it considers to be relatively high costs for doing so; understands that Sumburgh Airport is 25 miles away from the main town of Lerwick and that its remoteness means many islanders have little option but to drive to the airport; believes that the transport links between these island airports and many of the areas that they serve are intermittent, do not meet every flight and do not always connect the airports with outlying areas; understands that this lack of public transport infrastructure forces many islanders to leave their cars at the airports, in many cases for weeks at a time if they are working offshore or abroad, and notes the calls for HIAL to reconsider this proposal.

12:44

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I thank members and the Minister for Transport and the Islands for being present for this discussion.

The debate is about Highlands and Islands Airports' plans to impose car parking charges at Sumburgh, Kirkwall and Stornoway, despite the fact that it has carried out absolutely no consultation whatsoever. In some ways, I feel guilty about wasting the Parliament's time on this matter, because the measure simply should not be happening.

Sumburgh airport is located on the most southerly tip of Shetland, 25 miles from Lerwick, the island's capital. The vast majority who fly from Sumburgh drive to and park at the airport, because there is no dedicated airport shuttle bus connecting to flights and no public transport connections to Sumburgh from any other part of Shetland. A taxi to Lerwick costs £60 one way and the cost to the north isles of Shetland would be more than £100. HIAL runs Sumburgh, Kirkwall and Stornoway airports and knows where Sumburgh is, but islanders now know that HIAL

has no idea—or simply does not care—where the rest of Shetland is.

I understand that HIAL has financial pressures, but that should have meant a thorough assessment of how to save money. HIAL has not published any savings options. Did the board consider any other options before making this decision on 6 February? It now plans an islands tax of £3 a day for the privilege of parking at the airport. It will be a HIAL and Scottish National Party tax, if it is allowed to happen.

Has HIAL consulted on this? No. The First Minister said that that was remiss, and I was grateful for that answer. I urge the Government to turn "remiss" into something stronger today. Has HIAL adopted the weasel words in its strategic plan about working in partnership with island communities, airport consultative committees and local councils? It has not, and that is unacceptable.

If a Shetland family must park at Sumburgh to fly south, it would add £42 to the cost of a fortnight away. The charge would also hit regular commuters. However, it would not hit staff of local government, health boards or others, such as members of the Scottish Parliament, who can claim travel costs. That is one public purse replenishing another—a fact that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution may want to consider. This measure will hit real people hardest—families, business people and voluntary sector representatives—and that is why it is so wrong.

As the leadership of Shetland Islands Council reminded the minister recently in Lerwick, there has been no impact assessment. I am sure that the minister also noticed the Shetland Islands Council motion this week, which expressed its complete opposition to HIAL's plans because there has been no discussion on public transport options or who would pay for them, no consideration of the inevitable parking fiasco that would take place around the airport, and, above all, no assessment of how the charge would hit local working people.

It is one of the ironies of politics that, in the month when the Government wants the Parliament to vote for the Islands (Scotland) Bill and island proofing, this tax is being imposed on islands and will hit their economic and social vitality. It will take some selling by the most persuasive of ministers—and Mr Yousaf is certainly that—to convince islanders that island proofing is now any more than window dressing.

The only argument that HIAL and the minister have for parking charges is the need to save money. HIAL is owned by ministers and receives an annual Government grant, so if the

Government has cut its budget, car parking charges are the result. The minister could, of course, reverse that cut.

However, I have a proposal that would save money without hitting islanders. It is a proposal that was made five years ago and dismissed by HIAL. At that time, HIAL was asked to change the heating system at the Sumburgh terminal building to biomass. The capital cost would have been repaid in three years, the annual saving was £100,000 a year and there are obvious environmental benefits. What did HIAL do? It did nothing. If we multiply that £100,000 annual saving across HIAL's estate, the total would probably be more than the £400,000 that it claims would be raised by parking charges. I accept that the figures would need to be updated, but the suggestion that there are no financial alternatives to car parking is simply not true.

I say to the minister: please halt this tax on island life. It is a tax that undermines the air discount scheme, which I support, and I endorse the minister's steps in that area. I ask him to instruct HIAL to conduct a proper assessment of their operations, as I have been told that they have not done that. If HIAL will not do that, he should get rid of the board—a board with no island knowledge—and appoint people who can run the company efficiently. No islander believes that, if the £3 a day charge is introduced, it will stay at £3. The money is being used to balance the HIAL budget—that is clear from parliamentary answers and other sources. If the Government cuts the HIAL grant, or the management makes a complete mess of centralising air traffic control in Inverness, which many believe will happen, what will HIAL do? It will increase the car parking charges.

Finally, I observe to colleagues that, if they represent an airport that is so far exempt from this air tax, that will not last long. If the principle is conceded at Sumburgh, Kirkwall and Stornoway, the airports where people do not currently pay for parking will be next.

When I was transport minister, HIAL asked me to approve car parking charges in the islands. I said no—actually, I said a bit more than no, but I will not use unparliamentary language. All my successors have said no as well, and I thank them for that. I have given our current minister a real alternative to hitting islanders with this new tax. I suggest that he, too, says no to HIAL, and I ask him to do so today.

12:50

**Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I thank Tavish Scott for securing the debate. For the record, I add my support to the

motion, although I agree that it is sad that we have to debate the subject.

I do not support HIAL's decision to impose car parking fees on airports that serve island communities in Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. A cost of £3 a day might not seem like much, but that soon adds up when travellers are away for an extended period. It is not fair for those who work offshore or for those who can receive medical treatment only outside the islands.

**The Minister for Transport and the Islands (Humza Yousaf):** It is important for the member to acknowledge that it has already been said that those who are travelling for medical reasons would not have to pay the charge. Will he acknowledge that?

**Edward Mountain:** I certainly acknowledge that those people who have to travel for medical reasons do not have to pay the charge, but what about their families who want to go to see them? I absolutely believe that it is critically important for families to visit relatives who are sick and away for treatment. It aids recovery, and those people should not have to pay, either.

Some might say that, if people do not want to take the bus, they should pay a parking fee. However, that is not always a practical solution, and intermittent public transport provision on the islands does not facilitate the use of the transport in that way.

I am also unconvinced that the fee will pay for itself. How much will it cost to police the car parking charge? How much will it cost to introduce ticketing machines? How much will it cost to introduce barriers? What will be the cost of the administration that will be needed to deal with the fines that will no doubt follow if people do not pay? The policy will not be cost-effective, and I do not believe that the costs are justifiable.

It is not just about cost; it is also about the manner in which HIAL made its decision to introduce car parking charges, which was, to put it mildly, pretty arrogant. No wonder those who depend on the airports—businesses, and especially families—are angry. I agree with them; I would be angry, too. To take this course of action without consulting communities, especially those that are impacted, is completely unacceptable. Further, rubbing salt in the wound by surveying the passengers after the decision has already been made just adds insult to injury.

No doubt HIAL is facing financial challenges. However, pressing ahead with its preconceived solutions without inviting feedback and discussing with airport users what it should do and what the alternatives are is wrong. In my two years as an MSP, I have seen far too many decision makers ignore the voices of local communities. Lessons

have to be learned. Trust can break down between those communities and the decision makers, especially when local approval has not been sought. Whether we are talking about matters relating to healthcare provision, the closure of rural schools or the downgrading of sewage treatment facilities, decision makers must listen to communities. If HIAL wanted to bring the communities that it serves along with it, it should have come up with a workable solution in collaboration with those communities.

HIAL needs to think again. Introducing car parking fees is not the best way forward. I urge it to scrap its policy and work with communities and all parties to find a better solution.

12:54

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I, too, congratulate Tavish Scott on securing the debate on an important issue for our island communities.

It added insult to injury that the process began with the announcement of the parking charges and then, when there was a public uproar, HIAL decided to consult on implementation. The consultation is not on whether there should be parking charges—consultation on that has never taken place—but on implementation.

HIAL has said that it will look at ways to ensure that those travelling for health purposes will not have to pay the parking fee. It is my understanding that that is part of the consultation process that is taking place. It seems that HIAL is doing this on the hoof. It has not thought about it. It has not spoken to anyone, and there are unintended consequences that it now needs to deal with. That is unacceptable.

Tavish Scott talked about the average cost to a family going on holiday if it had to park a car at the airport. That does not take into account that people already have to pay more. They have paid for their holiday, but they have to pay for flights to the mainland to access that holiday. Sometimes they are paying twice as much already. This charge will make a family holiday even less accessible, especially for people who are not on high wages.

There is also an economic impact. Our islands suffer from depopulation, and we need to do something to reverse that. Lately, people are living on the islands but working elsewhere. Offshore workers are a common example, but people do that in other walks of life, too. They want their family to have the quality of life that they can get from island living, but are forced to work elsewhere to sustain them. The charge will add a cost to them as well as other people who need to travel for economic reasons, such as small and

medium-sized businesses, the voluntary sector and many others.

It could put people off living on islands. It could be the difference between being able to stay or not. People might have to consider moving to the mainland, because the charge will add to the additional costs that they are already facing with flights. This is not a good idea. It also adds costs to the public sector, which is struggling in the islands because of austerity. This will add a cost to them when their staff need to travel off the islands, and will be another detriment.

The charge does not take account of the distances and the spread-out communities that the airports serve. We have many small islands that people need to drive from, such as Unst or Yell. The distance from Lerwick to Sumburgh is huge, but coming from those islands makes it a very long journey, with no alternative but to drive. Passengers from Leverburgh are 60 miles from Stornoway airport. Public transport is not available. It is adding insult to injury that there is no public transport to get to the airport, and there is then a charge to park.

There is a wider issue with HIAL. I will touch briefly on the centralisation of air traffic control. That is detrimental to our island communities also. HIAL did well in training local people who were rooted in their communities in air traffic control. Now it is saying to those people who applied for the jobs and did the training that they will have to move. That will have a knock-on impact on local economies. We cannot ignore that.

We have the Islands (Scotland) Bill. This charge is being sneaked through before the bill becomes law. If we are serious about island proofing, we need to stop this—and the other issues with HIAL—happening. It is a publicly owned company that provides lifeline services. These policies are letting down the communities that HIAL has been set up to serve and are certainly not contributing to lifeline services.

12:58

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I start by echoing the concerns that were expressed by Rhoda Grant in relation to centralisation of air traffic control services, which is an issue to which Parliament will return.

I apologise to you, Presiding Officer, the minister and Parliament, because I must soon absent myself to attend the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, which is about to start, in one minute.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** If you had told me earlier, I would have called you earlier, Mr

McArthur. It is a worthy cause that you are leaving us for.

**Liam McArthur:** I will not hold that against you, Presiding Officer.

For obvious reasons, I wish to participate in the debate. I thank Tavish Scott for allowing Parliament the opportunity to discuss an issue that will have ramifications for the communities that I represent. Tavish Scott graphically set out the case against the introduction of airport car parking charges at Sumburgh and the real challenges that it will present.

I accept that circumstances in Orkney are slightly different. Kirkwall airport is much closer to the main population centre, and there is a bus service in operation. However, all three airports share similarities. They are gateways for islanders who are accessing lifeline air services, which are already costly. Bus options for people who do not live in Kirkwall are limited or non-existent. In addition, there is a suspicion that the charge will be the thin end of the wedge—a cash cow that HIAL will go on milking whenever it feels the need to do so. HIAL has insisted that it had no option but to introduce parking charges. Whether or not that is the case, the way that it has gone about doing it, as all three previous speakers have said, is wholly unacceptable.

In Orkney, we have been here before. Back in 2008, similar proposals, albeit that they were targeted solely at Kirkwall airport, were unveiled, only to be hastily dumped a few months later after HIAL failed to answer even the most basic questions. Unfortunately, the U-turn did not come quickly enough to avoid the installation at the airport of parking-ticket machines, which had to be hastily concealed with bin bags and gaffer tape. Fast-forward a decade, and it seems that none of the lessons have been learned.

Despite the earlier ham-fisted attempt to impose car parking charges, Inglis Lyon and the HIAL board chose to embark on the latest attempt without any prior consultation whatever. As Tavish Scott reminded Parliament, HIAL's strategic plan talks of a commitment to

“effective collaboration with airport users and stakeholders.”

However, not only were stakeholders, including all three councils, not informed in advance, but HIAL's own airport consultative committees were left in the dark. I should know, because I was there. During a three-hour meeting in the St Magnus centre, not one mention was made of the prospect of car parking charges, which were subsequently announced a mere three weeks later. Whatever the legal requirements on HIAL, its failure to be up front and open, and to consult those who will be affected, is shameful.

I accept that there are issues, and that there is possibly a debate to be had. For some time now, concerns have been expressed about capacity issues at Kirkwall airport at certain times of the week. There is also a suspicion that cars are being dumped there for safe keeping, free of charge. However, although there is undoubtedly an issue, I presume that there are other ways to identify the vehicles concerned and to have them removed or to apply fines.

I would also support efforts to improve the existing bus service. Nonetheless, we need to recognise that even with significant improvements to the service, taking the bus will not be a practical or realistic option for many people who live in rural parishes or those who catch early-morning flights.

Another group whose interests appear to have been largely overlooked by HIAL in developing its proposals are those from the smaller isles in Orkney. The community councils of Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay, for example, have highlighted the disproportionate impact that the charges will have on residents of those islands, whose ferry services do not enable them readily to take a car over to the mainland.

HIAL has offered to take those concerns on board, but that rather underscores the benefit of carrying out a consultation before a decision is made on what to do. Tavish Scott is absolutely right: HIAL's lack of transparency and piecemeal approach to the issue is not acceptable. We need a thorough review of operations and full consultation of local communities. Until that happens, the proposals will remain discredited.

13:03

**Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I congratulate Tavish Scott on bringing the debate to the chamber. I apologise to him and to you, Presiding Officer, for missing the start of his opening speech.

I am an Orcadian, and Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd is my local operator. I declare an interest as a regular user of its services, alongside many thousands of local people, businesses and visitors who travel to and from—and within—the Highlands and Islands region every year. HIAL operates for public benefit in a region where there are many remote communities. Uniquely, it is tasked with overcoming that geographic isolation and connecting the Highlands and Islands, not only to the rest of the country, but to the rest of the world. A journey might start at Sumburgh, but it might end in Stornoway, Stansted or even Sydney. Our local airports are just the first part of our air bridge to the world.

The task with which HIAL is trusted is essential if we wish to see the Highlands and Islands grow

and prosper in the future, but it is clear that that must be done in line with the wishes of local people and with respect to local organisations, and in particular with respect to representatives who are elected to councils and other authorities to reflect local opinion. That is at least part of the reason why so much attention has been paid to HIAL's announcement on parking charges. I certainly do not support the policy as it stands and—perhaps more important—I object to the way in which it has been brought about.

As the motion points out, HIAL's strategic plan pledged

“effective collaboration with airport users and stakeholders”.

Unfortunately, that commitment has flown off into the sunset.

Let us not forget that we are talking about a state-owned company that has received millions of pounds in subsidies from the taxpayer. It also operates services that are, in many cases, lifeline links for people travelling to the mainland for medical appointments, to access public services or to stay in touch with friends and family. Local people, businesses and visitors alike depend on them.

I am not blind to the pressures that HIAL faces—the need to maintain and improve facilities, while balancing budgets. With proper consultation, HIAL would have had the opportunity to explain those pressures to the local communities, and perhaps it would even have been able to create proposals that would have gained widespread support and which were, by reflecting and recognising specific local issues, more sensitive to local needs.

Tomorrow morning, I will likely use the airport bus service in Kirkwall. I recognise that alternatives to driving exist, but they are not available to or suitable for everyone, as my colleague Edward Mountain said. Even where alternatives exist, they do not negate the need for a fair approach to parking.

However, my concerns are not just with HIAL. At times it seems that the Scottish Government has faced two ways on the matter. In response to a question on 26 April from Tavish Scott, the Minister for Transport and the Islands has responded that consultation would be undertaken between the announcement and its implementation on “practical implementation issues”, as if that is fine and reasonable.

However, the First Minister, when questioned about the consultation on 22 March, said:

“If it is the case that there was no consultation, that was remiss”.—[Official Report, 22 March 2018; c 17.]

Those two positions cannot be held together. Indeed, most pressing is the Minister's statement that

“the Scottish Government has been kept informed of HIAL's proposals throughout their development”.—[*Written Answers*, 26 April 2018; S5W-15396.]

before the announcement was made. Did the Scottish Government not think at any time that it would be worth talking to the local authorities ahead of time, rather than simply communicating the decision to them? Did it not think of asking HIAL what the airports' individual consultative committees—which were set up to build contact between the airports and local residents—had to say on the matter?

The connections are not just a local matter; we all have an interest in making sure that the Highlands and Islands is a positive destination in which to live, work and do business. HIAL is now belatedly surveying local opinion. However, I encourage HIAL—and the Scottish Government—to learn from the experience and to involve communities directly in decision making about their public services from the outset.

13:07

**The Minister for Transport and the Islands (Humza Yousaf):** I am happy to wind up the debate on behalf of the Government. It follows on from a helpful meeting that I had with Tavish Scott, Councillor Ryan Thomson and the council leader, Steven Coutts, when I was in Shetland, in Lerwick, on the 27 April. I generally get along very well with Tavish Scott on issues concerning Shetland and the council, but I am afraid that on this issue there is a fair amount of disagreement. However, I do have some sympathy with some of the issues that he raised, and I will touch upon those where I can.

First, it will be helpful to give some context on the HIAL estate. It operates 11 airports on behalf of the Scottish Government. All those must operate within a strict regulatory environment that ensures the safety and security of passengers, staff and crew. It is also probably worth mentioning that, although HIAL is described as a company that is subsidised by the Government, all the moneys that HIAL raises are reinvested in air services and the airport estate. None of it is skimmed off the top for shareholders. It is a not-for-profit organisation: everything is reinvested. Therefore, the measure is being taken forward purely to ensure that services to and from our island communities are sustainable for the long term.

Many members will know that car parking charges are already in place at Inverness and Dundee airports, and will come into effect at Kirkwall, Stornoway and Sumburgh from 1 July.

The charges will be £3 an hour in each 24-hour period.

**Rhoda Grant:** It seems to be a pointless exercise to consult on the matter now. The minister has confirmed that the charges are coming in. HIAL announced them without any consultation. Surely it is not right to make that policy change without consultation.

**Humza Yousaf:** I was going to touch on the consultation later, but I will go straight to it, since Rhoda Grant has raised the issue. The consultation is taking place from when the announcement was made in the middle of March to when the car parking charges come into effect. It is looking at practical implementation and where there might be benefits or concessions.

Some of those have already been raised by passengers. Just over 500 responses have been received from passengers; they might well focus on jobseekers or people who live furthest from the airport, especially in Shetland. Some passengers have mentioned apprenticeships. However, if Rhoda Grant is suggesting that there should have been a consultation on who wants to pay parking charges at their airport, I cannot imagine that many people would agree. Who on earth wants to pay more, or wants to pay now when they have not previously? Is she suggesting that we should not bring in measures because people do not want to do something? If so, HIAL would have to cut services or not reinvest in its estate. To me, that does not seem to be a practical way of taking forward what I am sure will be deeply unpopular measures. At the same time, they have to be brought in because we have to make the air services sustainable.

**Rhoda Grant:** I acknowledge that the measure will be deeply unpopular—of course it will—but the lifeline services are already expensive enough. People can ill afford them. The charges will add another cost to living on the islands, which simply because of geography enjoy a less buoyant economy. Surely we need to change that.

**Humza Yousaf:** Let me continue with that argument. As I said, the measure will be deeply unpopular. I do not think that anybody wants to pay more for anything; that is generally accepted. Consulting on practical implementation of the proposal is important, and HIAL is genuinely doing that with an open mind. When it finishes its consultation, I suspect that some element of concession will come in.

However, we are talking about sustainability of air services. Tavish Scott made a proposal—it was the first time that I have heard it—about heating systems, which we should look at. I do not know about the exact figures that Mr Scott quoted, but the figure for the subsidy that is required for

Sumburgh airport, in revenue terms, is more than £500,000. That is a significant figure just for Sumburgh.

The other proposal that Tavish Scott and Councillor Ryan Thomson made in good faith, and which has been well thought out by them, was that an extra 40p be added to Loganair's landing charges. That might be another method of income generation. However, Loganair has said that if that was to be put into effect, it might have to cut a flight from Glasgow and one of the Aberdeen flights. I suspect that that would be even more unpopular and would go against what Rhoda Grant is talking about.

**Edward Mountain:** One of the questions that I asked in my speech was whether the proposal would be cost effective. The minister has mentioned the cost of running services. Before a charge such as this is introduced, I assume that the minister will work out how much it will cost to run and how much revenue he will get from it. I suggest that the revenue will be pretty limited.

**Humza Yousaf:** HIAL has the information about how much that will cost. Of course it will revise and review figures as necessary. Edward Mountain can speak to HIAL about that; it will be able to provide some figures. I do not know whether the member has met HIAL to discuss the issue; he certainly has not written to me about it, despite seeming to be outraged about it.

The figures exist. Of course, there will be some commercial sensitivity, but HIAL is introducing the charges so that it can make sure that our air services are sustainable. There is no other reason: HIAL is a not-for-profit organisation.

**Tavish Scott:** I take the minister's point about savings. However, if it turns out that replacing the heating systems at Sumburgh and other parts of the estate can save the kind of money that I have been told about by people who understand the issue, will he undertake to make sure that that is done, rather than putting in place the car parking fees? It would achieve the same objective of saving money.

**Humza Yousaf:** I certainly undertake to look in all good faith at Tavish Scott's proposals, if he can provide me with good detail. HIAL is doing what it is doing in order to make the air services sustainable for the future.

Although I respect that Tavish Scott has brought the debate on behalf of his constituents, the correspondence that has come in has not been overwhelming. I have received nine pieces of correspondence on Sumburgh. I do not think that there has been any correspondence from Jamie Halcro Johnston—it is certainly not on my record—and I have certainly not had any from Edward Mountain. Correspondence that I have

received about Stornoway and Kirkwall airports is in single figures. That suggests to me that people understand that HIAL is doing this to ensure that air services are sustainable in the future.

Tavish Scott is the only member to have made alternative proposals to me, but if there are other alternative proposals, I will look at them and ask HIAL to look at them in good faith. This is about sustainability of air services to our islands. The measures that are being brought in are proportionate and will help to safeguard those air services. All members can agree that that can only be a good thing.

13:15

*Meeting suspended.*

14:30

*On resuming—*

## **Energy Efficient Scotland**

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-12140, in the name of Kevin Stewart, on a route map to an energy efficient Scotland. We have quite a bit of time in hand, so I can give time for wonderful speeches or interventions.

14:30

**The Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy (Paul Wheelhouse):** I am delighted to have the opportunity to open the debate and to discuss the important issue of energy efficiency. Just a week on from the launch of “Energy Efficient Scotland: Route Map”, which flowed from the “Scottish Energy Strategy” and “Climate Change Plan: The Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032”, which were published in December 2017 and February 2018 respectively, this is a good time for our Parliament to examine the challenges and opportunities ahead of us in transforming Scotland’s homes and buildings to be warmer, greener and more energy efficient.

Improving the energy efficiency of our homes and buildings lies at the heart of achieving that and will help us, through cross-portfolio working, to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and meet our new all-energy target to deliver 50 per cent of Scotland’s total energy needs from renewable sources by 2030. Crucially, as the Government’s motion sets out, it is essential to invest in energy efficiency if we are to remove poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.

By improving the energy efficiency of households that are living in fuel poverty, we are supporting our commitment to address the underlying economic and social inequalities in our society, and we are fundamentally helping to make Scotland a fairer country. Of course, as our climate change plan and energy strategy also make clear, better energy efficiency of our workplaces will help to improve business productivity and competitiveness.

Our latest statistics show that buildings account for almost 20 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions, so improving the energy efficiency of all Scotland’s residential and non-domestic buildings crucially underpins our efforts to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and meet our world-leading climate change targets.

Our investment in energy efficiency will stimulate economic growth and support jobs across Scotland. Research suggests that a 10 per cent improvement in the energy efficiency of



households will lead to a sustained expansion of gross domestic product of around 0.16 per cent. It is also estimated that every £100 million spent on energy efficiency improvements in 2018 would support approximately 1,200 jobs. That is why, in 2015, we designated energy efficiency a national infrastructure priority, and the route map sets out that the whole-economy cost of the programme for the public, private and third sectors will be between £10 billion and £12 billion in today's values.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** I highlight to the minister the issue around training for those jobs, and local training in particular. I encourage him to comment on the opportunities to plan for that in the context of the shift to the low-carbon economy.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I very much welcome that comment. We clearly wish to think carefully about the labour market impacts of such a major investment programme. My colleague Jamie Hepburn, as the minister responsible for skills and training, will be examining that issue closely on our behalf.

There are tremendous Scotland-based supply-chain opportunities, which we are determined to develop and support in partnership with Scotland's energy and construction sectors. Our commitment to improving the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes and buildings is not new. By the end of 2021 we will have allocated more than £1 billion since 2009 to tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency. In addition, we have invested more than £85 million since 2007 in loans to support Scottish households, businesses and organisations with energy efficiency and renewables measures, and in the development of district heating schemes, supporting more than 5,200 applicants in total so far.

Our energy efficiency loans to businesses alone have generated energy savings of 339 gigawatt hours since 2008, with carbon savings of 130 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and financial savings of £36 million.

We introduced regulations for the assessment and improvement of larger non-domestic buildings in 2016. Although they will have limited impact on our overall stock, they provide a solid basis from which we will extend regulation across the sector, as set out in our route map. Our non-domestic energy efficiency framework and support unit are catalysing energy efficiency retrofit throughout Scotland's public sector, with a strong project pipeline in place.

That activity, working in partnership with local government and energy companies, has helped to deliver more than 1 million measures to more than 1 million households since 2008. That is reflected

in the energy efficiency profile of the housing stock, with 42 per cent of homes in Scotland at energy performance certificate band C or better in 2016, which was an increase from 24 per cent in 2010.

This year, we have allocated more than £146 million to improving the energy efficiency of Scotland's building stock, which is a real-terms budget increase. We remain on track to deliver the 2016 programme for government commitment to make £0.5 billion available to tackle fuel poverty and boost energy efficiency over the four years to 2021. We want to continue to improve on that record and tackle the more than 1 million homes that do not yet have a good energy efficiency rating, which means C or better.

For our non-domestic building stock, given its diversity in scale, age and specification, work is on-going to understand and benchmark the energy and emissions performance across Scotland and how that can best be improved.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** Is the minister aware that better insulated homes have a second level benefit for rural dwellers who are dependent on kerosene, in that, with the reduced kerosene consumption that comes with better insulation, they are less likely to require kerosene to be delivered when the weather makes it difficult to do so because of snow and road conditions? That is often of great value to people in rural areas, along with the primary benefit of warmer homes.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Stewart Stevenson makes a very good point. I do not personally depend on kerosene, but I know that many constituents in Mr Stevenson's constituency and people elsewhere in rural Scotland will very much see the benefit of a lower demand for kerosene and therefore greater predictability and energy security in bad weather situations.

Through recent reviews of building regulations that have been led by my colleague Mr Stewart, the Minister for Local Government and Housing, and his predecessors, we now set very high standards for new buildings. A comparison with those standards offers an initial insight into the state of our existing stock. Less than 5 per cent of our non-domestic buildings are close to or better than new-build standards and around 60 per cent of our buildings are less than a third as efficient as new buildings. Indeed, around 10 per cent of our building stock is at least five times worse than the new-build standard.

That illustrates the significant challenge that lies ahead for all of us under our new energy efficient Scotland programme and why the preparatory work that we have already undertaken and the work that we will undertake over the next few

years are so important. We have set out in the climate change plan a bold ambition that, by 2032, some 70 per cent of heat and cooling for non-domestic buildings will be supplied using low-carbon heat technologies. The Scottish Government is already investing heavily in energy efficiency measures. As I said, we have already committed £500 million of funding for the four years to 2021. I remind the Conservatives that no equivalent funding is available in England, which is a point that is not lost on the sector and stakeholders.

On launching our route map last week, the First Minister announced that we are allocating £49 million in this year alone to our area-based schemes, which are delivered by local authorities. We are also providing £5.5 million of additional funding to support the energy efficient Scotland transition programme, which will continue to provide a mix of advice, grant and low-cost loans to support property owners over the next two years.

I am delighted that my colleague Kevin Stewart has announced further detail on the transition programme, with more than £3.5 million of the funding being made available to social landlords—housing associations, co-operatives and local authorities—through a new decarbonisation fund. As well as assisting social landlords in decarbonising their heating, the fund will encourage innovative thinking and fresh ideas. As of today, the fund is now open for expressions of interest. That underlines our commitment to tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency for the wellbeing of the people of Scotland.

The “Energy Efficient Scotland” route map also outlines the framework of national standards that we will put in place. It proposes that all of Scotland’s homes will have a good rating for energy efficiency—which means at least EPC band C—by 2040, with the phasing of that varying by tenure.

For the private rented sector, we are proposing an earlier target: we are consulting on plans that could result in all private rented properties achieving a rating of EPC band C or better by 2030. To reiterate what the First Minister confirmed last week in her keynote speech at the all-energy conference in Glasgow, we will bring forward regulations to confirm milestones on that journey, requiring landlords of privately rented homes who are reletting their premises, at any change of tenancy, to have their properties at an EPC band E rating or better starting from April 2020, and then requiring all private rented sector properties to be rated EPC band D or better by 2025.

For social housing, following encouraging progress in the sector, we want to go further, with social landlords maximising the number of social-rented homes that meet EPC rating B by 2032. We want to maximise the number of owner-occupied homes that reach EPC band C by 2030 and will provide support and advice to home owners to help them to reach that rating. If progress through voluntary action proves insufficient, we are prepared to consider what additional action will be needed after that point to help to drive change.

The Tories’ amendment calls for all properties to meet EPC C by 2030, and they have a duty to explain today exactly how that would be incentivised, given that their tax-cutting agenda would have starved this Parliament of almost half a billion pounds in spending power this year. Alternatively, the Tories should say today how they plan to compel owner-occupiers to achieve that by 2030.

Finally, we will develop additional standards for non-domestic buildings for 2021 and phase their introduction so that, by 2040, all buildings are assessed and improved to the extent that is feasible.

My colleagues Angela Constance and Kevin Stewart are setting a target date of 2030 for households that live in fuel poverty to achieve a good energy efficiency rating, which will make a massive difference to low-income households. Through the energy efficient Scotland programme, we have set targets to deliver and monitor progress on energy efficiency in buildings, and through framework legislation that will be introduced shortly, we will show that we are meeting our climate change targets and fuel poverty commitments. Our new climate change bill will set new targets to reduce emissions and our fuel poverty bill will set a new definition and target to end fuel poverty.

All our proposals are founded on extensive stakeholder engagement. From the outset, we have worked with our delivery partners, stakeholders and other experts to design the energy efficient Scotland programme. In parallel with consultation on Scotland’s energy strategy, we undertook public consultations from January 2017 on aspects of the programme, including local heat and energy efficiency strategies, regulation for district heating, energy efficiency itself and conditions standards in the private rented sector. Through pilots, we continue to co-design the operation of the programme with local government and national delivery partners.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** The minister has mentioned the climate bill and its targets. One target was around the provision of renewable heat, and it looks like we

will not meet that target by 2020. What specific actions will he take to deliver that target and ensure that district heating will be decarbonised when we roll it out?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I recognise Mark Ruskell's demand for renewable heat. It is a very strong priority for us. We had progress, but the year before last, we had a setback with the closure of the plant at Markinch, which had an impact on the overall figures. I confirm to the member that we are driving to try to achieve that target for 2020. I have no doubt that that will be challenging, because we do not have control of all the interventions for the renewable heat incentive—we are consulted on RHI, but we do not have control. At the recent all-energy conference, we continued our engagement with Claire Perry, Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth, on the importance of RHI to us, and I will continue to engage with Mr Ruskell and would be happy to meet him to talk in more detail about it.

Indeed, the Scottish Government believes that a long-term strategic partnership with local government is essential if we are to successfully deliver at the scale needed to tackle fuel poverty and reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions. That is why Mr Stewart and I are placing area-based schemes at the heart of our approach and creating a framework, through local heat and energy efficiency strategies, to support local government prioritisation and targeting. We believe that those strategies will allow local authorities to design a tailored solution to meet the needs of their areas and identify appropriate solutions to decarbonise the heat supply.

Our pilots have funded work to develop the capacity of local government partners to deliver this opportunity. To date, through our pilot programme, we have supported 22 local authorities over 2017-18 and 2018-19, 12 of which are piloting local heat and energy efficiency strategies, and we aim to support all 32 during the transition programme. Different paths can be taken to decarbonise the heat supply in Scotland and across the United Kingdom, as set out in our energy strategy, and there is uncertainty right now about what the most appropriate pathway will be. That uncertainty is caused by the UK Government, which must take decisions on such issues as the long-term future of the gas grid. There is also a complete lack of certainty over the future of the energy company obligation on a UK-wide basis. When that is combined with the severely limited scope of the devolved powers that are available to us, it makes it impossible for us to deliver a version of ECO that would have meaningful benefits for the people of Scotland.

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** Last night, at 2 o'clock in the morning, when I could not sleep, I became

aware of the BBC World Service intimating that, in California, it is about to become part of the regulatory burden on house builders that all new houses must be fitted with solar or photovoltaic panels—that will be a precondition of the granting of a planning application. Does the Scottish Government have a view on such an innovative idea?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** We do not have a monopoly on wisdom and will always consider examples from around the world. We very much support solar energy and other renewables at a domestic scale. Building regulations are a matter for Mr Stewart and I do not want to overstep the mark, but we would certainly be interested in any ideas in that regard, and we are considering ways of making it easier to allow properties to get renewable energy installations through permitted development rights and other means. That is one way in which we can support those important technologies.

We are working with the United Kingdom Government, the wider academic community and energy experts to identify the right long-term solution or solutions. We must take the time to research, evidence and plan our approach so that people can invest with confidence, knowing that our route map is not only sufficiently ambitious but grounded in reality and deliverable. Our "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map focuses on what we can do now and on what is certain in the context of much uncertainty in another place. That will mean focusing first on the things that we can control: energy efficiency, which underpins our current and future efforts to reduce emissions from our heat supply, and low-carbon heat solutions, including district heating, where it is an appropriate solution for the long term.

We are also continuing to support low-carbon and renewable heat. As announced in the programme for government, we have made a further £60 million available to accelerate low-carbon infrastructure projects, through our hugely successful low-carbon infrastructure transition programme. Of course, that is on top of the £41 million of capital funding that is already offered in co-investment through that fund.

We are confident that the energy efficient Scotland programme is not only challenging and ambitious—and rightly so—but also, crucially, deliverable. There is no single or quick fix to improving the energy efficiency of, and reducing emissions from, our homes and non-domestic buildings. It will take work, effort and commitment. The energy efficient Scotland programme provides a framework of support, advice and standards that will work together to operate across all parts of Scotland to improve lives.

Over its lifetime, the energy efficient Scotland programme will transform Scotland's buildings so that they are warmer, greener and far more efficient, and it will support jobs and boost sustainable economic growth in doing so.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the publication of the *Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map* and continued recognition by the Scottish Government of energy efficiency as a national infrastructure priority; acknowledges that, by 2040, the Energy Efficient Scotland programme will make the country's homes and buildings warmer, greener and more efficient, remove poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty, help achieve Scotland's climate change targets and maximise the local economic benefits across all of Scotland arising from an investment programme that has a "whole economy" value of around £10 billion; welcomes Scotland's ambitions to tackle climate change and fuel poverty as a huge opportunity to transform the energy efficiency of existing domestic and non-domestic buildings, drawing together action at a national and local level that is undertaken by individuals, businesses and the public and third sectors, and notes that this will build on the work of the Scottish Government, Scotland's 32 local authorities and partners that have improved over one million homes and non-domestic properties since 2008.

14:47

**Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con):** There is no doubt that the principles of the Scottish Government's "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map are supported across the chamber. At a time when Governments all round the world are racing to reduce their impact on climate change, and communities are looking to reduce their carbon footprints, we all must do our part. With that comes a responsibility to improve on our energy efficiency targets for Scottish homes.

As a keen environmentalist and someone with an interest in biomass district heating systems, I have helped many households and businesses to reduce their energy bills, improve their energy efficiency and reduce their carbon footprints. In that regard, I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests—something that I know that I get a bit of heat about. I am proud to refer to businesses that I own that provide renewable energy and housing, because that shows that I was working to improve matters as a member of the public long before I became a member of Parliament.

The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called for the SNP's energy efficiency target to be brought forward from the current date of 2040. We strongly believe that we can achieve transformative change in energy efficiency across Scotland, with all properties achieving an EPC rating of C, or better, by 2030. There is a question about the accuracy of the EPC system, but that is a debate for another day. However, the Scottish Conservatives recognise the different

characteristics that affect rural properties, so we will support the Liberal Democrat amendment, which seeks to improve energy efficiency in remote, rural and island communities.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** In the interests of clarity, I should say that although I welcome Mr Burnett's support, our amendment was not selected for debate, so he will not have an opportunity to vote on it later this afternoon.

**Alexander Burnett:** Well, we certainly support the principles behind it.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome Mr Burnett's support for those principles, because there is a reference to remote, rural and island communities in the Labour amendment. I look forward to the Scottish Conservatives supporting the amendment later.

**Alexander Burnett:** We will come to that.

Regardless of those exceptional areas, the SNP's current aim is still 10 years too late. The existing homes alliance Scotland has noted that research suggests that if the SNP brought all homes up to EPC band C by 2025, that would support 6,400 jobs throughout Scotland, which would create a boost for the economy because it would increase gross value added by 0.27 per cent annually.

That is not the only reason why the 2040 target is not ambitious enough. Labour points that out, which is why the Conservatives will support the Labour amendment, come decision time.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Given his urging of the Scottish Government to take more precipitate action, I would be grateful if Alexander Burnett could clarify that the UK Government's "The Clean Growth Strategy" makes it clear that it is its aspiration

"for as many homes as possible to be EPC Band C by 2035, where practical, cost-effective and affordable",

but there is no firm commitment for it to do anything by 2025 or 2030, as he suggests we should do.

**Alexander Burnett:** If the minister had been listening, he would have heard me refer to the existing homes alliance and its suggestion of 2025, and the examples of improvements to the economy that more ambitious targets could achieve.

The route map seeks to reduce fuel poverty by removing poor energy efficiency, but it needs to widen its outlook and ambition on the benefits. The existing homes alliance noted that a closer target year could reduce costs for fuel-poor homes by £245 a year, reduce our gas imports by 26 per cent, and save NHS Scotland between £31 million and £52 million.

The Government needs to understand that incentives are key to ensuring that residents are quicker to install energy efficiency measures in their homes. Local authorities currently offer council tax reduction schemes, but a reply to a parliamentary question from Monica Lennon showed that only six—yes, six—properties in Scotland had taken up the energy use reduction schemes over three years. The current incentives are clearly not working, or are not being taken advantage of.

We ask the Scottish Government to consider recommendations by Citizens Advice Scotland. CAS found that

“a prompt Council Tax Rebate ... should be ... the headline consumer incentive to accompany SEEP”.

Its research showed that a £500 rebate in the year following installations was more popular than pay-outs of £100 for 10 years. We support that measure.

**Stewart Stevenson:** I remind members that the late Conservative member of Parliament Alex Johnstone helpfully made an amendment to the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill in 2009 that provided that for businesses. The Labour party did the same for private houses. It remains unproven that people are motivated by such payments.

More fundamentally, not all councils have made much of the opportunity. We all have a duty to encourage councils to pick up the challenge of what we legislated for in 2009, rather than imagining that new legislation will make a difference, in and of itself.

**Alexander Burnett:** I agree that we all need to do more at all levels—Government, council and individual household. The minister asked what incentives we could look at, so I have been talking about the incentives that are in place at the moment but are not working, and what could be done to improve them. I hope that that is a constructive point.

**The Minister for Local Government and Housing (Kevin Stewart):** Mr Burnett talks a lot about incentives. We recently had Tory proposals in the budget to reduce the spending power of the Parliament by half a billion pounds. Would Mr Burnett give an indication of how the Tories would pay for the incentives that he is talking about?

**Alexander Burnett:** It would be unfortunate to push aside this constructive debate on how we can assist our contribution to tackling climate change by tackling energy efficiency, in order to rehash the debate about who could run the economy better, regardless of whether that is about the SNP's current failure in Scotland's economy or about the Conservative's policies across the rest of the UK, which are working.

Unfortunately, and not just on the economy, we have the recurring theme with the SNP Government that we are living in a cluttered landscape. It is no surprise that it is difficult for constituents to be aware of incentives when there are so many policy programmes tackling energy efficiency, including the home energy efficiency programmes for Scotland, the energy efficiency standard for social housing, the energy company obligation, Scotland's energy efficiency programme and the regulation of energy efficiency in the private sector.

To remedy that situation, Citizens Advice Scotland has recommended a one-stop-shop approach that would tackle the clutter and allow us to build on the best features of all those programmes. We need to make it as easy as possible for consumers to install energy efficiency measures. There being one organisation to provide advice on assessments, incentives and installation could help us to reach our target of all homes having an EPC C rating or higher by 2030. The route map states that there will be a fund of £54.5 million for energy efficiency for 2018-19, but we believe that additional funding is required in order to ensure that it is designated as a national infrastructure priority.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will Mr Burnett take a brief intervention on that point?

**Alexander Burnett:** I will not, because I have taken more than my share of interventions in this speech.

WWF Scotland and the consumer futures unit of Citizens Advice Scotland have both called for additional funds to be added to the budget if the Scottish Government is to meet its future targets and ambitions. We will, therefore, support the Green amendment, which calls for an acceleration—

**Mark Ruskell** *rose*—

**Kevin Stewart:** The Green amendment was not chosen for debate.

**Alexander Burnett:** I thank the minister for pointing that out. We would have supported the amendment that the Greens lodged, which called for acceleration in public spending to achieve our aims.

As the Scottish Conservatives set out in our 2016 manifesto, we believe that the energy efficiency budget needs gradually to reach 10 per cent of the Scottish Government's capital budget allocation. That would mean capital infrastructure investment rising from this year's £80 million, which currently sits at under 3 per cent of the budget, to £340 million by 2020-21, which would equate to a cumulative total of £1 billion.

The route map states that steps are “not set in stone” because of the ever-changing nature of the energy sector. I therefore ask the cabinet secretary to be mindful of people who are classified as being off the grid.

We also look to the Government to ensure that sufficient support is given to fuel companies that serve a higher proportion of rural residents. I join the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers in calling on the Government to consider a step change to “The Clean Growth Strategy”, because modern, high-efficiency oil-condensing boilers could help to reduce carbon emissions and fuel costs by 30 per cent.

As I have outlined today, the Scottish Conservatives are fully behind an energy efficiency programme that aims to reduce fuel poverty while simultaneously reducing our carbon footprint. Last year, my colleague Graham Simpson joined members from all parts of the chamber in sending a letter to housing minister Kevin Stewart, detailing many of the points that I have raised today on the measures that the Scottish Government needs to adopt. We had hoped that the proposals would be considered, so we jointly repeat our recommendations today.

However, we still find the SNP’s current programme to be just not ambitious enough. We must decarbonise the system. We need to help to take people out of fuel poverty. Consumers are facing a cluttered landscape. Energy efficiency targets will be a decade too late, fuel poverty proposals are weak and energy efficiency incentives need to be improved. The decisions that we make today will affect future generations, and we do not want to be seen as the generation that could have done more. We believe that we can do more than what is currently proposed.

I move amendment S5M-12140.1, to leave out from “and continued recognition” to “£10 billion” and insert:

“; considers that the target for all homes reaching EPC ‘C’ rating, where feasibly possible, should be no later than 2030, not 2040, given the urgency to reduce carbon emissions and to ensure that every home in Scotland is warm and properly insulated; believes that an earlier target will alleviate, more quickly, the problems arising from poorly insulated houses, which can all have a negative impact on people’s health and wellbeing; notes that a letter addressed to the Minister for Local Government and Housing, signed by opposition party members, called on the Scottish Government to adopt targets for 2030”.

14:58

**Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab):** For clarification, the Labour amendment and the Tory amendment to the Scottish Government motion are the only two amendments that have been selected for debate.

Labour welcomes the publication of the route map. It sets out a series of targets to ensure that homes are warmer, greener and more fuel efficient, and it seeks to reduce the scourge of fuel poverty, which—as we all agree—blights the lives of so many people and families across Scotland. In addition, it lays out further steps to meet our climate change obligations. In my speech, I will cover mainly housing; my colleagues will cover other aspects of energy efficiency in their contributions.

We agree that we must, when we set policy, always help our most vulnerable people. There is therefore a huge amount to be done to reduce actively the burden on poorer households who are trying to stay warm and reduce their energy bills.

There is a lot that we can welcome in the route map but, in truth, it has failed to be the ambitious framework that it might have been. It is a missed opportunity, so we set out to influence its direction of travel in the debate today. We share the view of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, in that we do not believe that a commitment to reduce fuel poverty below 10 per cent by 2040 properly represents a commitment to end fuel poverty.

We do, however, welcome the new definition of fuel poverty, which is calculated after housing costs, but we believe that the timescale is too long. We agree with the SFHA that a commitment to reducing fuel poverty below 5 per cent by 2040, or even below 10 per cent by 2030, would have been more desirable.

We disagree strongly with the Government’s decision not to include a rural minimum income standard in the new definition. It is quite astonishing that rural fuel poverty does not feature much in the route map, when the highest levels of fuel poverty are found in Scotland’s rural and island communities. The fuel poverty rate for rural households in Scotland is 37 per cent, which is more than 10 per cent higher than the national figure.

We agree with the Government that energy efficiency should have the status of an infrastructure priority—a point that was covered by Alexander Burnett. However, as has been said by the consumer futures unit of Citizens Advice Scotland, we believe that significantly higher levels of funding would have been commensurate with the designation that would be required to make it a reality as an infrastructure project. That is a missed opportunity.

The £54 million budget that was announced by the First Minister for 2018-19 is not all new money; it is rather disappointing that only £5.4 million is new funding. The Scottish Government needs to rethink that. Energy efficiency cannot be taken

seriously as a national infrastructure priority with only £54 million having been allocated to it.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will Pauline McNeill take an intervention?

**Pauline McNeill:** I knew that the minister would want to intervene on that point, so I will let him.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Just for clarity's sake, I say that £146 million is being invested in energy efficiency in the current financial year, as I said in my opening statement. I appreciate that there are different strands of funding and that that may be confusing for members, but I want to clarify the position for the purposes of the debate.

**Pauline McNeill:** That was helpful. In this debate, it is important that we draw all that together, so that we can see what is going on. However, the essential point is that if energy efficiency is to be a national infrastructure priority, it has to look like one. Admittedly, it does look a bit more like that, if £146 million is the figure that we are considering.

So, what are the biggest challenges? According to the existing homes alliance, the biggest challenges are owner-occupiers, who make up 61 per cent of the housing sector. Roughly half of home owners have an EPC rating lower than C, but the route map contains no new incentives or financial support for that group to make use of. That will be one of the biggest stumbling blocks to achieving the goals that are set out for that sector. Only 1,325 households have made use of a Scottish Government loan over the past year. That is quite a small number that will not even make a dent in the problem. A home energy efficiency programme for Scotland grant is another option for home owners, but many people will not qualify because eligibility is largely based on income.

We agree with Citizens Advice Scotland that a one-stop shop for home energy advice is essential if we are to make it easier for home owners to investigate energy efficiency options. It is quite a confusing path for home owners: most people do not associate energy efficiency with climate-change reduction, and many lack understanding regarding their options. There is a clear need for much greater promotion of the schemes that are available, perhaps including face-to-face promotion, to get the message across to home owners about the various forms of assistance that are open to them.

**Kevin Stewart:** All MSPs could do much to promote the home energy Scotland helpline, which provides people from all tenures with the opportunity to find the pathways that they can use to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. As I have done before in the chamber, I appeal to all members to highlight that helpline in communications that they have with constituents,

whether they are in social, private rented or owner-occupied housing.

**Pauline McNeill:** I will be delighted to play my part in that. However, the essential point is that we have good organisations, but it is a confusing path for many owners and we need to do more to make sure that it comes together. The suggestion from Citizens Advice Scotland is that there should be a one-stop shop and that there should be more face-to-face options in order to improve uptake.

Labour, with others, has argued that it is time to set a target for the private rented sector to reach EPC C rating by 2025, which was also mentioned by Alexander Burnett. Tenants in the private sector need strong action to secure better conditions. We are pleased that the Government is consulting on the matter, and hope that it will have an open mind and consider 2025 as target. We will try to influence the debate when it comes around.

At the heart of the debate is the fact that more than half a million households cannot afford their energy bills. Hundreds of thousands of homes are poorly insulated or have outdated heating systems that contribute to rising energy consumption. Approximately half a million houses in Scotland have an EPC rating lower than D.

Tenants in the social sector have particular need of assistance. In that sector, 31 per cent of households are in fuel poverty, despite social housing having the most energy efficient housing stock overall. The SFHA echoes that observation and notes that although housing associations have the most efficient homes, their tenants tend to be on lower incomes and are more likely to be vulnerable, so more needs to be done there.

We will support the Tory amendment tonight, because we agree that the target for all homes to reach EPC rating C in 2040 is far too far away, so we want a much more ambitious target. There is nothing else on the table, so we are happy to support 2030, for the time being.

Overall, we need to take a more ambitious approach to energy efficiency and to tackling the question of warmer homes. Because of the extent of the problem, we must be more ambitious as a country. It will simply take too long to make serious inroads in tackling energy efficiency without significantly higher levels of investment.

The current financial commitment does not adequately reflect the fact that energy efficiency is supposed to be a national infrastructure priority. I call on the Scottish Government to raise its ambitions in that regard and to make it a real national priority.

I move amendment S5M-12140.4, to insert at end:

“; believes that the Scottish Government's proposed

target to reduce fuel poverty levels to below 10% of households by 2040 is not ambitious enough and condemns a generation to living in fuel poverty, and further believes that the forthcoming Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Bill should provide a clear statutory foundation for the new fuel poverty strategy, including an ambitious new target date for the eradication of fuel poverty, and should include action to eliminate poor energy performance as a driver of fuel poverty, with priority given to fuel poor homes and homes in rural, remote and island communities.”

15:06

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** I declare an interest as a homeowner who has benefited from a recent Government energy efficiency loan. Perhaps I was one of the 1,300 people whom Pauline McNeill talked about, who benefited in the past year.

I welcome today's debate coming quickly after the launch of the Scottish energy efficiency programme. We are at the start of our scrutiny of the plan, not at the end of it, and all the drafted amendments, including the ghost ones from Greens and Lib Dems, underline the level of cross-party consensus that exists between all Opposition parties to see the ambition raised further. There is a majority in this chamber for increasing the ambition—maybe not right now, but there might be at 5 o'clock.

I thank WWF for helping to forge that consensus. I also thank the Greens' head of research, Iain Thom, who has been so effective in his cross-party work over the years that he is now sadly leaving us to work for everyone in a new role in the Scottish Parliament information centre. I am sure that all members will wish him well in that role.

We have all repeatedly extolled the triple bottom line of energy efficiency. It seems to be the best tool in the box to lift hundreds of thousands of families out of fuel poverty and create thousands of skilled jobs while slashing carbon and building resilience in our energy system. As the challenges of driving climate change action grow in the years to come, we might well look back at these debates and wonder why a bit of universal lagging and draft proofing seemed beyond the reach of our society.

We cannot rely on building our way to success through building standards when 80 per cent of our homes are already built; we must tackle the here and now. The SEEP must create the right motivation, especially for owner-occupiers. We can get too used to working around the difficulties of living in a poorly insulated house and be unwilling or unable to take the opportunities to make lives flow a little better in a healthier home environment.

The research by the consumer futures unit of CAS should guide the SEEP. What does upgrading to category C actually mean for a householder—how will it make their day a little better?

The incentives also need to be there. Members have mentioned the need for a strong financial cashback scheme in year one, which might help somebody to buy that sofa or fix that door that needs to be replaced. It could improve our wellbeing.

The scheme must also be accessible. In my personal experience, using HEEPS has been clunky and bureaucratic. I cannot explain how it works to my neighbours, my constituents or my local joiner in under a minute. There is confusion around the plethora of the failed green deal, occupancy assessments, EPCs and the offers that come down the phone and through the letter box every month. The one-stop shop concept is good, but it needs to be simplified further and built on.

I turn briefly to budgets, and this as much a message for Mr Mackay as it is for Mr Stewart. It is clear that the £137 million in this year's budget needs to be substantially increased if we are to get the vast majority of homes up to category C by 2030. The existing homes alliance has pitched that we need to be spending around £450 million by the end of this session of Parliament, and multiple funding commitments are important to build an effective long-term approach. That will add certainty to the market, helping to lever in public and private sector funding, and it will lead to better workforce planning—a point that Claudia Beamish raised—which I hope will mean new apprenticeships and college courses to train and retrain workers.

Last year's programme for government pledged to spend £500 million over four years on tackling fuel poverty and energy efficiency through SEEP, and annual budgets must now reflect the status of energy efficiency as a national infrastructure priority. The engineering might not be as visually iconic as the Queensferry crossing, and you cannot drive across it, but the infrastructure that we spend most of our lives in is four walls and a roof, and our homes have the power to improve our wellbeing and enable us to thrive, but only if we invest in the future today as a strong national infrastructure priority.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That was a good try, minister, but Mr Ruskell has finished his speech.

I am sensing a wee bit of sympathy for Mr Ruskell, because it appears that I let him speak for only four minutes. Allow me to explain. I have



agreed with Mr Ruskell's group that he can split his allocation between opening and closing speeches. For everyone else, the time limits are as previously announced. I call Liam McArthur to speak for around six minutes.

15:11

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. It was not sympathy for Mr Ruskell on my part, but mild panic. Nevertheless, I am delighted to be taking part in the debate.

I welcome last week's publication of the "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map, and I welcome the fact that we have an early opportunity to debate the important issues that it raises. As has been acknowledged by most, if not all, the main stakeholders with an interest in the area, the proposals that are set out in the route map represent an important step forward. Equally, however, there is a risk that the route map could come to be seen as a missed opportunity to eradicate the scourge of fuel poverty and achieve our climate change objectives unless more ambition is shown in a number of key respects. Both of the amendments that are being debated this afternoon, as well as the two that did not make the cut, make a contribution in addressing that risk. For that reason, the Scottish Liberal Democrats will support both the Conservative amendment and the Labour amendment at decision time.

The case for greater urgency in achieving our targets for improving the energy efficiency of all our housing stock is compelling. So, too, is the need to back the welcome inclusion of energy efficiency as a national infrastructure priority with the sort of funding that will make that designation meaningful—a point that was picked up by Pauline McNeill and Mark Ruskell. The call in Labour's amendment for greater ambition on fuel poverty is obviously one that we strongly agree with. Indeed, that was very much the focus of the amendment that I lodged, and it is the area on which I will concentrate the remainder of my remarks.

As colleagues in the chamber will scarcely need reminding, I have the highly dubious honour of representing the constituency with the highest level of fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty in the country. Being off the gas grid and facing higher energy costs, not least because of an unfair surcharge, as well as suffering longer, harsher winters and having more hard-to-heat properties, Orkney's reasons for finding itself in that position are not hard to understand.

I pay tribute to the coalition of different local organisations that all demonstrate great commitment and no little ingenuity in finding ways to tackle the problem of fuel poverty in our islands

and to provide a bit of a one-stop shop—another point that was raised by Pauline McNeill. However, it is not easy for those organisations, particularly when the circumstances that they face are different from those that are found in other parts of the country and do not conform to the expectations underlying funding programmes or regulatory requirements. That is why I was pleased when the Government agreed to set up a stand-alone fuel poverty task force for rural areas under the chairmanship of the highly respected Di Alexander, who has a deep knowledge of and passion for tackling fuel poverty in rural communities.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Alexander Burnett helpfully referred to some difficulties with the current household rating system. Certainly, my house, cosy as it is, cannot get down to a C rating. Does the member recognise that what the amendments to the Government motion seek is impossible, given the current system? That is the case unless we can revisit the definitions and have a common goal of ensuring that everybody lives in a cosy, affordable home. The present EPC system just does not work well enough.

**Liam McArthur:** Stewart Stevenson makes a valid point. It is one that I have made in relation to many of the properties in my constituency, because there will be challenges there. Unless we are more ambitious in the targets that we set, we run the risk of falling far short of where we need to be.

As I said, I was pleased to see the Government set up the task force, which spent over a year taking evidence and reflecting on the particular characteristics and drivers of rural fuel poverty before coming forward in October 2016 with "An Action Plan to Deliver Affordable Warmth in Rural Scotland". The plan set out sensible, realistic and practical actions to

"make it significantly easier for people living in rural and remote Scotland to keep their homes warm".

In making the case for rural proofing any policy on fuel poverty, the task force explained:

"Rural and remote Scotland has a population of 1 million and is characterised by a multiplicity of small, scattered and often hard to reach communities, which bring additional policy, service delivery, cost and funding challenges."

Sadly, there seems to be no evidence at all that the route map that was launched by the First Minister last week has been rural proofed or, indeed, island proofed. If it has, that raises serious questions about whether the process is meaningful or is little more than a tick-box exercise. I appreciate that word count is hardly a reliable gauge of anything, but the lack of any reference to "rural" in the route map is a bit of a giveaway.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will the member at least acknowledge that, as I set out in my opening speech, we have interim targets for the private rented sector and social housing that are well in advance of the deadlines that he mentioned? In rural areas like the south of Scotland, as he will know from his own area, much of the rented market is taken by private sector rented accommodation, and we are prioritising that early in the period.

**Liam McArthur:** I note the points that the minister makes, but I am teeing up to go on to the need to define rural fuel poverty instead of using EPC designations. [*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Excuse me, Mr McArthur. Can Mr Wheelhouse and Mr Carson stop having a private conversation, please?

**Liam McArthur:** There is a coffee lounge outside the chamber.

What is more substantive is the Government's failure to accept that using a single minimum income standard to determine fuel poverty in both urban and rural areas is inappropriate. Di Alexander and his colleagues were explicit in their report—they have reiterated this message in response to the Government's revised definition of fuel poverty—that any minimum income standard would need to be uprated by between 10 and 40 per cent to reflect the higher costs of living in rural, remote and island areas. Worryingly, the minister has chosen to ignore that recommendation as well as the subsequent advice from the fuel poverty definition review panel, which called for a

“specific remote rural enhancement to the new MIS income threshold”.

It makes no sense for the Government to acknowledge the rural dimension to fuel poverty, set up a task force to develop proposals and then simply reject key recommendations made by those experts. I do not believe that the issue breaks down along party lines; I am almost certain that there will be MSPs on the Government's benches—perhaps including the minister, Mr Wheelhouse—who represent rural constituencies or regions and who feel similarly confused and uncomfortable with the approach that is being taken by the minister, Kevin Stewart.

To make matters worse, the redefinition of fuel poverty and the use of a single minimum income standard will allow the Government to claim that fuel poverty rates in rural areas are around 20 per cent rather than the current average of 35 per cent. At a stroke, without any additional funding or new policy intervention, ministers would be able to claim that they had achieved their fuel poverty target for 2030. Clearly, that is nonsense. Surely, no one thinks that that is credible or represents a

sensible way of addressing fuel poverty in our rural communities.

Yes, there is a need to target resources more effectively at those who are most in need of help, and I accept that the programmes that have been introduced by successive Administrations, with the best of intentions, have often struggled to make a difference for some of those in the greatest need. However, using such a blunt instrument, failing to recognise the specific dimension to fuel poverty in rural and island areas and ignoring the advice of those who have real-life experience and expertise is not a recipe for being any more successful in the future.

The Minister for Local Government and Housing, Kevin Stewart, and I are due to meet to discuss the issue next week, in the context of amendments that I lodged to the Islands (Scotland) Bill, which is the legislative expression of the Government's commitment to ensuring that policy and law making take proper account of island needs and circumstances. I would be happy to cancel that meeting in return for confirmation by Paul Wheelhouse or Kevin Stewart this afternoon that the Government is prepared to accept the task force's recommendations.

As I said at the outset of my speech, the route map represents an important step forward in improving energy efficiency to tackle fuel poverty and climate change. However, where it falls short in ambition or is misdirected—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must close, Mr McArthur.

**Liam McArthur:** We need to see cross-party commitment to press for change.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am beginning to understand why Mr McArthur was panicking at the idea of his speaking time being cut to four minutes.

We move to the open debate, with speeches of around six minutes, please. I have a little time in hand for interventions.

15:20

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** The energy efficiency route map that the Scottish Government published last week shows welcome commitment to improving Scotland's housing stock. The investment of £54.5 million, as part of the wider investment of £146 million to which the minister referred, will help people to stay warmer, assist people on low incomes and help us to play our part in tackling climate change.

It perhaps will not surprise members, given that I am convener of the Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee,

that I want to focus on climate change, because in that context the route map is meaningful news.

In designating energy efficiency as a national infrastructure priority, as it did in 2015, the Scottish Government acknowledged the role that energy efficiency has to play in tackling climate change. Today, as we debate a matter that will have a major impact on our climate change efforts, two ministers and a cabinet secretary, none of whom has climate change in their title, have been drawn to the front bench.

I think that that reinforces a point that is often made in the Parliament and in the work of the committee, which is that all ministers and cabinet secretaries in this Government must be climate change ministers and cabinet secretaries. If Scotland is to respond fully to the challenges that climate change poses, all its MSPs, all the committees of its Parliament and all the portfolios of its Government need to be dialled in. The route map on energy efficiency, backed as it is by the cash that I mentioned, is evidence that that is happening, as is this debate.

As was noted in the climate change plan, the energy efficiency programme will not just save consumers money but support thousands of jobs, creating a substantial domestic market and supply chain for energy efficient and renewable heat services and technologies as well as related expertise, which can transfer to international markets.

The low carbon and renewable energy sectors already support some 49,000 jobs in Scotland. Moreover, every £100 million that is spent on energy efficiency improvements in 2018 is estimated to support approximately 1,200 full-time equivalent jobs in the Scottish economy. Our ensuring that we act to tackle climate change is good news not just for the planet but for our economy and jobs.

Energy efficiency is a key area that requires attention, as is evidenced by the fact that Scotland spends £2.5 billion every year heating or cooling buildings, which represents more than 50 per cent of our annual energy use. Almost 120,000 households, including those who were helped in 2017-18, have benefited from the home energy efficiency programmes for Scotland, and another £116 million has been allocated in this year's budget, with the aim that, by 2020, 60 per cent of walls will be insulated. I will talk more about HEEPS in a moment.

In its report, "Reducing emissions in Scotland—2017 progress report", the Committee on Climate Change noted that domestic buildings accounted for 13 per cent of emissions in 2015, with 5 per cent of emissions coming from non-residential buildings. Significant progress has been made in

reducing emissions in Scotland. A billion homes and non-domestic properties have been improved since 2008. However, I think that all members acknowledge that we must go further.

The route map shows what "further" looks like and sets out a course to reducing emissions from all buildings to as near zero as feasible by 2050. I hear and sympathise with calls to quicken the pace, but I am not hearing how that would be incentivised and funded. That is important.

Sitting alongside our approach is, of course, the need to move to renewables. It is estimated that in 2017, the equivalent of 68 per cent of gross electricity consumption came from renewable sources—that is up 14.1 percentage points on the 2016 figures. Whether we are looking at wind, wave, solar, tidal or other renewable technologies, renewables have a role to play, but ultimately improving energy efficiency will be pivotal to ensuring that we green the energy-related element of the economy.

**Claudia Beamish:** Will the member give way?

**Graeme Dey:** I want to crack on, if the member does not mind.

It is important that MSPs do not just talk the talk but walk the walk. Last summer, having replaced my radiators and had a new central heating boiler installed in the family home, I re-insulated my loft. That was something of a physical undertaking, I have to say, but the difference that it has made to the warmth of our 26-year-old house has been pronounced.

I can therefore stand here today and say that implementing energy-saving measures is not just the right thing to do morally but also good for our pockets and our comfort. I could add that I have switched to a green electricity supplier that sources electricity entirely from renewables, but I reckon that that would be pushing my luck, as I could be open to accusations of self-satisfaction—perish the thought.

It is vital that we get maximum bang for our buck when we invest public money in energy efficiency measures. I have seen an example in my constituency where such an opportunity was perhaps not fully exploited. A couple of years ago, Angus Council secured more than £1 million of funding under a HEEPS area-based scheme to externally clad privately owned houses that lacked wall cavities. The council had identified clusters of such properties in Arbroath, Forfar and Montrose. However, rather than focusing on a single location, or maybe two, and squeezing the maximum return from that sum, it decided to do a number of houses in each location.

The net result in Arbroath, in my constituency, was that just 30 homes were addressed, with a

number of properties being left out of the project, and it was a similar story elsewhere. I was told that the council would apply for a further tranche of money under the scheme in the following year and, if successful, would pick up where it had left off in all three towns. However, that would have involved moving back into those areas, with all the costs of re-establishing the footprint that was needed to carry out the work eating into the budget. I would argue that smarter thinking would have made the money go a little further.

On the issue of smarter thinking, can we please encourage more holistic thinking when it comes to implementing measures that are aimed at reducing emissions and our carbon footprint? We will all have heard or come across examples where home insulation, for example, has been carried out by firms that have travelled considerable distances to carry out one-off pieces of work. I am aware of an example where properties just north of Aberdeen had loft insulation installed by firms that had travelled from Elgin and places even further afield, such as Inverness. Can those who are charged with delivery of such schemes please give some thought to shortening the supply chain and, through that, reducing transport emissions?

Angus South is, of course, a partly rural constituency, and I recognise some of the points that Liam McArthur made. We must make sure that our energy efficiency schemes are open to and publicised to those in rural areas.

We face a big challenge in tackling climate change, but take that on we must, and the plan from the Scottish Government has an important role to play in ensuring that our buildings are front and centre in that work, as they require to be.

15:27

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** I begin by declaring an interest as a home owner and an owner of property that I lease.

I welcome this debate, following the Government's publication of its "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map last week. I note that, although all parties share similar objectives of achieving an energy efficient Scotland, each has a different route map for how to get there.

Let us look briefly at the scale of the task that is ahead, starting with housing. Some 1,490,000 homes in Scotland have an EPC rating that is lower than C. Of those, 420,000 are in bands E, F or G, and only about 50,000 are being upgraded to a D rating or above each year. Almost 1 million homes with an EPC rating of D or lower are owner-occupied, and as the minister, Paul Wheelhouse, noted, there is a major challenge in improving that housing stock.

At the moment, regrettably, most owner-occupiers are not installing energy efficient measures but are making do with what they have. That is bad enough in our towns and cities, but the situation is worse in our rural areas, where peripherality contributes significantly to the problem. Graeme Dey mentioned that. Getting skilled tradesman is difficult enough in our towns and cities, but it is much more difficult and expensive in rural Scotland—if they exist there at all. In both town and country, energy inefficient homes lead to respiratory and other medical problems, including mental health problems, and they cause and contribute to the daily growing demand on our national health service.

Regrettably, World Health Organization research suggests that, in the winter of 2016-2017, 30 per cent of winter deaths in Scotland could have been avoided if people had been living in warm and adequately insulated homes. I can only speculate that, in the winter just past, such deaths will have been still greater in number than those in the year before, due to its severity—and it is still not over in much of rural Scotland. Self-evidently, the worst numbers will have been among the elderly and those who live alone.

**Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** I hear what John Scott says about winter deaths. Can he perhaps tell us what proportion of such deaths were down to the fact that people who were on universal credit could not heat their homes?

**John Scott:** I thank Ms McKelvie for her intervention, but that is a debate for another day.

That is why we are disappointed by the lack of ambition in the Government's target to raise all homes to a C rating by 2040, as that lack of ambition is costing lives and contributing to overflowing hospital wards and bed blocking. Spending to save used to be one of the Scottish Government's policies—I well remember John Swinney extolling it from the SNP benches. Given the cost of extended stays in hospital for elderly patients, relative to the cost of upgrading energy inefficient homes, making homes more energy efficient truly wins hands down every time.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will the member take an intervention?

**John Scott:** Of course.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I thank John Scott for taking my intervention—as always, he is a gentleman.

I appreciate the point that John Scott makes, but we are committing more than £500 million over the four-year period up to 2021 on energy efficiency in Scotland. No such scheme is in place for England. I wonder whether he might reflect on that in calling

for more ambition here. His colleague Mr Burnett did not answer that point.

**John Scott:** I thank Mr Wheelhouse for his intervention. Of course I will reflect on what he has said.

In place of the Scottish Government's target of upgrading all homes to a C rating or above by 2040, Scottish Conservatives want to see such work completed universally by 2030—10 years earlier—which will mean spending now to save lives and reducing health service costs at the same time. I say to the minister that that is where we would get the funding from.

I turn to how delivery of warm homes could be better achieved. We need to do more than just look at funding; we also need to change attitudes to fuel poverty in the minds of not just landlords but owner-occupiers, for whom not creating an energy efficient home is truly a self-inflicted wound—I probably fall into that category.

Government schemes such as the council tax rebate scheme need to be changed, so that there is better uptake, and perhaps front loaded, as suggested by Citizens Advice Scotland, whose research suggests that a £500 one-off council tax rebate in the year following the installation of energy efficient measures would be more popular than a rebate of £100 per year for 10 years. I say to the minister that that is certainly worth a try. Perhaps both approaches could be run in parallel to find out which was more popular.

I return to the “Energy Efficient Scotland” route map. Scottish Conservatives want to see the Government go further than it appears to be prepared to go at this time. We want to see better incentives to encourage people to help themselves, which will require better regulation and more support, and which may include subsidised loans for the installation of energy efficient measures. It will also require the Government to better promote such schemes, as the uptake of existing schemes for home owners has been poor. We will need to raise awareness of the availability of future support for improving EPC ratings, and the Government must show leadership and determination in seeking to deliver such targets.

In old-fashioned parlance, there is a selling job to be done to make local authorities and housing associations aware of the incentives that are on offer to improve their housing stock, as Pauline McNeill suggested. We need to make individual home owners better aware of what they might do to help themselves, rather than leave all the communication to the many nuisance telephone calls and messages left on call minder from ambitious companies that are trying to sell either new double-glazed windows or new boilers, Hard-

to-reach, elderly rural home owners must be approached—perhaps face to face, as I think Pauline McNeill also suggested—and made aware of Government ambitions in a different way from cold calling, which, in my view, drives some potential customers away. We must do more to eradicate fuel poverty, which, again, is all too evident among those who live in local authority housing stock.

If we can achieve warmer, better, more energy efficient homes, the prize will be huge. Better physical and mental health will happen as surely as night follows day, and our constituents will have a significantly better quality of life. That is why we in the Conservative Party want to move the upgrade forward as quickly as possible. Go to it, minister, and you will have our support.

15:34

**Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** I share in celebrating the moves that Scotland has already made, and the moves that it is committed to advancing through the route map that was launched last week. It is more important than ever that we position ourselves as trailblazers, not only through our alternative energy sources but by ensuring that they are commercially viable and that people can afford them.

The grand plan is a visionary projection that sets out the kind of infrastructure and efficiency improvements that the Scottish Government is committed to delivering. We have heard a lot about that this afternoon. I welcome in particular the commitment to ending fuel poverty. We need better insulated homes, and the schemes that are available make some progress in that regard. However, it does not matter how well insulated someone's home is, and how many projects they have taken part in—if they do not have the money to switch on the heating, they are in a terrible situation.

But—there is a very important “but”—I have been working in my constituency of Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse with families in fuel poverty in which children either go cold or eat cold food. There are people who request a cold bag at the food bank because they have no means of cooking the food. That is not acceptable in a fuel-rich nation. I am talking about our most vulnerable groups of people—the sick, the elderly, those with special needs, children and babies and those who are so infirm that they are barely able to move for themselves. I have met them all; they are all real people.

More recently, I have met people on universal credit, which was rolled out in 2016 for single men and in 2017 for families in my constituency. I know

of some people who spent most of the winter wrapped up in as many layers of clothes and blankets as they could get, because they could not get out of their homes for the cold. The pensions or allowances that they now receive are not adequate to keep them warm and fed. We should think about that for a second.

Working families often find themselves in the same predicament—more so since October 2017, when universal credit was rolled out. Children are expensive to feed. I know that, because I could not keep my boys fed. They are expensive to clothe and keep warm. Parents should not need to choose which essential their children get that week. The increasingly obvious devastation that has been brought on by Tory cuts and the introduction of universal credit leaves an ever-larger number of people who are unable to pay for ordinary household expenditure, including the energy to warm their homes.

Fuel poverty is not about to become a curse of the past, but we have a plan to eradicate it for our future, and the route map goes some way towards doing that. The visionary aim of the route map to 2040 is to eliminate fuel poverty by that time. I, like everybody, would like it to be eradicated quicker, but we need to have a plan. However, we should not let that target blind us to the pressing need in communities such as mine. That is why I am glad that vulnerable people and people who are in fuel poverty are the first targets in the route map. The here and now is the reality for my constituents. Families are trying to survive on ever-reducing and ever-limited resources. That is the reality for my constituents in Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse.

I want to share a real-life intervention and the difference that it makes. An SNP councillor for Lanark, Julia Marrs, and I set about establishing a scheme to persuade energy retailers that they could offer innovative ways to help combat fuel poverty. Scottish Power signed up first, with a real commitment that the company should be recognised today for delivering; I am very grateful to Scottish Power for that. Now, eight different agencies are providing variations on the quick credit scheme. We introduced it initially, and it is now used across the UK and not just in Scotland.

The scheme started in Hamilton, Carlisle and Birkenhead food banks late last year, at about the same time that universal credit was rolled out for families. The scheme offers a £49 winter credit payment for those who are in danger of being disconnected or those who have no means to warm their homes or cook their food. Scottish Power has said that the idea behind the scheme is that it is led not by the customer, but by the partner agency spotting the requirement and assessing when to promote the scheme and who

to promote it to. The company has partnered with food banks, citizens advice bureaux and community energy projects. Households do not have to pay anything back, and they are entitled to three payments in a 12-month period.

I am very happy, but also very sad, to report that the Scottish Power scheme has given out 172 quick credit vouchers so far through Hamilton's food bank; it has also given out 52 vouchers in Clydesdale. I am sad that so many people needed the scheme in the first place. More retailers are talking to me now, and I will continue to encourage private sector buy-in as a way of highlighting the sector's corporate social responsibility commitments.

I am firmly convinced that such an innovative and straightforward community-led support scheme is the right approach for our most vulnerable groups. I continue to encourage energy suppliers to share the responsibility to help those who are in fuel poverty in that way or with similar programmes, such as those that are being developed by other energy companies.

That £49 is extremely important to someone who is trying to keep an elderly relative or a baby warm, and to their family, as they are in immediate crisis. They are the people who do not answer calls or open the dreaded letters from their energy supplier—they need the money now. The Scottish Government's commitment to £1 billion over 22 years to eradicate fuel poverty is a welcome advance, but I make the plea for people who are in crisis. The improved infrastructure is welcome, but we need crisis intervention, too. It is the practical money-in-the-hand relief that makes sense when someone is struggling. I have been confronted with families who have been handed that £49 and members will not be surprised to hear that it had a big impact on them. It is an emotional impact, because it means that people can go home and be warm for at least another month. The difference is amazing.

The scheme is a meaningful mitigation that draws together the big energy providers—they do not have a good reputation with some people, but they have a good reputation when it comes to the scheme—to work with local communities, such as those in Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse. I hope that they will work with communities everywhere else in the country, because we are working towards the scheme becoming nationwide.

In the longer term, I hope that the Scottish social security agency proposals have examined how best to manage existing fuel poverty until the wonderful day when it no longer exists. I want claimants' energy needs to be assessed and addressed as part of the process, as well as the

risk of them falling into, or deeper into, fuel poverty.

I truly welcome the route map. We are all on a journey and we all want more. I look forward to a day when everyone has a warm home, irrespective of their personal financial circumstances.

15:42

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the publication of the route map, as do members across the chamber. Nobody in the chamber denies that the process of optimising our housing and building stock for a low-carbon future will be difficult. The Scottish Government's route map moves us in the right direction, but it is insufficient on the counts of detail and funding in the longer term.

On climate change, in the latest greenhouse gas emissions statement, the Scottish Government brushed aside criticisms of its failure with regard to rising emissions in the residential sector with cries that we have had a cold winter. That is something of a circular argument. Cold winters cannot be used as an easy excuse, because that surely demonstrates how tough the winters would have been for those who are vulnerable to fuel poverty, and the absolute need for stronger and more immediate action.

The minister and Graeme Dey, the convener of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, highlighted the climate change plan and how it underpins the route map. Strong ambitions on energy efficiency measures could deliver multiple benefits, including the reduction of household bills, the alleviation of fuel poverty, health improvements, the creation of economic and employment benefits, and the reduction of the sector's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which were 6.1 million tonnes in 2015.

It is vital that energy efficiency improvements go hand in hand with low-carbon energy technologies. Scottish Renewables highlighted in its briefing its concern that the proposed measures on district heat networks are not strong enough, with at best only a small beneficial impact, and that the measures fail to engage off-grid areas, which is a major concern in my South Scotland region. It is very disappointing that the Government allowed the proportion of heat that is generated by renewable sources to fall in 2016. That needs to be a priority.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I share Claudia Beamish's concern to try to address renewable heat targets and I am not taking away from that. However, does she accept that we cannot control the success or failure of private sector schemes, including the scheme at Markinch, which

unfortunately went out of commission through the closure of the Markinch paper mill?

**Claudia Beamish:** I take that point. I will come on to the private rented sector later in my remarks.

If we are to tackle fuel poverty in a just and fair way, due regard must be paid to the specific circumstances of the wide range of people living in Scotland today. I have long been concerned about those living arrangements in which energy efficiency measures are more complex, such as in private rented accommodation, or in multi-occupancy buildings.

In 2014, I proposed an amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Bill to introduce a provision on energy efficiency standards in private rented sector properties, including those in multi-ownership buildings. That amendment did not receive the support of the Scottish Government at the time, and it was not agreed to, but buy-in from owner-occupiers is crucial. I would very much welcome comment from the minister in his closing remarks about such cases, which are more complex, and about the Scottish Government's plans for people in those circumstances; co-operation and indeed shared funding—feeding into a collective pot or some such—may well be required. That might require legislation.

As we know, significant action has been undertaken by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, which has led on these issues. As its briefing reminds us, its

"members have already made significant progress in increasing the energy efficiency of their homes and in developing innovative approaches to providing affordable warmth such as renewable heating, district heating and setting up their own not for profit energy company."

I acknowledge the fund that the minister has highlighted today, but I point out that the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations is calling for more support.

For many more people on low incomes, we must prevent other forms of fuel poverty, and further action is needed. I highlight our amendment in that respect. Like the minister, I represent rural South Scotland, and a significant number of my constituents live in fuel poverty. In 2016, as we have already heard—I stress this again—37 per cent of rural dwellings were in fuel poverty, compared with 24 per cent of urban dwellings.

I am utterly mystified as to why the Scottish Government's national document on energy efficiency can have zero mention of the words "rural", "remote" or "island". Liam McArthur highlighted that issue robustly. It is more expensive to live on islands, in that it is difficult for the required materials and fuel to be taken there by boat, and I think that there should be a

minimum income, which should be different for rural and island communities. I hope that the minister will consider that.

The cost of alternative fuel becomes more manageable if people can buy at times when supply is cheaper. It seems unlikely that the winter fuel payment will be brought forward so that it may be accessed earlier, even for this coming winter. I ask the minister to reconsider that, as both Scottish Borders Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council, in my region, are having serious issues. I thank Age Scotland for highlighting the stark statistic that six in 10 single pensioners live in fuel poverty. That is important to note, too.

With regard to financial support, I ask the minister to consider how the Scottish national investment bank criteria could help the Scottish Government's plan to decarbonise heating in homes and businesses and to bring jobs to local communities. In that context, I highlight area-wide projects.

I have highlighted some of the specific circumstances in which people find themselves vulnerable to fuel poverty, but it is something that everyone in Scotland has to consider. Pauline McNeill and other members across the chamber have argued for a one-stop shop, and I support that. As a rural dweller, I find it confusing when I am investigating what I should do to better insulate my home and do all the other things that we need to do—and that is my brief. It is really important that those things are done appropriately.

The United Nations affords us the right to adequate housing. Here in Scotland, that must mean a warm home—today, and for future generations. A national infrastructure priority deserves more.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I advise members that we have now eaten up most of the extra time. I think that all groups have had a fair shot at that. I therefore ask members to stick to the six-minute limit from now on, please. That would be useful.

15:49

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** The “Energy Efficient Scotland” route map sets out a programme to improve energy efficiency and, in so doing, will help to achieve our priorities of tackling climate change and reducing fuel poverty. It will also improve the day-to-day lives of people across the country, making their bills cheaper and their homes and places of work more comfortable. Businesses and public sector providers will also benefit, and the savings that they make from increased energy efficiency could be reinvested in their services or workforce.

It is a testament to the Scottish Government's commitment to making those improvements that, since 2015, energy efficiency has been designated as a national infrastructure priority. However, the area has seen investment and action from the Government since long before then. Between 2009 and 2021, the Government will have allocated over £1 billion to improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty.

Although the investment to date has been significant, we all agree that there is still much to be done. That is why “Energy Efficient Scotland” takes a long-term approach to energy efficiency. The route map's vision is that, by 2040, Scotland's homes and other buildings will be warmer, greener and more efficient. That will be achieved by setting long-term mandatory energy performance standards for all buildings and using a phased approach that recognises that different building sectors will start from different points and improve at different paces.

I am particularly pleased that the route map makes it clear that those making the transition to greater energy efficiency will be offered good-quality independent advice. In my constituency and, I am sure, in others, there is a real issue with cold calling about energy efficiency. Companies will falsely claim that constituents are required to make changes to their homes under the pretence of a Government scheme. That can often have grave consequences, as individuals make unnecessary changes to their homes at great expense. I hope that the minister will confirm in his closing speech that the advice that is provided will help to raise awareness of such fraudulent practices.

I am also pleased with the ambitious target that is proposed in the route map to maximise the number of homes in the social rented sector achieving EPC B rating by 2032. In the Highlands, a large amount of the social rented housing stock is prefabricated or constructed by a method that makes houses hard to heat. I would be interested to hear from the minister what challenges he believes there may be in improving that type of housing stock to the desired standard.

Improved energy efficiency can help some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society by removing a driver of fuel poverty, as Christina McKelvie outlined perfectly. The fuel poverty bill, which will be introduced later this year, will set statutory targets to eradicate fuel poverty. The Government's most recent consultation on the issue sets out a framework to show how those targets will be achieved.

Improved energy efficiency will also help us to achieve our climate change targets. Across households, businesses and public services, around £2.5 billion is spent every year on heating



and cooling the buildings that we use. Scottish Government statistics show that buildings account for nearly 20 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Improving efficiency is therefore crucial to tackling climate change. The Government's climate change plan, which several members have spoken about, sets out the policies and proposals that will keep Scotland on course to achieve our 2050 target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent.

Implementation will not tackle only those two issues; it will have wider economic, social and health benefits. It will improve people's day-to-day standard of living, make bills more affordable and make our homes and the places where we work more comfortable. As well as assisting existing businesses, improved energy efficiency could help to create businesses. The roll-out of the energy efficient Scotland programme could create a substantial Scottish market and supply chain for energy efficiency services and technologies. As the route map shows, every £100 million that is spent on energy efficiency improvements in 2018 is estimated to support approximately 1,200 full-time equivalent jobs.

To conclude, I want to give an example from my constituency of what energy efficiency can do. This particular example is included in "Energy Efficient Scotland". In 2012, Ignis Wick Ltd purchased the assets of the failed Wick district heating scheme and took over its operation. The company invested £2.5 million in a biomass steam boiler to replace the existing oil-fuelled boiler. That reduced fuel costs and secured heat supply to 165 homes along with the Old Pulteney whisky distillery. Ignis continued to invest in the network with assistance from the Scottish Government's district heating loan fund and, subsequently, the Green Investment Bank and Equitix acquired the site. The network now supplies 200 homes, the Highland Council's assembly rooms, the distillery and Caithness general hospital. That shows exactly what, on a larger scale, the energy efficient Scotland programme can achieve by tackling climate change and fuel poverty, improving energy efficiency in homes, public buildings and businesses, promoting growth and investment and reducing bills for residents.

To Graeme Dey, I say that if he wants to talk about travel distances, I will see his Elgin to Aberdeen and raise him Glasgow to Wick.

15:55

**Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** Improved energy efficiency could go a long way to alleviating fuel poverty, particularly in rural areas. Last year, Graham Simpson, with other MSPs, wrote to Kevin Stewart about energy efficiency and fuel poverty and said that priority

should be given to fuel-poor households, particularly in remote and rural communities. I, too, would have liked to see that in the Government's route map for energy efficiency. However, the route map that was published last week says nothing about rural homes. The SNP Government has failed to seriously address the issues that energy-inefficient homes present for rural residents.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will the member give way?

**Finlay Carson:** Not at the moment.

The SNP Government says that it is committed to removing poor energy efficiency as a driver for fuel poverty. However, its lack of ambition to eradicate fuel poverty in Scotland, by committing only to reduce it to less than 10 per cent by 2040, is not good enough.

The link between better insulated, warmer, more efficient homes and tackling fuel poverty cannot be clearer. A target of EPC band C for all homes by 2040 is laudable enough, but I am sure that the residents of the 420,000 premises across Scotland that are currently rated in the lower EPC bands of E, F and G, who will have to spend 22 more winters in freezing homes, will not agree with the Government—they will agree with me when I say that those targets are simply not ambitious enough.

The route map also fails to outline the practical means by which households are expected to achieve energy efficiency by 2040.

**Christina McKelvie:** Will the member give way?

**Finlay Carson:** No, thank you. The SNP Government has not committed new funding for energy efficiency. With a lack of encouragement for new home owners to take measures to make their homes more energy efficient, coupled with a lack of adequate regulation, there is a great risk of that crucial sector flat lining. The approach also presents significant problems for social landlords, which are being asked to increase energy efficiency while not increasing rents. Home owners are also being asked to improve their homes without incentives on offer. The existing homes alliance Scotland has outlined that incentives must be in place long before the target deadline approaches if we are to achieve the Government's target for reducing carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty and achieving the transition to an energy efficient Scotland.

In addition, as the member for Galloway and West Dumfries, I know that many of my constituents could benefit from renewable heat technologies. That is why I was dismayed to see that the Government's route map does not make the most of opportunities for the renewable heat

industry, especially as it is not on track to meet its 2020 renewable heat target.

Although the route map confirms emission reduction targets, it contains little detail on how those targets will be achieved. It is welcome that the Government is preparing to support some district heating, but it has failed to engage off-gas-grid areas, which is a major missed opportunity for rural communities, given the cost effectiveness of renewable heat technologies. It is essential that such technologies as smart electric heating, heat pumps, biomass and solar are taken advantage of to ensure that the heat that we generate is used in the most efficient way as well as being low carbon. I call on the Government to commit to providing future support for those technologies, given that current funding will run out in the next three years, and I encourage the SNP Government to consider how new technologies can promote energy efficiency in an up-to-date, modern manner.

If we are going to become energy efficient, we must be clearer to households and businesses about what they need to do. The installation of energy efficiency measures must be as straightforward as possible for consumers, who should be able to immediately enjoy the many benefits of energy efficiency. Organisations such as Citizens Advice Scotland have indicated that the biggest challenge to a transformation to an energy efficient Scotland will be improving standards of energy efficiency in owner-occupied properties, as already touched on by Alexander Burnett. Buy-in from owner-occupiers is critical in achieving energy efficiency targets, but home owners are not installing those measures fast enough at present. It is clear that the Government must work harder to highlight the many benefits of installing these efficiency measures to encourage owner-occupiers to improve their homes.

In order to achieve energy efficiency, it is also essential that consumers have confidence in and trust Government schemes. I know how constituents of mine in Galloway have struggled with these energy schemes. One woman in Dalry struggled to secure new heating and insulation before winter set in, and the timescale on her HEEPS loan ran out owing to supplier delay. The recommended supplier said that her property was too far away and that there was insufficient manpower to carry out the work. Following that, the recommended supplier went to the wall, and many of the other companies that could have carried out the work were based in central Scotland. In another case, a contractor who installed a heating system went bust, leaving my constituent with an unusable heating system and no recourse. Those cases highlight the work that we have to do in order to truly achieve an energy efficient Scotland. The benefits of the approach

are still to be felt by far too many people, who simply do not have the required information.

16:00

**Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP):** I am pleased to speak in this debate as a member of the cross-party group on energy efficiency and the cross-party group on housing, but most of all as a constituency MSP. I warmly welcome the Scottish Government's "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map.

I vividly remember that, after a public meeting when I was standing for election, a young lad came up to me and said, "Ben, it's great that all the new houses are being built, but don't forget about the older homes, like mine, that are still too cold and damp." I think of that conversation often, and I think of it today. I think of that lad and too many people like him in my constituency and elsewhere in Scotland who live in buildings that are too inefficient and which absolutely need improvement. Historical decisions by a range of political parties have brought us to where we are today, and it will take all of us working together, stakeholders and local authorities to make the difference that is needed.

I welcome the fact that energy efficiency has been a priority for the Scottish Government even before the publication of the route map, which is evident in the SEEP scheme, the HEEPS scheme and the warm homes Scotland programme, which I have seen delivered in my constituency by Warmworks Scotland. The new "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map will build on that. With £54.5 million, the route map will play an important role in furthering the Scottish Government's efforts and all of our efforts to tackle fuel poverty, reduce carbon emissions and protect the planet for future generations. Let us remember that 53 per cent of Scotland's energy consumption currently goes towards heating and that buildings account for 19.7 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions.

I started by talking about my constituency, and I am sure that many members will appreciate that Edinburgh Northern and Leith is an urban constituency—indeed, it has some of the densest urban areas in the whole of Scotland. As other members have noted, with regard to our current stock, we face a significant challenge in ensuring that existing buildings are warmer, greener and more efficient by 2040. We need to address the issue of how we can enhance the current stock so that it meets the standards of new buildings in the social rented sector, for example.

Others have touched on the challenges in relation to owner-occupiers and the private rented sector. Tenements represent one of the most important and widespread forms of housing stock

in those two sectors. In January, I led a debate in Parliament about tenement repairs and maintenance—I thank members across the chamber for their support for that motion and for their participation in the debate. The word “tenements” sometimes makes people think of certain parts of certain cities, but we should remember that, under the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004, a tenement is defined as

“a building or a part of a building which comprises two related flats ... or more than two such flats at least two of which ... are, or are designed to be, in separate ownership; and ... are divided from each other horizontally”.

That represents 500,000 homes in Scotland—a quarter of Scotland’s current domestic housing stock. That means that how we manage, enhance, improve and repair our tenements is vital to rural and urban Scotland, and is key to energy efficiency.

I declare an interest as someone who owns a tenement flat. It is not just my personal interest but much more the casework that I have received as a constituency MSP that has driven me to take action on this. I know colleagues have had the same type of correspondence. Since the debate in January, I have received emails from all over Scotland about the issue.

As we heard earlier, the problem is that some owners are unwilling or unable to undertake works. When it comes to shared property within a tenement, whether that is the roof or the common stair, there are real challenges about how individual owners mobilise themselves to undertake works.

That is why, together with other MSPs across the chamber, including Graham Simpson, we have collaborated to bring together a working group of experts and MSPs to look for new solutions to how we enable and encourage owners not just to repair the current tenement stock, for which there is an absolute need, and not just to maintain the current stock, for which there is also an absolute need, but to enhance it. I raise that issue today because enhancing our tenement stock can make a remarkable difference to how we deliver our aspirations on energy efficiency.

The working group is up and running. It is looking for solutions and is open to other MSPs who want to be involved. If we want to help tackle climate change and fuel poverty and enhance our rural and urban environments, enhancing our tenement stock is important. It is about improving quality of life, and I hope that the Government will continue to be open to that working group as we come forward with new solutions.

16:07

**Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I welcome the debate and the route map published by the Scottish Government to transform Scotland’s buildings to be warmer, greener and more efficient.

The route map is a step in the right direction. In particular, it is welcome that the Government is consulting on regulations to require private rented sector homes to be rated energy performance certificate B and C by 2030.

However, the route map fails to live up to the Government’s promise to make energy efficiency a national infrastructure project, with no significant financial commitment, a lack of any detail on how home owners can improve the energy efficiency of their homes, and no mention of the particular struggles faced by rural communities.

In other words, it is a map that shows you where we want to go, but is short on the detail of how we are going to get there. We must be more ambitious when it comes to ending Scotland’s fuel poverty shame.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** A number of members have mentioned the lack of specific reference to rural housing in the document. I want to emphasise that the initiatives are to help 100 per cent of properties in each property category—private rented and so on. We are trying to deal with 100 per cent of properties, and as a rural member that includes the properties of my constituents and Mr Rowley’s.

**Alex Rowley:** Given the impact of rural fuel poverty, which I will say more about, it needed to be referred to in the document more often. That is something that the minister could address.

As Age Scotland has said:

“Almost six in ten single pensioners and four in ten pensioner couples live in fuel poverty in Scotland, with those in rural areas most affected.”

Age Scotland continues to be concerned at the continuing prevalence of excess winter deaths with 2,720 recorded in 2016-17. There was a significant increase in excess winter deaths among people aged 85 and over, with 1,430 additional deaths compared to 970 in 2015-16, according to the National Records of Scotland. Indeed, the World Health Organization estimates that around 30 per cent of excess winter deaths could have been avoided if everyone in Scotland lived in a home that was adequately insulated and heated.

Was the Scottish Parliament not created to be able to tackle the big social and economic issues that impact on the people of Scotland? Scottish Labour is committed to ending poor energy performance as a driver of fuel poverty, and we

believe that the Government's proposals fall short in a number of areas.

The Scottish ministers designated energy efficiency as a national infrastructure priority in 2015, but the level of funding that is available pales into insignificance in comparison with funding for other infrastructure projects. There is a commitment to continue to fund programmes to reduce fuel poverty and increase energy efficiency and to continue multiyear funding, but there are no new or additional moneys planned. The plan provides barely any detail on how the Government will support private landlords and home owners to reach the targets that are outlined. If householders are to be active participants in improving the energy efficiency of their homes, financial and fiscal incentives are needed.

One such suggestion comes from Age Scotland, which calls on the Government to explore whether improvements that are made in order to meet energy efficiency standards should make home owners eligible for a reduction in their council tax. I merely suggest that we need to look at how we support people if we seriously want to eradicate fuel poverty from Scotland.

It is deeply worrying that, as has been discussed, there is no mention in the route map of rural homes. We face unique challenges in trying to prevent fuel poverty in rural areas, because of the use of off-grid fuel for rural homes. We have asked the Government to give priority to fuel-poor households, especially those in remote and rural communities.

As Scottish Renewables said in its briefing,

“The Route Map has little detail on how the programme will accelerate the roll-out of renewable heat, particularly in off-gas grid areas, which we regard as a missed opportunity given recent policy changes, and the eventual closure of the Renewable Heat Incentive in 2021.”

Labour has called for a warm homes bill to tackle fuel poverty, and we welcomed the SNP's commitment to take that forward. However, the warm homes bill has been renamed the fuel poverty (Scotland) bill, and there is no guarantee that it will include provisions to improve energy efficiency. The minister might want to address that point in closing.

The recent announcement by UK Labour that it would invest £2.3 billion per year to provide financial support for households to insulate their homes, and for local authorities to drive take-up and delivery of insulation schemes, shows the scale of ambition that is needed. We recognise the benefits that that would bring, not only in tackling fuel poverty but in terms of jobs and the economy.

Last year, Labour, along with the other Opposition parties in the Parliament, signed a letter calling on the Government to—among other

actions—establish a goal to end poor energy performance as a driver of fuel poverty; set a target to get the vast majority of homes rated at EPC band C or above by 2025 to 2030; and prioritise fuel-poor households, particularly in remote and rural communities.

The message today must be that, although we are on the right track, we must be far more ambitious if we are to end the blight of fuel poverty in Scotland.

16:13

**Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** I am pleased to speak in this debate, and I welcome the publication of the route map, which provides a long-term framework within which to plan and implement strategies. There is no doubt that our buildings need to be comfortable to live and work in, and heating them should be affordable. The route map will address issues in that respect.

I was particularly pleased to see that the route map reiterates a separate Scottish Government proposal to introduce a package of regulatory measures to support district heating. District heating was first mooted for the town of Grangemouth in my constituency way back in the 1950s. We are still waiting, but a major new system is on the horizon. The proposal in the 1950s was to harness the gas that was being flared off from the stacks at the oil refinery to provide cheap heating for the town. Sadly, that never came to fruition at the time, mainly as a result of a lack of vision, but it is most definitely on the cards again.

Exciting plans have been developed, which I hope could lead to a district heating network in the town producing low-cost heating for industry and households, particularly in parts of the town with low-income households. The ambitious Grangemouth energy project is a team effort involving Falkirk Council, the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and major companies in the town. It is all thanks to a task force that was set up in 2013 to assess the potential impact of the threatened closure of Ineos and which took up the challenge of finding out whether a more resource-efficient, low-carbon and low-cost energy solution could be found that would cut the costs facing local firms and householders.

A comprehensive appraisal of the demand for heat and power was carried out to tackle serious concerns about the cost burden facing businesses in the Grangemouth industrial complex. That identified a wide range of power-generation options, including industrial heat recovery, geothermal heat recovery and gas-fired combined heat and power. For the district heating element of the project, there were potential socio-economic

benefits coupled with carbon emission reductions through the re-use of waste heat. Unfortunately, just in the past couple of weeks, Ineos has pulled out of plans to develop a district heat network that would benefit the local community. The network will still do that, but Ineos has made alternative plans to provide energy at its plant, which is understandable but disappointing.

I take this opportunity to urge Ineos to engage more with the local community, in the hope that the firm can contribute to positively to it, over and above being an employer, albeit a major one. Ineos can also be a good neighbour to the 18,000 people who reside in Grangemouth, who live cheek-by-jowl with heavy industry day in and day out. Taking part in the district heating scheme would have helped the firm to ingratiate itself with the local community. However, despite Ineos's departure from the scheme, Falkirk Council is hopeful that other major players will come on board, because the opportunity is too good to waste.

We can learn much from our Nordic cousins across the North Sea in Denmark when it comes to district heating. Way back in 1979, Denmark passed its first heating supply law, and although there have been several revisions, it is still in effect today and has resulted in many years of active energy policy, systematic heating planning and regulation. Looking ahead, district heating systems will remain a key element of the energy system in Denmark. By 2020, about half of Denmark's electricity consumption will be supplied from wind power, which has increased the focus on flexible district heating and combined heat and power systems. Those systems use heat storage, electric boilers and heat pumps and they bypass power turbines in order to support the integration of wind power into the energy system. There is clearly much still to learn from Denmark.

I turn briefly to climate change. It is clear that improving the way that we tackle the issue is vital for achieving our ambitious climate change targets. We know that Scotland cut its greenhouse gas emissions by around 40 per cent between 1990 and 2014, and it met its statutory emissions reduction targets for both 2014 and 2015. The data on Scottish emissions in 2016 is due to become available next month, and we hope that it will be just as good.

That is all well and good, but there is clearly much more to do, especially when we take into account the fact that buildings account for 19.7 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions. With the proposed action to ensure that all homes are improved by 2040 so that they achieve an energy performance certificate rating of at least C, there will have to be a significant programme of retrofitting. In that regard, it is only right to highlight

an issue flagged up by Age Scotland, which is that there will be a need for substantial dedicated funding for incentives for people matching any new standards, particularly older people who own their own homes and are asset rich but cash poor. Age Scotland rightly highlights that interest-free loans may not provide a sufficient incentive for them to undertake the necessary work. The organisation has come up with a suggestion that is worthy of consideration: the Government should explore whether owner-occupiers carrying out improvements in order to meet energy efficiency standards should be eligible for a reduction in or rebate to their council tax. I will leave that sitting with the minister.

16:19

**Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con):**

There can be few more important subjects than the standard and condition of Scotland's homes. Last year, I, Alex Rowley, Mark Ruskell and Liam McArthur wrote to Kevin Stewart on energy efficiency and fuel poverty. It was a rather odd alliance, I grant you, but we were and, I think, still are at one in our belief that more needs to be done.

We pointed out that the target for the elimination of fuel poverty by November 2016 was missed and that 35 per cent of Scottish households were in fuel poverty. We called for the elimination of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. We called for credible fuel poverty and climate change goals. We noted the recommendation of the expert fuel poverty strategic working group that all fuel-poor homes should be brought up to at least an EPC band C rating by 2025. We called for all fuel poverty programmes to be rural proofed, as recommended by the rural fuel poverty task force.

We said Scotland's energy efficiency programme should have an interim target for the residential sector of supporting the majority of homes—those for which it is technically feasible and appropriate—to reach an EPC band C rating by between 2025 and 2030. We said that priority should be given to fuel-poor households, particularly those in remote and rural communities.

We also supported efforts to work with the UK Government to improve the assessment methodology that underpins the EPC in order to improve its accuracy, and called for improved quality assurance of EPC assessments, as they have been too hit and miss.

How does the "Energy Efficient Scotland" programme that was published last week fare when set against that cross-party ambition? Let us take each of those asks in order and see how the Scottish Government's so-called route map stands up.

The first ask was on the elimination of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty, and the second was that all fuel-poor homes should be brought up to at least an EPC band C rating by 2025. The programme commits to the first, but is there enough in it to give us any confidence that it will deliver? No, there is not. What we have is a consultation—the Government is very keen on consultations—and a proposal to get fuel-poor households to EPC band B by 2040. It is safe to say that not a single Government minister will still be in post in 22 years and most of us will no longer be MSPs. Talk about kicking the can down the road. The commitment to have fuel-poor homes at EPC band C by 2030 is not as ambitious as the target that we called for. Why not?

In addition, we have dark warnings from stakeholders that the much-heralded warm homes bill might be dropped in favour of a watered-down fuel poverty bill that will not deal with energy efficiency. I hope that my information on that is wrong.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** A bill that is focused on fuel poverty is coming forward, but we also intend to introduce further legislation on warm homes and energy efficiency. I reassure the member of that. We are in the first phase of a two-bill process.

**Graham Simpson:** There was a manifesto commitment to a warm homes bill. From that answer, I am not clear whether it is still going to happen.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** To be clear, we are going through the process of working out the best method of addressing district heating, local heat and energy efficiency strategies with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and other stakeholders. We intend to introduce further legislation that will address the points that the member raised on making our homes warm and energy efficient while tackling fuel poverty. We are focusing on the fuel poverty target at this stage.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** Mr Simpson, I will give you the time back.

**Graham Simpson:** Thank you, Presiding Officer.

That is not quite the same thing, minister.

The third ask was on rural proofing. The route map says nothing about rural homes, which a number of members have mentioned. That is a clear failure. Current proposals for supporting people in fuel poverty ignore the recommendations of the Scottish rural fuel poverty working group that the higher costs of living in rural areas should be taken into account when targeting fuel poverty support.

The fourth ask was that Scotland's energy efficiency programme should have an interim target for the residential sector of supporting the majority of homes to reach an EPC band C rating by between 2025 and 2030. The majority of homes in Scotland—61 per cent—are owner-occupied. How are we going to get those home owners to upgrade their properties, a million of which are below EPC band C?

The "Energy Efficient Scotland" programme is particularly lacking on that question. There is another consultation—why not? We might as well—and the Government says:

"We want to continue to encourage and enable owners to take action".

Any suggestion of anything stronger will be left to the

"later stages of the programme",

whatever that means. The plan does not say in any detail—

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Graham Simpson:** Yes, if I get the time back again.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** If you wish, Mr Simpson.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** In my opening speech, I made it clear that we would look at 2030 as being a point by which, if we had not achieved our target to bring owner-occupied properties up to EPC band C or better through voluntary action, we would look for further methods to compel that to happen thereafter. However, I have not yet heard from the Conservatives how they would achieve the earlier target without compulsion or any credible incentive.

**Graham Simpson:** What the minister did not say earlier—perhaps he can say it later—is what that further action might be. The Scottish Government is kicking the can down the road again, and it is a road that takes until 2040 to travel. I tend to agree with Citizens Advice Scotland that we need to make things easy for people, so a one-stop-shop approach should be considered. We cannot force people to do things to their own homes, but we can entuse them to want to, and we can offer them things such as meaningful council tax discounts or low-cost loans and grants.

Finally, the EPC should be more robust. I am glad that the Scottish Government has finally agreed to look at EPC methodology. It cannot be right that someone can assess a home without even seeing it and give it a rating, and it cannot be right that two people can give the same house different ratings. That is the current position.

I want to mention one more thing—the condition of our existing homes. The route map does not deal with that. Many of Scotland's homes are ageing and crumbling, as Ben Macpherson mentioned, and the Government does not have a clue what to do about that. It has been left to those of us who can see the problem to form a cross-party working group, along with experts, and we will come up with proposals.

“Energy Efficient Scotland” is a missed opportunity. We need to do better.

Thank you for the extra time, Presiding Officer.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Well, you took interventions and we had some time in hand, so it was only fair.

16:27

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** I am grateful to Ben Macpherson for making me aware that I have tenements in my constituency. I had not previously twigged that a block of four houses on two floors sharing a common stair could qualify as a tenement, so I will go away and have a wee look at the implications of that.

It has been an interesting debate in all sorts of ways. I want to pick up on a few wee things. One thing that we have spent comparatively little time debating is district heating. We recognise that it looks unlikely that the targets that were set previously look will be met.

In the north-east, we have a unique opportunity to use geothermal heating. I had the privilege, as a minister, to visit a Stagecoach bus depot to see its geothermal heating. Two boreholes went down only 100m, but water could be pumped down to the bottom of the hole and brought back up to heat a large garage, inside which, even with snow on the ground and the doors open, it was really too hot. The cost of doing that about 10 years ago was something like £40,000. That is not a huge amount of money for a heating proposition for a bus depot of that kind, but it is considerably more than most people would consider investing in a domestic scheme. On the other hand, if we think about 10 houses sharing such a facility, we start to get into the realms of economic possibility.

However, as I look at the subject, I find that there are some practical difficulties in relation to way leaves—in other words, taking utility supplies across other people's properties. Statutory undertakers can get way leaves. They include rail, light rail, tram and road transport, water, ports, canals, inland navigation, docks, harbours, piers and lighthouses, airport operators and suppliers of hydraulic power. However, missing from the list of statutory undertakers are suppliers of heat. It

seems from my research that no way-leave condition is available for transport of heat from one place to another. I have heard that that has proved to be difficult for Michelin Tyre plc in Dundee when it wanted to transport heat, so there is a legal issue in that regard.

I am unclear, to be candid, as to whether district heating comes under a reserved power. We have powers under section 9 of the Energy Act 1976 that allow us to legislate for liquefaction of offshore natural gas, but none of the other powers that might cover district heating appear to be devolved. There is a lack of clarity, and my research is not necessarily complete, but I think that there are opportunities to consider how we might produce district heating, particularly in the north-east. We have a very good example in Aberdeen, but it is of quite a different character. Geothermal energy is not just a north-east issue, although Mons Grampus, and the granite therein, provides particular opportunities.

I join Gail Ross in outbidding Graeme Dey on travel distances. When my wife was getting the insulation in our roof void taken from 200mm up to 600mm, workers came from Lanarkshire to rural Banffshire to do it. However, I can even outbid Gail Ross on the distance travelled, because they had to come twice. They did not bring enough material the first time and my wife would not let them in the house until they turned up with enough, which meant that they had to make the journey twice. I therefore claim precedence over Gail Ross on that.

There is a serious point in the story of putting in that insulation. In a rural single-storey dwelling that is never going to be EPC C-rated because of the way it is constructed, the simple act of putting in that insulation cut our fuel consumption of kerosene by 40 per cent. In fact, it took us a full week of tweaking the thermostats on the radiators to get the temperature down to an acceptable level, as we were roasting because of the additional insulation. Were that sort of intervention to be installed in all rural houses, that would be great. The Government has done a great deal; that installation was through a Government-funded scheme and did not cost us anything at all.

I will talk finally about tax incentives, about which we have heard a number of comments in the debate. As I mentioned in an earlier intervention, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which I had the privilege of taking through Parliament, provided tax incentives for improving houses. However, it relied on councils bringing forward schemes, but by no means all of them did so. In fact, I am not sure that very many did. I suggest that the track record for tax incentives based on houses is, at the moment, showing a “Not proven” verdict, at best.

I am a wee bit disappointed that the Tories are seeking to delete from the Government motion that there is a “‘whole economy’ value” of £10 billion. I would have thought that the Tories would have been quite interested in that sort of number. I certainly am, so I say “Go to it, minister.”

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to closing speeches.

16:33

**Mark Ruskell:** I have two minutes at hand, and two brief reflections to make on the debate. First, it is clear from members’ speeches that SEEP needs to address the real lived experiences of people who are suffering from fuel poverty across Scotland. We heard very powerful speeches from Ben Macpherson and Christina McKelvie about the kind of innovation that we need in order to tackle fuel poverty in our communities, whether it is joined-up support between food banks and energy companies or the innovation that we need around development of tenemental properties.

However, we have to get the communications right. I was shocked to hear earlier in the debate that the answer to a parliamentary question from Monica Lennon showed that only six properties received a council tax rebate on energy efficiency in the past year, which I find absolutely incredible. I repeat that we have to get the communications right.

A number of members—Liam McArthur, Claudia Beamish, Graeme Dey, Finlay Carson and many others—talked about the lived experiences of people in rural communities. There are particular challenges in rural communities, including the cost of fuel and transport and the challenges of retrofit with older stone-built properties in off-gas areas. I ask ministers to reflect on those issues and on Pauline McNeill’s point about a rural minimum income standard. We need a Scottish energy efficiency programme that does not mask rural poverty and which addresses the specific needs of rural communities.

My second reflection is that at the beginning of the debate, the minister threw down an interesting challenge, which I think was aimed primarily at our colleagues in the Tory party. If we do not meet the aspirational targets for 2030, we will have to move towards regulation. Therefore, I was pleased when John Scott jumped up and extolled the benefits of high regulation and compulsory solar panels in California. I reach out to the Tories, because we need a strong consensus if we are to drive the Government to be bolder in its strategy, and that will mean a commitment to appropriate regulation to drive the kind of progress that we would all like to make.

16:35

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** The minister set out the Scottish Government’s aspiration this afternoon when he quoted the vision statement from the “Energy Efficient Scotland” route map:

“By 2040 our homes and buildings are warmer, greener and more efficient”.

It is fair to say that every other speaker endorsed that aspiration. However, we have debated how much warmer and greener and how much more energy efficient our homes should be, and whether we need to wait until 2040.

This is not a new policy area for the Scottish ministers. Energy efficiency has been a devolved responsibility since 1999, and every Government has pursued the same policy objective of greater energy efficiency.

What is new, ministers would say, is that energy efficiency is now not just a policy objective but a national infrastructure priority. I think that all members agree that a step change is required, and the designation of energy efficiency as a national priority seems to imply that a step change is to be delivered. Mr Wheelhouse certainly confirmed a continuing commitment in that regard and further steps that the Government intends to take. However, in our view, he did not demonstrate that those steps will deliver at a sufficiently greater scale or pace to justify the designation.

The Government’s route map identifies a desirable destination for 20 years from now, it provides a number of milestones along the way, and it confirms the targets for emission reductions that are set out in the climate change plan. However, as Scottish Renewables said, it contains very little detail on how to achieve those aims. The route map rightly identifies energy inefficiency as a driver of fuel poverty and rightly commits to earlier milestones in relation to fuel-poor households. Again, though, there is little detail as to how milestones are to be achieved and how progress is to be defined.

An energy efficiency programme without an ambitious target on fuel poverty is, at best, incomplete. The Government needs to be clear about what it intends to achieve and by when. Its consultation last November suggested a target of reducing the proportion of people in fuel poverty to 20 per cent of the population by 2030 and 10 per cent by 2040. Our amendment urges ministers to be more ambitious about ending fuel poverty and doing so sooner.

As Liam McArthur, Claudia Beamish and Alex Rowley said, it is disappointing that there is no specific recognition in the route map of the particular challenges that are faced by remote



rural and island communities, albeit that Paul Wheelhouse acknowledged the challenges early in the debate. Fuel poverty and energy efficiency are at their highest in the remotest places and are high everywhere that is off the gas grid, where communities do not have access to the affordable and reliable mains gas for heating and cooking that many households in urban Scotland take for granted. Precisely for that reason, energy companies could and should be encouraged to deploy innovative solutions in rural Scotland that can improve energy efficiency and affordability while reducing carbon emissions. I acknowledge the minister's point about the benefits of targets for private rented homes for many rural areas, but an explicit priority for all housing in rural areas would have been widely welcomed.

Innovative things are happening in urban Scotland, as members said. I am thinking, not least, of the district heating networks that have been established by the Aberdeen Heat and Power Company over the past 15 years, which have reduced energy costs and carbon emissions for many hundreds of households in Aberdeen that used to be in fuel poverty. The work that ministers are carrying forward separately to further enable district heating is welcome, as are other funding streams that support interventions in other Scottish cities. All those policy streams can work together, but they need to be joined up, which is where a national infrastructure initiative can help.

A number of speakers commented on the lack of specific proposals for financing or delivering change in the owner-occupied sector. Indeed, that was highlighted at the outset by Pauline McNeill. Owner-occupied homes account for three fifths of Scotland's housing stock and for two thirds of the houses with poor energy efficiency. Reducing heat waste from 1 million owner-occupied homes cannot simply be left to the market if we want to make a real difference to energy efficiency overall. It is up to the Government to introduce effective fiscal and financial mechanisms to provide incentives for owner-occupiers and to put milestones in place to measure progress.

The minister said that the right time to think about many of those questions is after 2030. We believe that that is simply not soon enough. If energy efficiency is to be treated as being on a par with other national infrastructure priorities such as transport and electricity networks, surely action is required to improve standards across the board. As Citizens Advice Scotland puts it,

"the National Infrastructure Priority designation ... implies a wider scheme of new support, both financial and in advice provision, for all consumers."

We acknowledge that the Government's "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map points in the right direction, but we on the Labour side will

continue to call for greater ambition and for the resources to go with it. Designation as a national infrastructure priority must be about more than words; it also requires action and ambition to back up those words, and that is what we will vote for tonight.

16:41

**Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I begin by referring to my entry in the register of members' interests in relation to residential property and renewable energy.

I welcome the opportunity to close for the Scottish Conservatives. I view this debate as an extra step in ensuring that Scotland continues to lead on green technology, improving the energy efficiency of our homes and helping to reduce the cost of energy to our constituents. As we begin to debate wider issues that relate to our relationship with energy, particularly with the climate change plan and the proposed climate change bill later this year, 2018 has the potential to be a landmark year.

Like colleagues across the chamber, we welcome the publication of the Government's "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map, and we look forward to continuing the debate on the matter. I note with caution that, all too often, we have seen reports that talk a good talk but fail to deliver in practice, and the route map must not be one of them. However, I credit the Government for the approach that it has taken.

As others have done, I stress that, although we welcome the need to take action and view the route map as a starting point for a wider debate, it is lacking in ambition and, in some cases, it appears to roll back from earlier suggestions by the Government. We Conservatives have been adamant and consistent in our call for ambitious targets to ensure that all of Scotland's homes meet the EPC C rating by 2030. We have made that call in various speeches in the chamber and outside it, and we have put it directly to the Government. It is a call that has been backed by other parties and organisations such as WWF Scotland.

There is a widespread view, which has been expressed this afternoon by the Opposition parties, that the SNP Government's target for all Scottish homes to achieve an EPC C rating by 2040 is a decade too late. As Sarah Beattie-Smith of WWF Scotland has said,

"homeowners must be supported to take action to upgrade their homes faster than proposed if we are to meet existing and future climate change targets".

**Stewart Stevenson:** I think that the member's colleague Mr Burnett properly said that there are difficulties with the EPC C definition. My house

could not be warmer but, because of its construction, it will never meet the standard, and I will not be alone in that regard. Is it not the case that we should have a better definition before we hook our target to it? The Government is equally guilty, by the way; we are talking only about different years, so everybody is at fault.

**Donald Cameron:** I believe that there is a review. There is a healthy debate about the utility of the EPC rating, which I simply do not have time to go into, but I say to Mr Stevenson that I represent the Highlands and Islands and I accept that there will be properties in my region that will never reach that standard. In our amendment, we say explicitly that that should happen “where feasibly possible”. To be honest, the Government’s language in the route map is similar, in that it speaks about it being “technically feasible”.

Lori McElroy of the existing homes alliance said:

“This must be done well before 2040 to effectively tackle fuel poverty and climate emissions from our homes.”

The simple fact is that, with almost 1.5 million homes being rated below the EPC C standard and just over 400,000 homes in bands E, F and G, the issue is pressing and deserves swifter action.

A much starker—and tragic—fact emerges from National Registers of Scotland: 2,720 more people died in the winter months of 2016-17 than died in its warmer months. The WHO suggests that around 30 per cent of such deaths could have been avoided if everyone in Scotland lived in an adequately insulated and heated property.

With all that said, our view is that it is important that the Government reviews the target, and commits to ensuring that all Scottish homes achieve an EPC C rating by 2030. However, we recognise that, in addition to being more ambitious, the Government needs to inform people better about the long-term benefits of investing in energy efficiency in the home and about the schemes that are available to help them. CAS notes that the energy discount schemes that are offered by local authorities have had poor uptake, which it apports to, among other causes, a lack of awareness. It emerged during the debate that we have a problem with communicating to the wider public about energy efficiency schemes. The response to a freedom of information request that we submitted showed that section 65 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which requires local authorities to establish an energy efficiency discount scheme that offers a one-off council tax rebate for householders who carry out energy efficiency measures, has given out just £20,000 over 10 years. That is not an impressive record, but it reveals that there is an information problem and that the Government needs to ensure

that its agencies and local authorities are making people aware of such schemes.

I agree with my colleague Graham Simpson, who spoke about rural proofing. As I have said, as a member who represents the Highlands and Islands, I am acutely aware that many rural and remote properties present different challenges from properties in urban Scotland, such as the age and design of buildings; the difficulty of insulating them; the fact that they are often exposed to far harsher climates; and the fact that many of them are not connected to the mains gas grid. Scotland and the south-west of England have more properties than anywhere else that are off the gas grid. Liam McArthur spoke about a particular issue in Orkney. The other very salient point that he made—and it is an important one—is that the route map does not include evidence of rural proofing and island proofing. We are about to legislate for island proofing in the Islands (Scotland) Bill and I sincerely urge the minister to take that into account in the forthcoming bill that he has mentioned this afternoon, irrespective of what is in it.

It is often easy to get bogged down in the aims, statistics and targets that reports such as this one often necessitate. However, the actions that we take will have an impact on the communities and people we represent. Only last week, I had the pleasure of chairing a meeting of the cross-party group on health inequalities at which we discussed the issue of fuel poverty at great length. A presentation from the Energy Agency was particularly poignant, because it highlighted the immense benefits to people’s health and wellbeing from making homes more energy efficient. In each example, individuals who had received upgrades to their properties reported saving money on their bills and feeling warmer. In one instance, a man indicated that his respiratory problems had improved, and that he had visited hospital on fewer occasions. Those are just anecdotes, but it is clear that there are immeasurable benefits from improving energy efficiency. That cross-party group heard very impressive evidence about public engagement and going directly to patients in hospital waiting rooms. There are significant lessons to be learned on communicating with the public and, as Pauline McNeill and John Scott have said, the approach should be about reaching out and going directly into communities, face to face, to spread the word.

I do not have much more time left, but I would like to commend the Government on its strategy. We do not feel that it is ambitious enough, but we all think that diversifying the way in which we heat our homes has the potential to help us to reduce our carbon footprint and make greater use of Scotland’s natural resources.

16:49

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I thank all members for their contributions to the debate. Although there might be disagreement about the pace and the mechanisms by which we deliver energy efficiency in Scotland, I am heartened that there is consensus that we are doing the right thing, even if there is not agreement on the way in which we are doing it. I take a lot of positive points from today's debate. People are trying to be constructive and encourage us, if anything, to be more ambitious, and the Government will do its best on that. I will try to reflect as many of the points that have been raised today as I can.

Before I do so, I reiterate that the "Energy Efficient Scotland" route map is not the end; it marks the beginning of the next stage of our journey to make our homes and buildings warmer, greener and more efficient by 2040. It is also worth reiterating that what the Government is committing to through the energy efficient Scotland programme will bring benefits to the whole of Scotland.

The energy efficient Scotland programme is a significant cross-government programme that responds to our designation of energy efficiency as an infrastructure investment priority. Graeme Dey made the good point that the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, the Minister for Local Government and Housing and I are not climate change ministers; we are here because we are doing our bit, through the energy efficient Scotland programme, to tackle climate change. I thank the member for his warm remarks in that respect.

We are also helping to tackle fuel poverty, which has been an underlying theme throughout much of today's debate. It clearly motivates us all, either as regional or constituency MSPs, as we try to help our constituents. I understand the strong sense of urgency on tackling fuel poverty.

We also want to address the need to deliver sustainable economic growth. I think that Stewart Stevenson made the point that it is a shame that the whole-economy figure of £10 billion would be wiped out by the Conservative amendment. It is important to stress that the programme is not only about public investment; it is about private sector investment, businesses and investment from householders. The programme involves the whole economy—public, private and third sector—and £10 billion over the lifetime of the programme. It would be a mistake to remove that figure from the motion, because it is clearly an important factor in underlying the success that we might achieve.

**John Scott:** Can the minister confirm that the spend to save policy is still Government policy, and that the programme will pay for itself by the

reduction in costs to the health service? If the programme was brought forward more quickly, we would achieve much more.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I agree with John Scott that energy efficiency investment is a great example of preventative spending. That has come across in all the speeches today. We recognise that it has an impact on health and on educational outcomes, with school children having a better environment in which to study. Investing in energy efficiency is a classic form of preventative spending, and it is important to do that. That is one of the reasons why we are driving forward our energy efficiency targets.

The route map outlines the proposed framework of national standards for the energy efficiency of buildings that we will put in place, as well as the support that we will provide. It is a truly cross-sector approach to improving the energy efficiency of domestic and non-domestic buildings. There has not been much focus on non-domestic buildings today. We want Scotland's homes to be improved so that they achieve an energy performance certificate rating of at least band C by 2040. However, as I set out earlier, there are milestones on the way. Our priority in the early stages of the programme is on fuel poor households, the private rented sector and social rented houses. As we move through the 2020s to 2030, the focus will turn to non-domestic buildings. I want to reassure members that we are very much targeting the houses and properties that need to be tackled first.

I accept some of the points that were made about rural properties. However, I want to highlight that there is a specific case study in the route map on a property in Ballater, involving a "Miss R", which might be of interest to Mr Burnett. We have set out some examples, and I will give some examples in a moment of some of the initiatives in rural Scotland in order to give members confidence that that is a focus of our work.

**Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** If the Government loses the vote tonight on accelerating the targets, will the Government implement what the Parliament wants to happen?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I am relying on my persuasive skills, Mr Rumbles. I hope that, by the end of the debate, I will have persuaded the Liberal Democrats to vote for the Government's motion and to reject the inappropriate amendments. I regret that Mr McArthur's amendment was not taken, but it was mentioned by Mr Burnett, which I am sure was positive for him.

There are a number of issues, perhaps about presentation, that we have to make clear. I want to emphasise that £146.1 million is being spent in the

current financial year and that £500 million will be spent over the four years to 2021, which is an ambitious level of spending. It is a £10 billion whole-economy programme and that might go up to £12 billion. That is a significant scale of ambition for our economy and all the stakeholders in the economy, and I reassure members that we believe, after consultation, that we have the right amount of ambition. Notwithstanding that, we can adjust as we go along, as I am sure that we will as we reflect on progress and try to achieve our targets. We are putting the appropriate resources in place to deliver an ambitious programme and, regardless of how today's vote goes, I hope that that reassures members.

We are putting area-based schemes at the heart of our approach and creating a framework, through local heat and energy efficiency strategies—LHEES—to support local government prioritisation and targeting. Mr Stewart and I are working hard with COSLA to develop a programme of activity to address some of the concerns that members have outlined about communal properties, mixed tenures and the difficulties of trying to deliver programmes. Graeme Dey gave an excellent example of how funding can sometimes drive inefficiency if it is not co-ordinated properly. Through LHEES, identifying the appropriate technologies in each location and identifying the best way to deliver, we hope that we can drive out those inefficiencies.

We can learn by rolling out pilots in new towns and other places where we have communality of housing stock. There are lots of areas in which we can improve efficiency and make sure that, in these early years, we identify the best technologies, delivery methods and ways of co-ordinating our activity at local level. We need to ensure that we get the best bang for the public buck and make it as attractive as possible for the private sector, owner occupiers and private landlords to take part.

I have two examples of that in rural Scotland. In Arbroath, Cairn Housing Association, with support from our area-based scheme loans, improved the energy efficiency and heating systems of 25 homes in Albert Street from EPC band D to EPC band C. Residents have benefited from warmer and more efficient-to-heat homes, and customer satisfaction rates are at 85 per cent.

In Stirling, a programme was undertaken of photovoltaic solar panel installations, which picks up on Mr Ruskell's and John Scott's point about solar panels in California. That is a demonstration of the potential for alternatives to the standard grid-connected model of powering and heating our homes.

**Claudia Beamish:** Will the minister give way?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I am pressed for time, Miss Beamish. I apologise.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** While you are taking that pause, I remind members that it is very rude not to listen to what the minister has to say. It is very interesting, so pay attention.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I want to highlight the fact that, on the non-domestic front, we have relaunched the small and medium-sized enterprises loan fund. Members might win favour with their constituents by pointing out that there is cashback on those loans, so they can gain an incentive to invest in energy efficiency. Small businesses around the country are already benefiting from that.

I wanted to address the budget issue with Mr Ruskell during his closing speech, but I realised that he had only two minutes and I did not want to steal his time. In respect of the budget, it is the whole-economy cost. I took his point earlier about ambition, but I hope that he now realises what we are referring to with regard to the overall scale of ambition in the programme.

We believe that LHEES will be an important part of the framework that we are taking forward to make sure that we co-ordinate our activities.

On the actions around tackling fuel poverty, I want to highlight that we propose in our consultation that all homes of fuel-poor households should reach EPC band C by 2030 and band B by 2040. It is important to stress that we are going beyond band C for those households that are affected by fuel poverty. In that regard, I congratulate Christina McKelvie on the work that she has done with Scottish Power and other agencies on her voucher proposal. That is a welcome initiative.

Our ambitious target will act as a guide for our national area-based fuel poverty programmes and I hope that that will give a structure—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am sorry—it is getting too loud again as members come into the chamber. It is very disrespectful to the member who is speaking.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** In respect of the case study on page 40 of the route map, which I referred to earlier, we will reflect on and take away the points that were made about rural Scotland. We are very much working on the basis that this is an all-Scotland programme and we are targeting fuel poverty wherever it is found. I reassure members that that is the case.

A number of points were made on the national infrastructure priority, and we have now identified half a billion pounds to deliver it. Scotland's energy efficiency programme—SEEP—as it was referred to in previous programmes for government, is now

called energy efficient Scotland. Hopefully, that ties that up and members can see where the funding has come from and that a programme has now been identified to deliver that funding in practice.

A number of references were made to needing a one-stop shop for energy efficiency. That was started by Alexander Burnett and was taken up by other members. I emphasise the point that Kevin Stewart made very well: that home energy Scotland is a very useful tool in helping all of us to help our constituents. Members could help us and help their constituents by advertising it. It is a simple system to use, and an excellent service is provided to constituents.

I finish by emphasising that this has been a very positive debate. The route map that we set out last week, and which the First Minister launched at the all-energy conference, is a bold, ambitious but—importantly—deliverable programme. It has been modelled, and we believe that it can give confidence both to the supply chain and to investors, whether they are householders, businesses or third sector organisations.

I thank members for their attention. I have enjoyed the debate.

## Decision Time

17:00

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** There are three questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S5M-12140.1, in the name of Alexander Burnett, which seeks to amend motion S5M-12140, in the name of Kevin Stewart, on a route map to an energy efficient Scotland, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (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)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 64, Against 60, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-12140.4, in the name of Pauline McNeill, which seeks to amend motion S5M-12140, in the name of Kevin Stewart, on a route map to an energy efficient Scotland, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

#### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)

McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (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)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)

Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 64, Against 60, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S5M-12140, in the name of Kevin Stewart, as amended, on a route map to an energy efficient Scotland, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

#### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)

Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)

McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 65, Against 59, Abstentions 0.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament welcomes the publication of the Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map; considers that the target for all homes reaching EPC 'C' rating, where feasibly possible, should be no later than 2030, not 2040, given the urgency to reduce carbon emissions and to ensure that every home in Scotland is warm and properly insulated; believes that an earlier target will alleviate, more quickly, the problems arising from poorly insulated houses, which can all have a negative impact on people's health and wellbeing; notes that a letter addressed to the Minister for Local Government and Housing, signed by opposition party members, called on the Scottish Government to adopt targets for 2030; welcomes Scotland's ambitions to tackle climate change and fuel poverty as a huge opportunity to transform the energy efficiency of existing domestic and non-domestic buildings, drawing together action at a national and local level that is undertaken by individuals, businesses and the public and third sectors; notes that this will build on the work of the Scottish Government, Scotland's 32 local authorities and partners that have improved over one million homes and non-domestic properties since 2008; believes that the Scottish Government's proposed target to reduce fuel poverty levels to below 10% of households by 2040 is not ambitious enough and condemns a generation to living in fuel poverty, and further believes that the forthcoming Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Bill should provide a clear statutory foundation for the new fuel poverty strategy, including an ambitious new target date for the eradication of fuel poverty, and should include action to eliminate poor energy performance as a driver of fuel poverty, with priority given to fuel poor homes and homes in rural, remote and island communities.

*Meeting closed at 17:03.*



This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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